



SCRIPTURE TRUTHS DEMONSTRATED IN THIRTY-TWO SERMONS, OR DECLARATIONS OF STEPHEN CRISP

Published in 1707

Text in [Light Blue](#) or **[bold Light Blue](#)** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

Quaker ministers, such as Stephen Crisp, served without pay and never spoke from a prepared text or notes. All Quaker ministers were like Stephen Crisp, having no particular meeting to which they attended, but rather traveled from meeting to meeting to deliver their messages of encouragement, exhortation, and reproof. Steven Crisp is reputed to have visited almost every meeting in England and Scotland. Most meetings were without anyone able to speak a sermon with words supplied by the Spirit; rather several members would be prompted by the Spirit to stand in turn and present a specific teaching. [The Quaker ministers only spoke and prayed under the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit of God.](#) All sermons were unrehearsed and completely extemporaneously inspired. Although George Fox methodically had several of his sermons recorded by a Friend, Quakers one hundred years later shunned records of sermons, believing they were only meant for a particular time and audience. For that reason, there are very few recorded sermons preserved. These sermons were recorded in shorthand at three different meeting houses in London. This book of thirty-two sermons by Stephen Crisp was published by a non-Quaker in 1707. These sermons were never republished for Stephen Crisp

had fallen out of favor with the 18th Century Quakers, probably because his message so plainly shows those having fallen short of the rest.

You can see the original form by [clicking here](#). For a description of a early Quaker worship service, see [Proper Worship](#).

From the anonymous transcriber of these sermons, with initials N. C. :

Though the transcriber of these sermons does out of modesty decline to print his name, he does assure the reader, that he has not in the least altered or imposed upon the preacher's sense, either in the taking or transcribing of the words. And he does further declare, that he neither is, nor ever was, one of the people called Quakers, but always of another persuasion. Yet being willing, according to the Apostle's rule, to try all things, he has sometimes been present at their meetings; and having the skill of short-writing, he has taken many of their sermons and prayers from the mouth of several of their preachers; and among others those of Stephen Crisp, deceased; which, upon review, appeared to him, as well as to eminent persons of another sect, to contain some many Gospel Truths, delivered with such plainness, zeal, and demonstration, and generally agreeable to the known doctrines of Christianity, that it is hoped the publishing of them may be useful to the world.

Note, the above anonymous author of this book was not a Quaker, yet he heard such profound truths declared, he went to the trouble of recording each word, and then publishing this book — in hopes *they may be useful to the world*. And so they most definitely are.

These sermons are some of the strongest, most straight-forward, informative appeals that I have ever encountered. Clearly Stephen Crisp's gift of ministry from the Lord was to exhort those not yet in the Kingdom of

God, to raise their efforts in denying themselves on the inward cross and seeking the further grace of God to bring them to the finish of the race and abundantly enter God's kingdom. Don't fail to read the prayers at the conclusion of several sermons; they are wonderful.

When you read these sermons, realize he was speaking to those who had already been convinced that hearing the word of God from within their hearts and that obeying it was basic to salvation; that salvation came with cleansing, purity, perfection, and holiness through the power of God worked by God in a man; that self-denial with obedience to the commands of God was the cross; and that with the true hope, and thinking on the name of Jesus, silently listening for the voice and watching for the light's revelations, with resulting obedience to all commands heard and understood, was the basis of spiritual progress. To those content outside the Kingdom, Crisp's words are strong exhortations to renew their energy given to the good fight of faith, to seek God with all their heart and soul.

Text in [brackets] has been added by the site editor.

And, if you haven't read [Stephen Crisp's memoir](#), it is available for you to enjoy one of the most descriptive narratives of the journey to God ever recorded.

Sermon I

The Great Mediator of the Everlasting Covenant

**Preached at Grace-Church-Street [meeting house], April
25, 1688**

My Friends,

How should we all admire the workings of the Holy Ghost. You may know from your own experience, that all the operations of the Holy Spirit, from the beginning, have been for the cleansing, and purifying, and preparing you for the kingdom of God. This experience is given to a little remnant, to know that the manner of his working, that the end, aim and design, of all the operations of his power, is for our good, and in order to our eternal happiness.

Now, this is a great engagement upon the minds of the people of God, diligently to wait upon him,* that they may be shown more and more into the mystery of life and salvation, that has been hidden from ages and generations, and is now revealed by his spirit.

[*In all thirty-two of Stephen Crisp's sermons, there is no explanation on *how to wait on God*. To wait on God is to persistently sit in humble silence, listen for his voice and words, watch for his revelations, hear his commands, and then obey Him; only those who heed and obey Him receive eternal salvation. Heb 5:9.

It is a cross to a man's will to sit waiting on God, silently listening, struggling to keep his mind from wandering; it is a cross to a man's will to obey what he is commanded and taught by the Holy Spirit; **this is the cross of which you must** deny yourself and pick it up every day, to then follow Jesus. **To obey his voice and light is to follow Jesus.** This is how to do what you have prayed for a thousand times: *thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*. You cannot be his disciple unless you pick up your cross daily and follow his orders. Salvation is only received by those who follow the lamb wherever he goes — who obey

completely the voice of the Lord, in whatever he commands. Do not be discouraged if you don't hear for some time. Even your waiting is to your credit: Let your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, in proportion to our waiting and hoping on you. Psalms 33:22.

To listen in humble silence and hear, the following is what I have been taught by the Lord:

- Begin by thinking on the name of Jesus, (but not over and over). If your chair has arms on it, rest your elbows on the arms, put your hands together as for prayer, and rest them in light contact with your mouth, chin, or nose.
- Force yourself to smile and **hold the smile**. Smiling will chase the worries away, which is what 90% of thoughts are. A smile releases endorphins and serotonin, making it easier to relax and drop thoughts. When you find yourself sunk in a stream of worries, or stuck in reviewing the horribleness of your past sins, (after you have once confessed regret over them), a forced smile will break those thought patterns, allowing you to refocus your mind on waiting, watching, and listening for the Lord to speak.
- Close your mouth, put your teeth together, and breathe through your nose as long as it is clear; breathing through the nose **with teeth together** reduces your thinking significantly. This is true when waiting or in normal activities.
- Not only listen, **but watch** — watch the light on your closed eyelids; **cut your eyes to the upper right. Keep watching what is in your sight, however little, and it will keep your mind still.** By watching, you keep your mind still, and listening is natural with a quiet mind. Your

mind is busy watching and so cannot think.

- Breathe slowly and deeply. Slow breathing makes thinking more difficult. While *breathing in* slowly and deeply, focus on feeling the upper right of your head; and while *breathing out* slowly, focus on looking for light at the upper right of your head, (45 ° angle up). Each time you breathe out, look further to the right, (but without twisting your head).
- After you have expelled the air from your lungs, without immediately breathing in, hold your breath for a few seconds. You will feel a pressure in your head; don't resist it, latch onto it, and when you breathe back in, hold onto that pressure because it can help you maintain silence. With practice you can hold onto that pressure throughout your waiting time.
- Be ready to reject thoughts and visions that the devil throws in randomly to cause your mind to wander; to reject thoughts before being lost in thought is hard, but it becomes easier with practice. The Lord never brings up a sin for which you have already expressed regret and stopped doing; but the devil throws up visions of your past experiences to cause your distress and loss of focus. The devil also brings up a subject of your interest and then proceeds talk about that subject tempting you to listen to his garbage talk; and like little dreams, he can set you up with sexual temptations. You can stop this garbage by returning to **watching to the upper right**.
- To get started, (or to restart when you find yourself lost in thought), breathe out stopping for a few seconds to catch the pressure. Smile. Breathe in, feeling the upper right of

your head. Then breathe out again watching to the upper right.

For more on how to successfully wait, watch, listen and hear, see the web page, [How to Benefit from the Changing Power of God by Waiting on the Lord.](#)]

And those who are thus exercised with the measure of grace given to them, grow and increase in holiness and righteousness, by the working of it; and they increase in knowledge in the great things of the law, and the mysteries of the kingdom of grace. By the eye that God has opened, they discern that the working of his power in all ages has been for the extirpating, rooting out, and destroying of that root of iniquity, which has brought forth such a crop of sin and wickedness, which was not of his planting, nor of his creating.

For, from the beginning of the creation of God, unto this day, God has had a singular love and favor to the sons and daughters of men, as being (as, I may say) the masterpiece, or greatest piece of the creation, most nearly related to himself, created in his own image, in righteousness and holiness; and in that they now are not so, but marred, and spoiled from bearing the heavenly image, is not the Lord's doing, but has been wrought by the enemy both to God and man. Yet the Lord continuing his love to the work of his hands, has from age to age revealed and made known his power, for the restoring and bringing back again lost man, fallen man, sinful man, to be reconciled to him who he may, as was intended, enjoy and possess the love and favor of his Maker; but there was no profitability found for his reconciliation with the holy God, except by making him holy. For as the making him unholy, separated him from his Maker, so the making of him holy again, would unite him again unto his Maker. So that there must be a way and means for the reducing of him to his primitive state, before he could enjoy and obtain his primitive enjoyments; that is, the love and favor of God. And there has been a general universal sense upon the sons and daughters of men of this alienation and estrangement from God; and they have put themselves upon

many ways and methods to obtain reconciliation, and to try if they could restore themselves. They have sought ways and tried and proved the inventions and imaginations of their own minds, in their fallen wisdom, what they might do to please God, and be reconciled to him.

We are sinners, and we will sacrifice, we will bring a sacrifice for our sins; and when men have brought a sacrifice, it has not been accepted because there has not been a Mediator known, who might mediate for them with the Lord; so that all the sacrifices they have offered, have never being accepted with him, in order to obtain an atonement and reconciliation. Now only those who have a relation to the Mediator by faith in him, does he intercede for, so that he might present them again to God; and this has been the difference between sacrificer and sacrifice, from the days of Cain and Abel to this day. Some have had a relation to the Mediator in all their services and sacrifices, and some have had a relation only to the thing offered and the service performed; but they have not in all ages been alike. Those whose service and worship was performed to God with a relation to the Mediator, have found acceptance; and those whose worship and service was performed only with a relation to the thing offered or done, which was simply their own act and was only their will-worship, were always short and it was turned back again upon them *for there is no name given under Heaven, by which any can be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ*; who is the Mediator of the new covenant, for which the old one was broken. When Aaron was set up to be an high-priest to God, he was appointed to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people, and he who committed a sin, was appointed by the law to bring a he-goat of the flock to the door of the tabernacle and to deliver it to the priest; and he was to make an offering for the sin committed after such and such a manner, and it was to be an atonement with God for him. So here was seemingly, a reconciliation by a sacrifice; and some saw no further than the bringing of a goat, and a ram, and the performance of the priest's office, and they counted all was well. And others saw further, long before the apostle spoke or wrote it, *that it was not the blood of bulls or goats, nor the blood of a ram that could purge away sin from their consciences*. And after

the apostle had opened the mystery of divinity, who had a divine and spiritual skill, in unfolding the restoration of mankind, he declared plainly, *that when the offering was made by Aaron for sinners, even then there remained still a consciousness of sin; for it was not profitable that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.* So that their outward performances, and their outward services, only pointed out the Mediator; they had a pointing finger, as it were, to the real, true and everlasting Mediator, Christ Jesus, who is made a Mediator between God and man; so that by and through him, man might be again reconciled to God.

So that now in these gospel-days, in which God is opening the mysteries of life and salvation, to the intent and purpose that the sons and daughters of men might be restored again into their primitive enjoyment of the favor of God; now in these days, it is the duty of all Christians, and of all who are seeking the welfare of their immortal souls, to have their eyes and hearts to Jesus, as to one who is able to reconcile them to God; to him it is committed, to him wisdom and power is committed, and to him authority is committed, that he should be an everlasting high-priest; and that all the services, and all the worships and religious performances that people offer up to God, should be in his name, so that by him they might be recommended to God. For no one will find acceptance with the Father, unless in all their performances, they have an eye to him.

So that it comes plainly to pass, according to that short and confident assertion of the author to the Hebrews, that *without faith it is impossible to please God.* But it is possible to offer sacrifices without faith, and possible for people to perform religious services without faith, as woeful experience has taught us in our days, that many have been exercised in a kind of religious service, who never in their lives had faith enough to believe the things that they prayed for; and so they were without faith. When people pray to God to send his Holy Spirit into their hearts, so that they may keep his commandments to their lives end, and do not have faith to believe it, and when they pray, *Your will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven, it is*

only a religious performance; and if it is not done in faith, it is only an increase in sin and an addition to sin. Where is the man who is exercised in praying to God who believes that what he prays for is ever likely to come to pass? Go where you will in this or another nation, and inquire of people about their faith; they believe there is no possibility of extirpating and rooting out of sin while they live upon the earth; therefore all their prayers for it are vain, and their faith is a vain faith. And it is high time in such a day as this, when men are faithless and unbelieving, to preach up the object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. People are of many faiths, and of many beliefs; but we have found by experience, that they do them no good, they do not bring a thing to pass, that of necessity must be brought to pass, before they can be reconciled to God; *their faith does not cleanse the heart*, nor extend so far as to believe that they ever shall be cleansed; in all the worship and religion that they perform, they do not come to this faith: that they shall be made clean. All they do is done only in sin and uncleanness; they cannot bring a clean sacrifice out of an unclean vessel. And our Lord Jesus Christ said concerning this subject: *an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit*; but there must be good fruit brought forth; how must we do it? *Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good*. When men's vain talk about religion and religious presumption come to an end, then all this religion will appear to be in vain, and will not answer the end for which it is performed, until men believe that it will make the tree good, and *cleanse the heart*, and transform men by *renewing the spirit of their minds*. So that religion must begin *within*; and it is not our changing of forms of worship, from one form to another, and taking up this and the other opinion, that results in the change of our hearts. Sad experience teaches us, that men may carry over their old lusts into a new religion; we can carry over our old inclinations into our new opinions. For though *the form of worship* is changed, the heart remaining unchanged and the lusts unmortified, their religion is in vain whatever their persuasion.

This great calamity has overspread all sorts of people, for there is no sort of people, but that there are those among them who are under this great

calamity, of holding the profession of god useless with an ungodly mind, and the profession of truth with a false and treacherous spirit. The remedy to this great calamity is the single way that all men are brought off from having their eye to their performances, and to the doctrines and tenets that they hold, and do, as the apostle said: fix their eye upon Christ, and look upon Jesus. This is the first thing that must begin our religion, for Christ must be the Alpha of our religion, as well as the Omega of it. If I do not begin there, let me begin where I will, I begin wrong. If I should begin at the most serious and sound doctrine, and at the most apostolic religion; if Christ and his apostles were here upon the earth; if I walked among them; if I believed all they said and did, I would begin wrong, unless I fixed my eye upon Jesus Christ, who is the taker away of sin, and is the sanctifier of the soul by his Spirit. There must be the beginning, and there must be the conclusion; he is the author, and the finisher of all true faith. There are authors of other faiths. Men have their different faiths, and creeds, and articles, and they have exposed and imposed them too; but this is the worst of it, none of them are right. Let them be exposed and imposed with ever so much force and violence, none of these will cleanse the heart; but that faith which is delivered over by Christ Jesus, who has the quality of cleansing and purifying; that is the faith when all is done, that will do the work; that is it that will save and sanctify, and do the business that all the world is about. Everyone would have a reconciler with God, and sin rooted out, and be as God would have them be; this is the public profession of Christendom; at least they would wish to find out something by which it might be done. Although many are willing enough to continue in sin and drunkenness, whoredom, lying, and hypocrisy; these are a sort of fools, who make a mockery of sin, and who swim in the streams of pleasure; and what worry do they have, so long as they make a profession of Christianity?

But I am speaking about a people who are struggling under their corruptions; who would mortify sin, and serve God in holiness and righteousness, and do God's *will on earth as it is done in Heaven*; and do it

not in form, but would have power to do it; and they have tried several ways to do it, and it is not done; and many have been at this work until gray hairs are upon their heads, and it is still not done. Now God has given Christ to make reconciliation. How can we, who have the love of God extended to us, but extend our goodwill to our friends, and signify to them that all the travail and pains they are at, and all the prayers they make, will do nothing until they have their faith fixed upon Jesus, who is able to save and deliver them, and *save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.*

[To *saved* is to be *delivered*. To be *delivered* is to be freed from the bondage of sin. Therefore, to be *saved* is to be freed from the bondage of sin. Salvation is to be delivered from sin, to be delivered from evil, like you continually pray for: ***deliver us from evil***, for yours is the kingdom, the power, and glory forever.]

But here some will object and say, it is true what you say, but is it not needful to preach such doctrines to us for we all believe in Christ, that is, the only Mediator and Savior. We know that Christ Jesus is the only Mediator, and that unless he commends us to God, we cannot be accepted by him. This is our general doctrine; therefore what need is there for your urging and pressing upon us, who have come into the faith already.

Let me search into the matter; it is of greater importance than to search into a bargain of worldly things. Men would willingly have others open and discover to them in what they may be cheated, to prevent their being imposed on in a worldly bargain. I hope then they will listen to know how, and in what they may be deceived by themselves, and deceived by others in matters of eternal concerns. There are no Protestants, but they reject any Mediator except Jesus Christ, and believe that no Mediator can reconcile them to God, but Christ alone, and they say he is the object of their faith. I would ask them this question, whether they believe in Christ at a distance, or as present, *really present* with them? Is their faith historical and at a

distance, that they believe in Christ, as one born of the Virgin Mary and was crucified and dead before they were born, and arose again, and ascended into Heaven, and is set at the right hand of God? If the reason of my belief is: that I have heard of this history of Christ; or whether the reason is: because by his Spirit, he has visited me in this age. The one is, I believe, because good men have told me so; but the other is, I believe, because, by his Spirit he had promised to send, to lead me into all truth, he has visited me. Now let me examine whether I am aware of such a spiritual visitation, by this quickening Spirit, which is the Lord *from* Heaven, and not only the Lord *in* Heaven. Whether I am aware of such a quickening power and virtue, which I have received upon my spirit, that he is not only at the right hand of God on high in Heaven, but has now come to knock at the door of my heart, and has raised in me a life; as opposite to sin, as his was. Let me consider if I am aware of a secret touch of his quickening virtue upon my soul, by which he has begotten me into a life opposite to sin; so that if sin remains, it remains as a burden, and oppression upon me, so that I am a sufferer; for as much as I am quickened, and made sensible of a better life, of a godly life, I would willingly be at it, and live in it, but iniquity, lust, and corruption lie in the way. He who has quickened me so far, as to bring me to a sense of the burden of sin, and my faith tells me that he will take the burden off, else my faith will do me no good, if corruption still prevails upon me. If my faith tells me this, it will tell the wickedest man in the world as much; but if my faith tells me I am a sinner, and my sins consist of this and the other evil thing I do, and am inclined to do, it tells me again that he that has quickened me, and brought me to a sense of sin, so he can take the burden off from me.

Here now is a true faith that begins in conviction, and ends in true conversion; this is the word of faith, delivered to the saints, and which we are to preach. They said of old, that the word of faith, they had to preach, was that which was near in their mouth, that they might receive it, and do it. I have something near that reproves me for sin; if I am obedient to it, then faith gives me victory over that which is sinful, for which the world reproves me; and I see faith gives me victory over any corruption, which I have been

struggling under, I am encouraged to fix my faith upon him who has thus quickened me. So that this is the difference between faith in Christ at a distance, and faith that quickens [makes God's spirit come alive in me] me by God's Spirit; which Spirit has been so much slighted in our days, by the highest notionists in our age; they supposed it to be a mere fiction; some have mocked and derided, and others have been discouraged from speaking of the Spirit of Christ and his operation upon their souls. Some have declared both in the press and pulpit, that they have had no experience of the touches of God's Spirit upon their souls. But our experience has brought us to another degree of knowledge. We know, and you may know if you please, and that before you sleep, that there is a way opened; God has made way for his Spirit to reach the spirits of men, to signify immediately to their spirits without another instrument: in this you do wrong, and in this you may have life, and seek after it. Now the Spirit that thus works is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son, which voice in men tells them they might believe and be saved. When he comes, faith, Christ, he will lead you into all truth. How shall the world know this is he? He shall convince them of sin. If there is any conviction that arises in man of this and that sin, it must be from the way the Holy Spirit has upon their spirits; he has a way to speak to men, and everyone that is a lover of his own soul, is bound to hearken to that voice.

In the latter days, said the Lord, when I shall raise a prophet in the midst of you, whoever will not hear that prophet, shall be cut off. All commentators agree on this text, that that prophet was Christ Jesus; it was not John the Baptist, nor Paul, nor Peter; but Christ who was promised to be raised. There was such an absolute command that went along with that prophecy, that *all should hear him*, and it had a threatening at the end of it, that *all that who will not hear him shall be cut off*. Are they not whoremongers, and drunkards, and liars, who will not hear this prophet? They will not hear him, because they love their sins. What becomes of them? They are cut off from the enjoyment of the love and favor of God, and when they draw near to God in prayer, and other religious exercises, it is with

them, as it was with *Cain, sin lies at the door*. When they come into a storm at sea, or are arrested with sickness, and death looks them in the face, they would have peace, but there is distress, and trouble instead. What is the matter? Were you not baptized in the Christian faith? Did not the minister tell you that you are a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven? Alas! My sin lies at my door. O! That I had time to live a better life! What ails your life, man? My life has been a life of deceit, lust, and vanity, corruption and hypocrisy. Did your teacher not teach you, that a believer has no guilt upon him, but that all his sins are pardoned from the day he became a believer? This doctrine will not hold in a storm, though it will do in fair weather; when men are swimming in their pleasures, it will serve them; but when they come to deal with their Maker, no faith will serve them, but that which purifies the heart, and that which makes a change from the earthly image to the heavenly.

It would be better for you and I, and every one of us, to take these things into consideration while we have health and strength, and while some sand (as I may so speak) is in our glasses [hour glasses - time], to consider what is my faith? What is the object of it? Have I a dependency upon my duties, and alms, and good deeds? They will fail me. But if my dependency is upon Christ as a savior, and a sanctifier; and if my sanctification is carried on gradually, he who has begun a good work in me will perfect it. And if the reason of my going to meetings, and going into my room, and bowing myself before the Lord, is to keep close to him who carries on the work of sanctification, I cannot expect to live in the world, except I shall meet with temptations; the devil will tempt me, but my Savior will be near me, as near to me as the Devil can be; if I will keep close to him, he will keep close to me. *My Father, said Christ, is greater than I, and none is able to pluck you out of your Father's hands.* I must expect to be tempted; *for the adversary, the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* Alas, said one, though I have made some progress in the work of sanctification, yet for all that, he may one day betray me. Have I grown strong enough to resist his temptations? Am I wise enough to foresee all his tricks and traps,

which he leaves to ensnare me? But I know who can see them, and defeat them. I have my faith fixed upon one who can bind the strong man, and cast him out. The life that I now live, is not in my own parts, and by my own understanding and sense; *but the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.* This is that faith that gives me victory. The apostle had a battle for it; *I have fought the good fight; and henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, and not for me only, but for all those who love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;* and who come to have familiarity with Christ, with his Spirit and truth, with his grace and word, in their hearts. Though these are several expressions, they all signify one immortal seed of life, by which men are united to God. It is a leaven there, to leaven them into the divine nature.

Whenever such a one is tempted, he does not resist the tempter in his own power, but he waits to feel the risings of that life, and power, and virtue that was in Christ Jesus, and is in him still. He waits for that power, that in the name of Christ, he may say, *get behind me Satan.* Being fortified by Christ's name, and armed with his power, what is it that a Christian cannot do? What valiant, noble and wonderful things have they done, who have been shielded with this faith? See the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. All the repetitions of that chapter, from one end to the other; in all of them the apostle ascribes all the bravery and courageousness of those noble acts, to the power of faith. They looked to Jesus, before ever the Virgin Mary brought him forth out of her body. The prophets did earnestly seek to know those things, which the Spirit of Christ that was in them, did signify unto them, that there was to be this great Prophet, before ever the Virgin Mary was born. So that Christ was always the object of a true believer's faith. Though under the law, they had a high-priest, and he was placed at the altar, and they had offerings burnt upon it, yet they had an eye to Christ, they had an undervaluing of all that their sacrifices could do for them. *If you would have had burnt offerings,* said David, *I would have given them; I would not have withheld them from your altar; you should have had enough of them.*

He was bold to say, in respect to acceptance and reconciliation, *burnt offerings and sacrifices you did not desire; but a body you have prepared me; for it is written in the volume of the book, I come to do your will, O God.* He had an eye to Jesus who was to come, upon whom help was said to come, that there was a Redeemer who would come from Zion, and a law-giver from Jerusalem. They had an eye beyond sacrifices, to Christ. In all ages the people of God have had the answer of their souls, which is reconciliation, and the favor of God. Those who had this answer, never had it except by Christ. No man can be accepted with God, can ever have the desire of his soul answered in peace and reconciliation with God, until his faith is placed on Christ Jesus. Neither can any man have faith in Christ at a distance, and by this be reconciled to God, but must know his Spirit. I must have an experiential knowledge of his power and wisdom, and I cannot have this without his Spirit. Let me believe ever so traditionally, unless I have the Spirit of Christ, it will do me no good, it will be no advantage to me.

This is the word that was in my heart as a well-wisher to the souls of all men. As God has given goodness to my soul so I cannot but wish well to the souls of others; that, as he has found a way for my redemption and salvation, so likewise I wish the same for others who are bondmen and bond-women, and under the power of their corruption. God's work has been to destroy the bondage and the oppression, and to destroy the tyrant that reigns over the souls of people; God having made them for his glory, and the devil has stolen them away, so that they do not do what pleases God. But God's good pleasure is, *that all men may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.* And God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever believes in him would not perish, but have everlasting life.* And he is called, *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.* He can take away sin; if my sin does not obstruct my faith and confidence in him, he will take it away; and if he takes that away, then he makes the tree good. Nothing hinders us from the enjoyment of God, but sin; and if Christ will take it away by the blood of his cross, no matter for all the scorn, contempt, hardship, reproach and persecution of this world; no matter, for he has not

deceived us, but told us beforehand, if we would be followers of him, and be led by him, we must expect these things; sufferings, reproaches, persecutions, disdain and envy. These things do not come uncertainly upon us for the world loves its own, and cannot love those who are not of it; but those who are not of the world, may be brought to the terms of God, and they may not be any longer in the world. Christ did not pray that his disciples would be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil. So that Christ is a Mediator, and a propitiation for all men, and he is working by his Spirit for the redemption of all men, that to as many as believe in him, to them he gives power *to become* the Sons of God.

The sum of all this is, that we have an opportunity put into our hands; we cannot deny it; you must all upon search, confess, that the grace of God often works in your hearts against any corruption, against any evil. Let not this price be put into your hands in vain, as into the hands of fools. If I knew that this and that was a sin, I would leave it; let us be of that mind, and we shall soon know it; and then say, if I knew such a thing to be a sin, and could get a thousand pounds [sterling] by it, I would not do it. Why should you love sin for profit or pleasure? I am sure it is an ill bargain when it is done. Whatever I am convinced is a sin, I will not do it.

Resolve upon this, and then the grace of God will be at work; we shall soon see that we must leave sinning. There is such a thing I must leave; God has set up a judgment in my mind against it; though it brings profit and pleasure, away it must go. Here is a step, a following step to follow Christ. He who will deny himself will follow Christ. My Redeemer shows me this to be an evil; I will not do it, but follow him, and imitate him. Here the soul is led step by step, even by Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, until it is gradually cleansed from sin, and reconciled unto God; and this can be done by no other means, for prayers and alms will not do it, all that can be done by us will not do it; none can do it but Christ alone, whom God has commanded to be your help, so that you may all wait for the divine operation of his grace in your hearts. That is what we labor and travail for,

as knowing that God has wrought wonderfully by it, for the redemption of all those who love him more than they love their pleasures, more than they love their sins. It must be concluded, that following of him, and leaving father and mother, husband and wife, children, brethren, and sisters; all these things as they stand in competition with him, and the obedience of his Spirit, must be looked upon as nothing to him. Then above all things, I must not displease him. *He can speak peace*, and none can take it away; and if he takes it away, none can give it. If we follow Christ, when this is done, then all is done according to the will of God; then the blessing descends upon the whole creation; then every man will speak truth to his neighbor, and every man will govern his family with discretion; so God is glorified, and his name comes to be exalted; who is worthy to be beloved, adored, and exalted above all blessings and praises. To him be glory, who is God over all, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

His Prayer after Sermon

Most glorious God of Life and Power! and of everlasting kindnesses; a God of long-suffering and patience, else we would not be here this day.

Lord, we are monuments of your mercy. You have spared us lovingly and have called to us in a day when we turned away our ear from you. You have stretched forth your hand all the day long, and you have gathered a little remnant of the lost sheep of the house of Israel to partake of your pastures of life; and now all our souls have been greatly refreshed and comforted since we came to understand and comprehend with the rest of your saints the height and length and breadth and depth of your love, which in the Son of your love, you have revealed to us.

And blessed Father of Life! Our souls do breathe and cry unto you on the behalf of strangers, who are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, who are still breathing and inquiring after you, asking the way to Zion.

O Lord! Remember them and hear their cry, and let their sighing and complaining enter into your ears; that all they in whom you have begun to kindle holy desires after you, may have them grow into flames to burn up all enmity to you; that so they may be purified by your judgments and receive of your heavenly grace. This is the way which you have used with your children; you have commanded them to worship you in your dwelling-place; you have taken them into your house, and fed them with your finest wheat; refreshed them with your loving kindness, and filled them with your Holy Spirit.

Dearest God of Love! This is the design and purpose of our meeting together, that we may enjoy the presence, and feel the operation of your word, and have communion with you and your Son Jesus Christ, through your Holy Spirit; the way into rest and life is with you. You can open and no man can shut. Lord, open the hearts of this people to receive of your goodness and receive of your blessing; so that everyone may be sensible that you are at least knocking at the door of their hearts, so that you might have an entrance and bow the hearts and wills of all to receive what you give and have to offer; to receive the word of life, by which you are quickening them and kindling holy desires after yourself that everyone may receive the truth in the love of it. That, so blessed God of Life, your glorious work of redemption may be carried on, and we may all feel it carried on in our souls.

Hear your poor people who are crying to you, the God of Gods in Zion; those who are sensible of their weakness and selfishness and how unable they are to overcome the enemies of their souls. Arise in your power, Lord, and these enemies shall all be scattered; let the souls of your people be raised from the dust, and delivered from their sin, that they may rejoice and praise your name for their deliverance.

Righteous God of life! Our eyes are to you, to set forth your glory, for you have made bare your arm for the salvation of the poor and needy souls, and you have been stretching forth the cords of your love to gather them that

were scattered; and have been bringing home to you those who were scattered away in a dark and cloudy day.

You have made us sensible of your operations; and have constrained your servants to labor in the word and doctrine for the gathering of such home; so that they and we may enter into your holy covenant, and may sound forth your praises to the ages and generations to come. That it may be so, Holy God of Life and Love! You who saved us with a marvelous salvation, may receive for all your mercies, and blessings to your children, praises, glory, honor, and thanksgiving; for you alone are worthy, who are God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

SERMON II

Heart Preparation for Receiving the Gospel

Preached at Devonshire-House, February 12, 1687

IT is in my heart at this time, to desire that everyone's heart were prepared to be made a partaker of the blessings of the gospel; for there is a certain preparation that everyone must witness in themselves, before they are capable of receiving divine blessings. For in all ages of the world, the blessings of the Lord have been manifold, and his arm has been always stretched out in all ages, to the sons and daughters of men, who are sensible of the love he has to them; and where these tenders of the love of God have met with prepared hearts, they have received it to their eternal welfare. But this has been the lamentation that has been taken up upon the greatest part of mankind, that they have not been prepared to receive the love of God; their hearts and minds have been so filled with the love of visible things, and carnal objects, that they have not been truly sensible of the riches of the grace, mercy, and love of God to them

Now, it was laid of old by the prophet, that *the preparation of the heart is of the Lord*, and there is something that belongs to us in our part, that we may attain this preparation, that we may be brought into this spiritual frame of mind; and that is, by returning to the Lord, for people to think upon his name, and have regard to his appearance. And although this is not the work of nature, for by nature the minds of people are abroad, and they are crying out as the Psalmist speaks, *who will show us any good?* Yet to help that defect, the Lord has been pleased to send forth his grace and his truth, and to call to the sons and daughters of men, that they might seek after him, that they might *seek the Lord while he is to be found*; and those who hearken to his voice, they will readily confess, that nothing so well satisfies an immortal soul, as to be gathered into fellowship with its Maker; and that one time or other, it is the desire of all men and women, that they might attain peace with the Lord. And they know there is no peace to the wicked; they know wickedness will remain until it is abolished and destroyed; and they know it is not in their power to destroy it; and therefore of necessity there must be a waiting upon the Lord, who is Almighty, that he may reveal his power in our weakness.

And those who are thus prepared in their minds, meet religiously together, with expectation from God; that he, according to his promise, will appear, and reveal his arm, and do in them, and for them, what they cannot do for themselves; this is a fit way for people to meet together, and to have their expectation from God, and say: Lord, you know my weakness, and you know the enemies I have to deal with; you know I am not able to overcome them. Therefore we are now met together, in the presence of the Lord, to wait to receive at his hands, that power, that life, that virtue, by which we may be made more than conquerors. Such a religious meeting thus gathered together, has a promise; *I will be in the midst of them*, said the Lord; and therefore, having a promise, we may reasonably expect that we shall be made partakers of the living virtue and power, by which we may do that, which of ourselves we cannot do.

And, friends, it is my souls desire, that you were all thus qualified, that everyone had an evidence in himself of this right preparedness; for where the eye is abroad upon any visible thing, that it seeks satisfaction in anything below the Lord himself, it will wear away and grow old. All those objects that people fix their mind upon, they will grow old; but those whose desires, and the breathings of whose souls are, that they may grow into acquaintance with their Maker, this will never grow old. When peoples' minds are fixed, as the people of the Lord of old were, when they made a companion between the state of their minds, and the minds of others, and signified it in these words, they are saying; they are crying (that is, these who are of the world) who will show us any good? But for our parts, our cry is. *Lord lift up the light of your countenance upon us, and we will be more glad of that than they can be with all the increase of corn, and wine, and oil.*

Now those who feel in themselves that the reason of their meeting together is to enjoy the light of God's countenance, and to partake of the blessings of God, they have their expectation from God, their minds are retired into God; knowing right well, that if the tongues of men and angels are moved to declare the heavenly and divine mysteries of the kingdom of God, they cannot be edified or benefited by them without the divine help and assistance of God's Spirit; for there is a *seal* upon them, and none can open that *seal*, but the Lion of the tribe of Judah; he only is found worthy to unseal the mystery, and unseal the divine blessings that are with the Lord. So people must come to that retiring of spirit, to that resignation of soul, to be like a little child waiting upon the Lord, crying out unto the Lord, that he will prepare them, that he will make them hungry, and then feed them, that he will raise a thirst in them, and then satisfy them with those divine springs of life, which through the Lord Jesus Christ are opened to every one that believes. As far as your minds are stayed and settled in waiting for the Lord, so far you will feel in yourselves an openness and readiness, that if the Lord speaks, you are ready to hear him, ready to submit to his word, ready to obey him; there will be such an openness in the mind, not to the words of

any man, but to the word of God, to receive that; for where the words of men are received, though ever so excellent, they do not convert the soul, but the word of the Lord is pure, converting the soul. And this Word is what is able to quicken those who are dead in sins and trespasses, and bring them to be made partakers of life. For it is not an increase of knowledge that will do the turn, but it is the increase of life and virtue, the increase of godliness, and submitting our wills to him who made us. It is this that will do the turn, this will bring peace to the soul, and bring us into the favor of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, that you may all feel what prepares the heart for this resignation, and quietness, and subjection, you must wait upon the Lord, that you may be made partakers of the blessings of his everlasting gospel, and of his divine presence. This is what is most profitable and most advantageous. And then the Lord will open to you the windows of heaven, and rain down the blessings upon you, by which you will be comforted and refreshed, far beyond all the works that we can do, for it is an inward work that must be done upon the soul, to convert people who have been alienated and estranged from God, and bring them to a reconciled state, through the Lord Jesus Christ, by which they may partake of the divine virtues, which sanctify and justify the soul in the light of God.

His Prayer after Sermon

Just, glorious, and powerful Father! Your arm of power is made bare in this our day, to bring salvation to the poor.

Lord, you have lifted up the light of your countenance upon a people who have waited for your glory and your salvation; a little remnant whom the god of this world could not satisfy; but O Lord, in an acceptable time, you have brought your salvation near; and the light and brightness of the everlasting gospel you have commanded to shine into the hearts and souls of the mourners and bowed-down ones, who are seeking the living God, not among the outward forms and ways of men.

But, O blessed Father of Life! You have now brought us to the day of your power, and bowed our wills, and made us a willing people in which to serve you and to do your will on earth, as it is done in Heaven; and for that end, O Lord, you have put it into the hearts of your people to wait upon you, in whom all our fresh springs are, that from you we may receive the renewing of power from day to day.

In all the hours of our temptations and trials, our eyes, O Lord, have been to you and to your power; and we acknowledge, to the glory of your power and goodness, that you have been a God near at hand, when we have been seeking you, and trusting in you, so that we are a people sensible of your power and presence with us; for that eye which you keep open to your children brings your glory to our view and shows it breaking forth over the nations. And we have great joy and satisfaction in beholding the progress of your mighty power in our day, how you have broken down and confounded and are still breaking down and confounding, all the dark imaginations and devices of the sons and daughters of men, who have conspired to hinder the breaking forth of the glory of your Son, Christ Jesus.

O powerful God of Life! Arise more and more in the greatness of your power and love, and make known your counsel and your will among the inhabitants of the earth; and bow their minds, Lord! Bow their wills, that none may dare to withstand your appearance, lest they are found fighters against God and destroyers of themselves.

O powerful Father! For this end, make bare your arm to the rulers and governors of these nations, that they may know your counsels, and bow to your heavenly will, and may promote your law of righteousness in their own hearts, and the hearts of others; that by your power, a blessed reformation may be wrought, and a stop put to iniquity; so that it may not run down in a mighty stream, as it has done in time past; but that truth and righteousness, and sound judgment may be known in the earth; that those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, may have their soul's desires satisfied; and so

praise and thanksgivings shall arise from their souls to you.

O powerful Father of Life! Preserve and keep your children, whom you have gathered, and purged, and purified, and to whom you have made known the way of life, and made them a willing people in the day of your power, to do your will, and to wait for the coming of that kingdom that you have promised to establish under Christ Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords; and that it may grow, and increase and be spread abroad upon the earth, and let everyone's desire to be the subject of this.

Powerful Father of Life! The arm of your power and invisible strength has been revealed, that nothing has been able to resist or stand against and prevail, by which you are planting Zion and building Jerusalem and establishing it. By the same power let your work be carried on, and let many be brought in to be subject to Christ, for the good of their immortal souls. As you have multiplied your blessings upon us, so from day to day then have made us sensible of your love to us, acknowledging us to be your children and peculiar people by your presence in the midst of us whenever we meet in your name to wait upon you, that so, Living Father, all yours, both here and everywhere, may be encouraged to attend upon you, and to be faithful to your power. That waiting for the opening of your counsels, and the enlightening their understandings, they may be able to comprehend with all saints the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of your love in Christ Jesus; that in the sense of the freeness and greatness of it, all your children here and everywhere, whom you have gathered in an everlasting covenant of grace to yourself, may have communion with you and your Son and Spirit; and may return you the honor, glory, and praise of all your love, and mercy, and grace; for you alone are worthy, who are God over all, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

Sermon III

THE FIRST AND GREAT COMMANDMENT

**Delivered by Stephen Crisp, at Devonshire House, May
27, 1688**

WHEN God gave forth his law on Mount Sinai, which Israel was to hear and to obey, the first and great commandment was: You shall have no other gods before Me. Here is the sum and substance of all true religion that ever was upon the earth to this day; all the commandments, all the precepts, prophecies, and all the dealings of God with his people from that day to this, have been all contained in this short precept: You shall have no other gods before Me.

And as long as Israel stood in obedience to this command, their blessings were multiplied upon them, their good things were increased from day to day. The Lord was with them as long as they were willing to be his people. He appeared as their God, and as their defender; wrought their deliverances, fought all their battles for them, gave them dominion and strength, courage and wisdom; ministered out of his treasury all good things to them; for the great care of God Almighty was with all his people. He had regard to them, and visited them at all times, to keep them from idolatry: I am, said He, a jealous God; take notice of Me to be so; I am jealous of my Name; if you will be mine, You shall have no gods but Me.

And all the precepts about offerings and sacrifices, and making atonement for sinners, and the divers services and worship, the various offices in the temple and sanctuary, they were all outward means appointed of God, to keep this outward church in an inward conformity to the command of God. This command was written on tables of stone, and these tables were laid up in the Ark of God, and all this pertained to the first covenant, and typed and figured out the dispensation of the new and everlasting covenant, that God

would make with his people, not like the old. How was it not like it? Not like it in the outward shadows, the types and shadows of things; but He would bring forth the substance of all those shadows and types, and would alter the form and outward appearance of things. For, as God is unchangeable, so is his law unchangeable.

Moses said, the first and great commandment is: You shall have no other gods before Me. This was put onto the stone tablets. Christ Jesus said: The first and great commandment is, You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul, and with all your mind. Matt 22:37. This is put into the tablets of the heart. So here is a difference between the first commandment by Moses, and the first commandment by Christ. They both acknowledge the first and great command to be the subjecting of the creature to him who made him, as his God, that he may serve only the Creator, and may love Him with his whole heart. The Jew could prove this by his stone tablets, and Christ proves this by the fleshly tablets of the heart; for there the creature is bound to love the Lord with his whole heart, and to serve Him only: Him only shall you serve.

Now here the Jews' law is brought over to the Christians, in *the greatest point of religion that was ever preached. It shuts out all idolatry, all superstition, all variety of religions - all is shut out by this commandment;* and the Christian who has the law written in his heart, according to the New Covenant, he can go as readily to his heart and read it, as ever the Jew could go to his stone tablet, and read the law there. You cannot deny that if there is a thing written and engraved in my heart, I can go as readily to it as I can go to any book or tablet, though I have the keeping of it; but the Jews did not have the keeping of the law because generally it was laid up in the Ark of God.

Now friends, what lies upon my mind to speak to you at this time, and that out of the great love that I have to all your precious and immortal souls, as God has had love to mine, is, that you would all consider and weigh in the

fear of the Lord, whose presence is among us, which of you, and how many of you, have come to the obedience of this commandment! I do not doubt that most of you can say all the commandments; but you are happy people if you can obey even one. I dare pronounce that soul, a blessed soul, that can perform this one commandment, that can or dare stand before his Maker and say: "O Lord! I love you with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my might; my love is withdrawn from all other things in comparison to you; there is nothing in this whole world that has a place in my mind, but it is in subjection to the love of you."

Here is the first and great commandment the unchangeable law, the law that was good in Moses' days, and good in Christ's days, and it holds good in our days; and indeed it is such a definitive law, that the breakers of it can neither be good Jews, nor good Christians. There is an absolute necessity that lies upon us, of abstracting and drawing away our minds and souls from all other gods, from all images, and other dependencies and trusts, which people are naturally liable to trust to; and to have their whole confidence set upon the Lord. But alas! With grief of heart I speak it, there are very few who as yet have *known* the right *giving forth of the law*; and there are fewer who are subject to it. This law was not given forth at first without thunder and lightning, and a terrible noise, and the mountain smoking, (he who has an ear to hear, let him hear,) so much that Moses himself said, he feared greatly, and he quaked exceedingly because of the thunder of the Almighty, and of the mountain that smoked and burned with fire, so that Israel could not draw near.

Now I say, there are only a few today who have come to the knowledge of the *giving forth of this law*, who have certainly known those thunders, and that terrible work that the Lord of the whole earth [within a man] makes, when he comes to get up his law [into the heart of a man]; for a great many who have come near to it, and mightily have heard and received the words of the law of God, they have gone backward. They have done like the Jews of old; though they had suffered much, and gone through much, and had seen the

wonders of the Lord, how he had led them and delivered them, yet when it came to this, that they must bear the voice of God, they said: We cannot bear it; we cannot endure it; we have devised for ourselves an easier way; for the voice of thunder and dreadful noises put them into terror, and quaking; and trembling, and great dread came upon them. But we have found an easier way, they said. What is that easier way? You go near, they said to Moses, and you hear what the Lord says, and you come and tell us; you shall be a mediator between us; let God speak to you, and you repeat the same to us, and we will hear you.

Thus the Jews, who had not come beyond the law of God written on tables of stone, would not come to receive it in their hearts, as the Christian must. So Moses received the law from the mouth of God. He was faithful as a servant in the house of God; and he ministered forth the law of God, his precepts, statutes and judgments, and testimonies. He wrote the Jews a book of laws for all of them to walk by, from the highest to the lowest; showing how they should act in criminal matters, and do justice between man and man; and what they should do in the worship of God; and what they should do towards the priest, whose lips should preserve knowledge for them. So he brought up a form of religion, but his work was according to the precepts of God; and he brought them into the form of national religion, and government, and national laws. So Moses and the priests ruled over them, and the priest offered sacrifice for them, and made atonement for them; and Moses inquired of the Lord, and asked counsel for them, and taught and instructed them.

What became of all this at test? When this was done, the priest made, atonement for sin, but he could not pluck away the guilt of one sin. After the priest had made his offering for sin, there remained the consciousness of sin. Moses taught them the counsels of God and the commands of God, but he could not bind their hearts to the obedience of them; for he declared openly against them, that they were a rebellious and stiff-necked people, despite the fact that they had an outward law.

Indeed time would fail me to run through the manifold miscarriages of the church of the Jews, in respect to their idolatry, in respect to their contempt and rebellion, both to God and his servant Moses, who was to teach and to guide them. I say, the time would fail me to mention the manifold miscarriages that happened among this people, who had an outward law and religion without them, and an outward teacher without them.

Now, in the fullness of time it pleased God to send his Son Christ Jesus, to raise up a Prophet like Moses, in respect to faithfulness, though higher in respect of dignity. For Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, but this man was faithful as a Son in his own house; in the house that He was heir to; that house in which He was a King, a Priest, a Prophet, and a Ruler. When the Lord signified, by the spirit of prophecy, the coming of the Righteousness One, he signified to the people that his ministry should not be like that of Aaron. The people should not have their religion without them, and their laws and precepts without them, and their priests without them, and their worship and church without them; but that they should have it all *within* them. I will write my law in their hearts, I will put it into their inward parts; then they shall be my people, and I will be their God, and they shall not forsake me.

Your fathers broke my old covenant, but I will make a new covenant in the latter days; a new covenant, not like that your fathers broke. They broke the law without them; but I will write my law *in* their hearts. This Prophet who is like to Moses, he shall teach my people, he shall be a leader to them, and guide them in the way they are to go, and shall be a captain for them, to lead them to salvation; and it shall come to pass, in the day that I do this, if there be any that will not hear him, he shall be cut off from among the people. That is the judgment that comes upon the condemners of the Gospel, upon those who will not hear Christ Jesus; they shall be cut off from the people. From what people? From the people of God; they shall have no part of the privileges that are enjoyed through Christ; they shall be cut off from the

benefits that others reap by their faith in Christ.

So that now we are to expect the operation and working of a ministry, that leads people to an inward religion, a heart-religion; where the heart is fixed entirely upon the true and living God, as the object of their dependence and trust, and they have no other. This is a strange word to flesh and blood. What! no other dependence but on the invisible God? Flesh and blood, and sensuality, can never come to this: this is a religion that has been hidden from ages and generations, and will be hidden from all ages that ever shall be in the world, where sensuality prevails. What! Will you have me place my whole dependence for the comfort of my life here, and of the life that is to come, the other life—to have my dependence upon an Invisible God—that invisible power that made me, and created the world? How is it possible for me to sequester myself, and draw myself off from all visible objects? I must trust to this, and trust to that. Flesh and blood can never attain to this, with all the intelligence and reason it has. It can never separate itself from idols. They are little children, they are children-of another birth, born of another seed, that keep themselves from idols.

Friends, idolatry is a great deal more common, I find, than most are aware of. Am I commanded to love the Lord with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and might? What is left when the whole is taken away? If God has my whole heart, what have I to bestow upon the world? What love, what affection, what eagerness, what fervency can I bestow upon the world, or any object in the world, when my whole heart, and soul, and mind, is gone before, is gone toward the Lord?

This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like it, that is: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Here it is that the law and the prophets, faith, creeds, prayer, religion, and worship, all that ever was in the world, all are comprehended in this: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. So what need is there for us to be disputing about religion, about this tenet and the

other tenet; this text, and the other text? For my part, I should only desire for you to understand this text; for if you do, I have no doubt about your going to heaven. Here is the sum, here is all at once, here is the quintessence of all religion, of all types, shadows, figures, ceremonies, and priesthood, and all that ever was or could be named and practiced in the world. All is brought to this: The heart given up to God — our love set upon Him.

What! Is this sufficient? Some will say: this will make you a good moral man, but what is this to the Christian religion? You might be led into error and become a heretic for all this.

How could this happen, that I should not be of a sound faith, but led into error and heresy for all this? When people let in error, and heresy, and unsoundness of faith, where do they let it in? Do they not let in the principles of error and heresy into their hearts? I believe this, and that, and the other error; it all comes into the heart, and has a seat in the heart. But how can we let it into the heart, when the heart is given up to God? Cannot I keep out error and heresy, if I give up my heart soul to Him? Cannot I trust Him with all?

This kind of talk of error and heresy, has come among men who have had the keeping of their own souls. They have taken their own souls into their own hands and have ordered their religion themselves, or have employed somebody to order it for them; and a great many of them have met together to make creeds and catechisms, and confessions, and orthodox doctrines that might certainly be professed and subscribed to. So afterwards some have come and found fault with them; and then they create a council to try them. Then these doctrines are cast off and are laid aside, and others are created to replace them. All these doctrines are what men have set up for themselves. They would not be under the government and prescription of God, as children under the government of a father; instead they will set up religions themselves, and say to the rest of the world: If you own anything contrary to our principles, you are a heretic, and being a heretic you are to

be rooted out and cut off. Do you not read in the scriptures, that whoever does not hear the prophet (who was recognized to some into the world) shall be cut off? What! Will you not hear Christ speak in the church? Will you not hear Christ speak? The church cannot speak without a head; if you will not hear the church, you shall be cut off.

All their barbarous and inhuman cruelties, martyring and imprisoning people, comes from their creating faiths themselves; and of all things, nothing is more desperately wicked; and they did not know it. The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Men do not know how proud and arrogant they themselves are, and yet they attempt to order the hearts, and minds, and consciences of others. Out of this has sprung all superstition and idolatry, because men would not give up their hearts to God. You shall have no other gods but Me. This commandment is great in itself, strict in the terms: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself. Their neighbors could not see with their eyes; therefore they would be destroying one another.

But, blessed be God, who is now bringing forth true Christianity upon its old basis and foundation, on which it was placed at first; for Christianity has been jostled off from its first foundation. For instead of loving God with all their hearts, and loving their neighbors as themselves, they hated them. Now this is the day, O friends! The weight of it is great; this, I say, is the day in which God is bringing Christianity upon its old foundation.

I would not have you think that I am here judging our forefathers, who have fallen asleep; that therefore they have gone to perdition, because they did not see this day, and did not live to see that benefit of it which we enjoy. I am far from it. This was the thing that they believed and prayed to God for; they did not see this day outwardly, but they saw it by faith. When I was a child, I remember the people of God, when they met three or four together, they would rejoice in the hopes of what they foresaw. They gave thanks to

God for the blessed days that He would bring forth, though they could not tell when. They did say and believe that God would scatter the fogs and mists, and bring forth a happy day, in which his people should have the gift of his Spirit. When they saw the impositions and persecutions of those times; that when those who did not conform and comply, they were cast into prisons, dungeons, and jails, well, it will not always be that way, they said; there is a day coming in which the Lord will set his people free from all the yokes of oppression, and from the oppressors.

Indeed my soul rejoiced in hearing the prophetic sayings of those good men. I thought I might live to see that day. Blessed be God, who has preserved my life to this day, and to this hour, to enjoy what they prayed for! They prayed to God to scatter the mists and fogs, that they might no longer cloud and darken men's minds, and hinder them from enjoying God's teaching. Blessed be God! That we are now in the enjoyment of the prayers of the faithful, who left the world before we were in it. Now the day has come that they prayed for, and inquired after.

How strangely does the man talk, some will say, concerning the Christian religion! The Christian religion is all over England. Go to any meeting in London, except one, and they will tell you they are Christians. I wish to God they were; that is the worst I wish for them all. But why should we talk of the Christian religion, without the Christian life? Except we find Christian life among them, what good is the name and profession of it? And the Christian doctrine is lacking in many places too. There are many in this city urging this very command, of loving God with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves, as fervently as I can do, or anybody else; and yet they will tell you, in the next breath, that no man in London, or in the world, can do this. No man can possibly love God with all his heart; a man cannot be found who can perform such an act, as to love his neighbor as himself. Not every neighbor, but some one choice associate he may pick out, that he can love, and bear with his infirmities and affronts, and love him as himself. Love your neighbor, that is, everybody, that there may be a good-will for all

people throughout the whole race of mankind. Peace on earth, good-will towards men. This is the fruit of the Gospel. Christian words will not make the Christian religion, there must be a Christian life; but where shall we find that, or seek it?

I know not, I have nothing to do to judge anybody; but there is One that judges, who lives the Christian life, and who does not? Who is this? I answer: The head of the Christian Church. Why, is He here? Yes, the Head of the Christian Church is here, and He speaks and gives sentence. If you have an ear, you may hear Him. If you will turn your mind inward, for He is an *inward* minister. Every one of you, if you will turn your minds inward, He will tell you whether you live a Christian life, and what kind of a life it is you live. If there is a drunkard here, let him ask whether his life is a Christian life. Will a man go away ignorant from this place, and have no answer? If there is a drunkard here, let him ask inwardly in his own bosom, Lord! is my life a Christian life? I dare affirm on God's behalf, he will hear an answer: "No! my life is not a Christian life, but a shameful, beastly life, a brutish one."

Who told you that the Head of Christians, Christ Jesus, is present —Christ Jesus, is He present?— How did He get here? He ascended up into heaven such a day, say they, how could He be here? Let Him be ascended up into heaven, yet He is not so ascended into heaven as not to be here also. How should He fulfill his promise, if He is limited in presence to heaven or earth? How should He make good his promise, if, when two or three are met together in his Name, He is not in the midst of them. Here are now many more than two or three met together in the Name of Christ, and that hope for acceptance with God, through the Mediator, Christ Jesus. If you think that there are two or three met together in this place in the name of Christ, it follows that Christ is in the midst of them.

I do not know what you are experiencing and enjoying now. Some may possibly say, I do not find any such presence of Christ; I hear of the presence

of Christ in the sacrament, and I have heard talk of the presence of Christ at a meeting; but I have been at many meetings, and I never found such a presence of Christ.

Can you read the scriptures? Yes, I can read the scriptures as well as you, but that cannot give me a sense of it; I do read the scriptures and believe it; but what signifies my reading the scriptures concerning the presence of Christ, if I do not have a sense of it? I have been at many a meeting, but never had the sense of such a divine presence as you talk of - nor it may be at the sacrament either. What is the reason you have no sense of it? If you will accept my counsel, and turn your mind inward, and inquire whether the thing I speak of is true, whether there is such a voice as I speak of, that will tell you what your state is. If you will be true to yourself, you may know the divine presence, and you may hear Christ speak.

The soul has eyes, and ears; just as the body does. What eyes does the apostle mean when he says: The god of this world has blinded the eyes of those who do not believe, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine in them? If the soul has eyes and ears, as well as the body, it can hear and see like the body. As the bodily eye can see visible things, so the eye of the soul can see things that are invisible, and heavenly. You can hear my voice outwardly, and you may hear the voice of Christ inwardly. I have known some who have been so afraid of hearing something bad about themselves, that they would not inquire. Some have been so guilty in their own consciences, that they have been afraid of hearing something bad, that they would not inquire about themselves. So it is inwardly; some have been so conscious that their life and conduct is not what it ought to be — that their life is a sinful life, that they do not dare bring it to question. It would certainly have been told them: "Your life is not a Christian life, you must mend your life, before you can ever come to have peace with God." If this should be your portion and mine, that upon search we should find our condition bad, what harm is it?

I would put one question to you; be serious in considering of it. We are all children of wrath by nature, none of us differ about that, and that unless we are born again, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God. The question is, whether I am one of those or not? Suppose upon inquiry it is discovered to me that I am not, that is bad enough; this is hard, but not so hard as it is true. This is the thing that I would have you consider:— Is it not better to know that I am still in a natural state, than to go on and perish to eternity? As long as there is life, there is hope; as long as a man is upon the earth, and taking care for his soul, and inquiring about the state of his immortal soul. If his soul is not in a good condition, is it not better for him to know it, and to seek for a cure? For no greater infirmity and misfortune can be upon man, than to have some occult and hidden disease, that he cannot be made sensible of; for this wastes and spoils him, and he cannot be persuaded to look out for a remedy. So it is inwardly; if a man is ignorant of his condition, and goes on to his dying day and hour, and does not seek after a remedy, this man perishes without any doubt.

When you are in this inquiry, be content to be controlled; be willing to have the truth spoken, though it is against yourselves. I could give many examples of what I have spoken of. If a man is satisfied that his life is not a Christian life; I say, if the swearer or liar, if the proud person, or the pleasure seeker, as soon as they come to be satisfied that their life is not a Christian life, that they now live, what can this man expect? What counsel should we give him, and what counsel should he take? I will continue in the way that I am in. What! After you know your life is not a Christian life? God forbid. Will you go on and perpetuate sin upon sin, and heap up wrath against the day of wrath? I am a sinner, my life is unchristian, I make account to live in sin, and die in sin. Is this good policy? Consider another text which our Lord spoke: If you die in your sins, where I go, you cannot come.

O Friends! lay these things to your hearts. What have I to do but to tell you that the love I have in my soul for you all, makes me desire in my heart that

you may be saved? This is the will of God, that you might all be saved, and come to the knowledge of the Truth. Blessed are those who know the Truth; the Truth as it is in Jesus. Truth in the inward parts, has a speaking voice; and if you hearken to it, it will tell you your state is not what it ought to be. Can you believe the Truth when he tells you so, that your state is bad, and that you are likely to go to eternal destruction, unless there is repentance and regeneration to prevent it? Can you believe this doctrine, when it sounds in your own heart? If you cannot believe it, unbelief will be your ruin.

The Spirit of Truth has come to convince the world of sin, because they do not believe in Christ; He tells them their condition, and they will not believe Him. The Spirit of Christ convinces men of sin, and they do not believe Him. The Spirit of Truth convinces you of your sin, but you do not believe Him. You love your pleasure and your profit, and your honor; then you do not love God with all your heart, and then you are not a Christian, but out of covenant with God. Are you sensible that your condition is bad; is it not best to get it changed? After we are convinced of our own sinful state, is it not our best course to seek to have it mended? Who shall mend, it? One person says — I have done all I can to mend my life, and I cannot mend it.

I had concluded so in my younger years; I had fasted, and prayed, and spent time in hearing, reading, and meditation, and did all in my own power, and all to mend my state; but I could not mend it. As I grew up in years, sin and corruption prevailed even more, and there was no help. I came so far as to believe there was no help, and that if God did not help me, I was undone to all eternity. I many times wished that I had never been born. I went to ministers and meetings, and to all sorts of separate people, and to all manner of ordinances, and to all manner of means, to mend this bad heart of mine, to see if I could obtain a power that would get me victory over my corruptions; but my arm was never so long as to reach to it; it was far out of my power and reach.

Many have sought to get this power of reforming their hearts and lives, to

attain it by their own hands, by their own endeavors, that they could never do it. They could never better their condition, nor bring forth fruit worthy of amendment of life. I wish that every one would have come to that impasse, that they did not know which way to turn them, that they had at last come to their wits' end. They will come to it sooner or later—the sooner the better. I have done all I can, I can do no more. I am at my wits' end, and I do not know what to think concerning my eternal state, I do know what to judge of it. I strive against my lusts and corruptions, but, for all that, they prevail upon me. Temptations come before me, but I cannot conquer them. O! I am glad when people have come to that impasse; that they do not know what to do, but despair of their own arms' abilities, of their own strength, and their own wit, and despair of all other help in the world; I am glad of that.

But I am not preaching up despair of God's grace and mercy; for let me tell you, when men despair of their own doings, and of all outward means and helps, then they are fit objects for the mercy of God, and not till then. When the Lord looked, and saw that there was none to save and deliver, then His own arm brought salvation. God will not save until then. God will not reveal his power until men have finished with their own power. They will never trust God, while they think they can do something for themselves. All the forms of religion, of the several people of this nation, will do them little good without the power.

What is the meaning of that principle, to have such masses, and prayers, and performances? What is the meaning of it? Let us search to the bottom. They say we are sinners, when we pray to God for his blessing and for salvation by Christ. There is this at the bottom: they think these duties and performances will be very helpful to their state, helpful towards the knowledge of it. To speak plain English, these are their gods. If I speak of profane and wicked people, I would say their lusts are their gods; but when I speak of [so called] righteous people who are mere formalists, then I say their duties, as they call them, are their gods. When all is said and done in their duties, their duties have done nothing for them; and then they have no gods at all. Then

they are godless; and if God does not help them, they are undone to all eternity.

When poor creatures are cast out, as it were, into the open field, to the loathing of their persons—When I passed by you, said the Lord, and saw you polluted in your own blood, I said unto you, live. When I passed by you, and looked upon you, behold, your time was a time of love, and I spread the corner of my robe over you, and covered your nakedness; yes, I swore unto you, and entered into covenant with you, said the Lord God, and you became mine. What! Was it a time of love when I was such an object in my own eyes, that I thought I was the most miserable creature in the world, one who could not make a good prayer, nor dispute for religion, nor perform any duty; a poor creature cast out into the open field, to the loathing of my person, having lost all that I had gained. My name was not among the living; my days were passed over in sorrow; and I said: "There is nothing but darkness, and death, and misery for me." I used all means, and tried all things, except a living trust in God, a trust in God alone, and that flesh and blood cannot do. Flesh and blood cannot know Him, therefore flesh and blood cannot trust in Him. Alas! I said, I cannot trust in the Lord, I cannot cast my soul, and all my concerns, my fame and reputation in the world, I cannot cast all upon the care of the Almighty; I cannot know Him, nor trust in Him. How can I do it? Nobody can do it! Those who know my Name, said the Lord, they will put their trust in Me. Never a truer word was spoken. But how does one know God, and trust in Him, says someone, I do not know.

When you once come to this impasse, to be at your wits' end, and not know which way to turn, nor to whom to run for help, or to ask counsel for your soul's welfare; when you have come to the end of all, and without hope, *then* God reveals himself by his son Jesus Christ. Christ, the Son of God, is known by our coming to Him; but none can come to Christ, except the Father who has sent Him, draws him. When you have finished with your gods, and thrown away your idols to the bats and moles, then you will find the Lord, and you will cry out: "O that God would have mercy upon me, and lift up the

light of his countenance upon me! I am a poor miserable creature!"

There are many who make such a whining and complaining, that they take pride in their very complaints, their hypocrisy is so great. I have known some who have prided themselves in wording their condition, and expressing their miserable case before the Lord. But suppose you cannot speak at all, but find yourself miserable, you cannot express your condition. At such a time as this God was drawing your soul to Christ Jesus, the mediator of it. I have heard of a mediator, and that there is balm in Gilead for me, that there is a physician there, that there is one physician, even Jesus Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant. You have sinned against Him, and grieved Him, yet he stands with open arms for you, ready to receive you, and embrace you. Where does He stand? He stands at the door and knocks; it is a small matter, one would think, to let Him in: (Rev 3:20) Behold, I stand at the door and knock, and if any man hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me. Here is good news for a hungry soul, if there are any such here. Christ the mediator, stands at the door and knocks. He will come in and sup with you, if you open to Him. Then we shall meet with the Lord's Supper. This is the Lord, I will wait for Him. He will bring his bread with Him, the Bread of Life, and the Wine of his kingdom; and the Lord's Supper will be celebrated without irrelevant distinctions and doctrinal arguing.

Now because we will not pervert the scripture, I would have you who understand books, read what commentators of this and former ages say upon this text; whether they do not give it as their opinions, that this knocking at the door, is Christ calling the soul by his grace; and that this door is the door of the heart, where Christ is calling the soul by his grace and Spirit, to let Him in by faith. This is their judgment and sense, and their sense is mine, and I believe the genuine sense of this text; that Christ would have people think He is near them, and would have them open their hearts, and receive Him by faith; for to be a savior to them.

[Some say] No! that, says flesh and blood, I cannot accept. I cannot consent to have Him for my savior. I will not let Him in, for He is like Micaiah to Ahab, He never spoke good concerning me. For, if I have Him for my savior, I must part with my lusts and pleasures. If there is any other savior, I will try that, and not meddle with Him. He will spoil all our merriment and good friendships. He will tell me that every idle word that I shall speak, I must give an account for in the day of judgment. What! do you think that I can like such a savior? That I can live with such a one as will call me to an account for every word I speak? And that, if I speak one idle word, judgment will come upon me? No, I will try one and another, rather than accept Him upon such terms. I am one who is joined to such a church, and enjoy such and such ordinances, and such helps. I am in covenant with God and under the seals of that covenant; I am baptized, and partake of the Lord's Supper, which is another seal of the covenant. I hope it will go well with me.

From the Word of the Lord within: "Those reluctant to look at their slavery say, 'Church me.'"

I will go one step further. Another said he must have a mediator: "I will go to the Virgin Mary, and offer something to her, and pray to her." Another says, "I will go to Saint James, and Saint John, and other Saints to intercede with God for me." They must have some mediator. This is the twisting and twining of the sons and daughters of men, to keep out Christ the great mediator, who came into the world for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. Alas! I have nothing left but my bare life and living in this world. I have nothing left me but some little desire I had to please God; and he will never judge and condemn me for that. But my false dealing, and buying and selling with deceit, He will judge this, and condemn me; and my discoursing of things without me; all my carnal friendship of the world, and my vain fashions; all this is corrupt and defiled; these He came on purpose to destroy. He came to destroy both the devil *and his works*.

What! can a man live in the world and never join with the devil? Never sin at

all? Never do anything that the devil would have him to do? There is no perfection in this world; no living without sin here. Then I am sure there is no unity with Christ here; and if there is no unity with Christ, then there is none with God the Father. What will become of you now? What will all the pleaders for that opinion say now? There is something that stands between God and me, and I shall never have peace. And what is that? It is sin. I would have my sin taken away, else I had better never have been born. Can you remove sin out of your heart? I have tried, but I cannot do it. I have heard of Christ the Mediator of the New Covenant. He said, He came into the world, and that for this purpose He was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Now sin in my heart is the devil's work, I will see if He will destroy that for me, I will trust and rely upon Him, and see if his great power can destroy it in me.

Here people come rightly to believe in Him whom God has sent, and to trust in Him; and He will take them in, and like a surgeon He will open their hearts, and let out their corruptions, though there has been ever so much rottenness; and He will heal them, and purify them, and pardon them, though they have been ever so wicked, **if they come to Him**. When your sins are set in order before you, then you cry out: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Is it God that has thought about me, and waited to be gracious, and has put up with my sins so long? How wonderful is his patience towards me! All these things working in the soul, tend to beget a love to God, and fervent desires to be cleansed and purified from sin, and earnest prayer to the Lord, to kindle the holy fire, that would burn it up. The more the soul trusts in Christ, the more this heavenly fire burns up our lusts; and *then* a man feels a great change in his mind. The things, he said, that I delighted in, are now grievous to me! I hope I shall never be found in those things again; my mind is now taken off them. Who took it off? Did you not strive before to take it off? I did, but I could not do it.

There are many, I believe, in this assembly before the Lord, who are my

witnesses in this matter, that when they came to Christ the mediator, He changed their minds, and He untied the devil's fetters. They were tied to their sins and lusts; but He has unloosed them. They are ashamed of those things that they formerly took pleasure in. What benefit, said the Apostle, did you have in those things, of which you are now ashamed? So I say: "What pleasure do you have in sporting, and gaming, and drinking, and company-keeping? What pleasure do you have to think on your unrestrained conversations? What pleasure do you have in pride and vanity? What pleasure in wrath and bitterness of mind? And what pleasure in malice and envy? What pleasure do you have in these things of which you are now ashamed?" So far as you are convinced, you are ashamed to think of them. I am ashamed to think that the devil at such a time, by such a temptation, should prevail over me.

I wish to God you all would come to this; to be ashamed; that you might remember your past evil ways and actions, with sorrow and shame. There is a secret joy in this. Surely it is better to be ashamed than to continue in impudence. God has wrought this change at last; and who shall have the glory of it? God shall have the glory of it, for his own works will praise Him. What men do, many times they do for their own praise; but when they are at their wits' end, and do not know what to do, they cast themselves upon their Maker, to see if He will have mercy upon them. If not, they must perish. Then, for what He does, He gets the glory and the praise.

There are some here, who are bound to praise God while they have a day to live, for what He has done for them. They could never have loved God with all their hearts; but they would have continued strangers to God; and the devil would have led them captive at his will;—they would not have loved God with all their hearts, had not God first shed abroad his love upon their hearts, and constrained them to love Him. It is He that has first loved them, and wrought in them both to *will* and to do his own good pleasure.

Whatever we are, we are by the grace of God. This grace is magnified in those who believe and obey the Gospel. My friends, we know there is so

much peace and pleasure in the ways of God, so much soul-satisfaction in walking with God, and in loving Him with all our hearts, that I should be glad if every one of you were of the same mind, and had experience of it. We labor diligently for this purpose, and we would set before you these two things.

First, How we may come to know our miserable state by nature.

And, What a blessed and happy state they are in, who have been converted and changed; who have been translated out of the kingdom of darkness, into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Consider your state by nature is evil; we hope that many of you believe the reports of the gospel, concerning the goodness of the Lord, his great love in sending his Son into the world, to seek and to save you who were lost; and that you believe in Him. And we are persuaded, that by the foolishness of preaching God will save some of you, that you may be his redeemed ones, and trust to no other savior. For there is not any name under heaven, but the name of Jesus, by which you can be saved. Only He can take away the sins of the world; his Spirit, which he promised to send into the world when He was leaving it, searches the heart, and tries the mind. Now I dare proclaim that Holy Spirit, to be the Spirit of the God of heaven, who now sees what resolution you are of, and what you are now proposing to do; whether to continue in sin, or to return to God. This I can speak without blasphemy; it is God's Spirit who searches the heart, and knows your thoughts and purposes, and convinces you of your sin. God has sent his Son Christ Jesus into the world to enlighten you, that by his light you may see Him, and that by his grace you might receive Him, and that by his grace you might be saved.

To Him I commit you all, and these words that we have spoken in the evidence are a demonstration of the Spirit, according as He wrought in us.
Amen.

His Prayer after Sermon

MOST glorious, infinite, Powerful Father! Who has created us, and given us life and breath, and lengthened out our time to this day, and have long waited to be gracious to us, and are still waiting upon the sons and daughters of men, bringing forth the hand of your love, and offering your grace and tender salvation to them, and has brought a day of visitation upon the inhabitants of this city and nation.

Glory, praise and thanksgiving be to you, Lord, that by your power you have inclined the hearts and consciences of the sons and daughters of men, to submit to you, and bow their necks to the blessed and easy yoke of your Son Jesus Christ, that they may do your will on earth, as it is done in Heaven. They are travailing, and distressed, and afflicted in their souls because of their bondage; arise, living Father, and reveal and discover your power to them; show them the exceeding greatness of your power, that they may trust in it and be safe; make bare your arm for their salvation. Those who are slumbering in their profession, let them be awakened; and bring to your heavenly kingdom those who have passed through your refining fire, whom you have cleansed and sanctified.

Powerful Father of Life! Carry on your work among your people everywhere. Gather those who are scattered, and bring them back to yourself, those who are wandering and out of the way, and seeking the living among the dead. Lord, teach them and let them hear a voice behind them, and guide them to the holy mountain; that they may be brought to the path of life, and to the place which you have provided for your little flock to meet and feed together, offering unanimously the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving, which you have ordained and appointed in your house.

Blessed and powerful Father! Be pleased to surround all your little ones with your Almighty Power; and wherever they are, let them feel your preserving hand, delivering them from the evil of the world. We do not pray that you

should take them out of the world, but to preserve them from the defilements and pollutions of it, that holy people may serve you the holy God, and bear your holy name upon their hearts; that so it may be exalted and magnified above all, and humble thanksgivings and praises, may be given to you, through Jesus Christ, for all your love you have manifested, and for your abounding mercies, and renewed favors which we have received at your hands. To you, living Father, through Jesus Christ, your well-beloved Son, in whom you are well pleased, be all honor, praise and dominion rendered by us and all your people, from now on, and forever. Amen.



SCRIPTURE TRUTHS DEMONSTRATED IN THIRTY-TWO SERMONS, OR DECLARATIONS OF STEPHEN CRISP

Published in 1707

Text in [Light Blue](#) or **[bold Light Blue](#)** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

Quaker ministers, such as Stephen Crisp, served without pay and never spoke from a prepared text or notes. All Quaker ministers were like Stephen Crisp, having no particular meeting to which they attended, but rather traveled from meeting to meeting to deliver their messages of encouragement, exhortation, and reproof. Steven Crisp is reputed to have visited almost every meeting in England and Scotland. Most meetings were without anyone able to speak a sermon with words supplied by the Spirit; rather several members would be prompted by the Spirit to stand in turn and present a specific teaching. The Quaker ministers only spoke and prayed under the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit of God. All sermons were unrehearsed and completely extemporaneously inspired. Although George Fox methodically had several of his sermons recorded by a Friend, Quakers one hundred years later shunned records of sermons, believing they were only meant for a particular time and audience. For that reason, there are very few recorded sermons preserved. These sermons were recorded in shorthand at three different meeting houses in London. This book of thirty-two sermons by Stephen Crisp was published by a non-Quaker in 1707. These sermons were never republished for Stephen Crisp

had fallen out of favor with the 18th Century Quakers, probably because his message so plainly shows those having fallen short of the rest.

You can see the original form by [clicking here](#). For a description of a early Quaker worship service, see [Proper Worship](#).

From the anonymous transcriber of these sermons, with initials N. C. :

Though the transcriber of these sermons does out of modesty decline to print his name, he does assure the reader, that he has not in the least altered or imposed upon the preacher's sense, either in the taking or transcribing of the words. And he does further declare, that he neither is, nor ever was, one of the people called Quakers, but always of another persuasion. Yet being willing, according to the Apostle's rule, to try all things, he has sometimes been present at their meetings; and having the skill of short-writing, he has taken many of their sermons and prayers from the mouth of several of their preachers; and among others those of Stephen Crisp, deceased; which, upon review, appeared to him, as well as to eminent persons of another sect, to contain some many Gospel Truths, delivered with such plainness, zeal, and demonstration, and generally agreeable to the known doctrines of Christianity, that it is hoped the publishing of them may be useful to the world.

Note, the above anonymous author of this book was not a Quaker, yet he heard such profound truths declared, he went to the trouble of recording each word, and then publishing this book — in hopes *they may be useful to the world*. And so they most definitely are.

These sermons are some of the strongest, most straight-forward, informative appeals that I have ever encountered. Clearly Stephen Crisp's gift of ministry from the Lord was to exhort those not yet in the Kingdom of

God, to raise their efforts in denying themselves on the inward cross and seeking the further grace of God to bring them to the finish of the race and abundantly enter God's kingdom. Don't fail to read the prayers at the conclusion of several sermons; they are wonderful.

When you read these sermons, realize he was speaking to those who had already been convinced that hearing the word of God from within their hearts and that obeying it was basic to salvation; that salvation came with cleansing, purity, perfection, and holiness through the power of God worked by God in a man; that self-denial with obedience to the commands of God was the cross; and that with the true hope, and thinking on the name of Jesus, silently listening for the voice and watching for the light's revelations, with resulting obedience to all commands heard and understood, was the basis of spiritual progress. To those content outside the Kingdom, Crisp's words are strong exhortations to renew their energy given to the good fight of faith, to seek God with all their heart and soul.

Text in [brackets] has been added by the site editor.

And, if you haven't read Stephen Crisp's memoir, it is available for you to enjoy one of the most descriptive narratives of the journey to God ever recorded.

Sermon I

The Great Mediator of the Everlasting Covenant

**Preached at Grace-Church-Street [meeting house], April
25,1688**

My Friends,

How should we all admire the workings of the Holy Ghost. You may know from your own experience, that all the operations of the Holy Spirit, from the beginning, have been for the cleansing, and purifying, and preparing you for the kingdom of God. This experience is given to a little remnant, to know that the manner of his working, that the end, aim and design, of all the operations of his power, is for our good, and in order to our eternal happiness.

Now, this is a great engagement upon the minds of the people of God, diligently to wait upon him,* that they may be shown more and more into the mystery of life and salvation, that has been hidden from ages and generations, and is now revealed by his spirit.

[*In all thirty-two of Stephen Crisp's sermons, there is no explanation on *how to wait on God*. To wait on God is to persistently sit in humble silence, listen for his voice and words, watch for his revelations, hear his commands, and then obey Him; only those who heed and obey Him receive eternal salvation. Heb 5:9.

It is a cross to a man's will to sit waiting on God, silently listening, struggling to keep his mind from wandering; it is a cross to a man's will to obey what he is commanded and taught by the Holy Spirit; **this is the cross of which you must** deny yourself and pick it up every day, to then follow Jesus. **To obey his voice and light is to follow Jesus.** This is how to do what you have prayed for a thousand times: *thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*. You cannot be his disciple unless you pick up your cross daily and follow his orders. Salvation is only received by those who follow the lamb wherever he goes — who obey

completely the voice of the Lord, in whatever he commands. Do not be discouraged if you don't hear for some time. Even your waiting is to your credit: Let your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, in proportion to our waiting and hoping on you. Psalms 33:22.

To listen in humble silence and hear, the following is what I have been taught by the Lord:

- Begin by thinking on the name of Jesus, (but not over and over). If your chair has arms on it, rest your elbows on the arms, put your hands together as for prayer, and rest them in light contact with your mouth, chin, or nose.
- Force yourself to smile and **hold the smile**. Smiling will chase the worries away, which is what 90% of thoughts are. A smile releases endorphins and serotonin, making it easier to relax and drop thoughts. When you find yourself sunk in a stream of worries, or stuck in reviewing the horribleness of your past sins, (after you have once confessed regret over them), a forced smile will break those thought patterns, allowing you to refocus your mind on waiting, watching, and listening for the Lord to speak.
- Close your mouth and breathe through your nose as long as it is clear; breathing through the mouth makes your carnal thoughts easier to come. I was taught this by the Lord. This is true when waiting or in normal activities.
- Not only listen, **but watch** — watch the light on your closed eyelids; **cut your eyes to the upper right. Keep watching what is in your sight, however little, and it will keep your mind still.** By watching, you keep your mind still, and listening is natural with a quiet mind. Your mind is busy watching and so cannot think.

- Breathe slowly and deeply. Slow breathing makes thinking more difficult. While *breathing in* slowly and deeply, focus on feeling the upper right of your head; and while *breathing out* slowly, focus on looking for light at the upper right of your head, (45 ° angle up). Each time you breathe out, look further to the right, (but without twisting your head).
- After you have expelled the air from your lungs, without immediately breathing in, hold your breath for a few seconds. You will feel a pressure in your head; don't resist it, latch onto it, and when you breathe back in, hold onto that pressure because it can help you maintain silence. With practice you can hold onto that pressure throughout your waiting time.
- Be ready to reject thoughts and visions that the devil throws in randomly to cause your mind to wander; to reject thoughts before being lost in thought is hard, but it becomes easier with practice. The Lord never brings up a sin for which you have already expressed regret and stopped doing; but the devil throws up visions of your past experiences to cause your distress and loss of focus. The devil also brings up a subject of your interest and then proceeds talk about that subject tempting you to listen to his garbage talk; and like little dreams, he can set you up with sexual temptations. You can stop this garbage by returning to **watching to the upper right**.
- To get started, (or to restart when you find yourself lost in thought), breathe out stopping for a few seconds to catch the pressure. Smile. Breathe in, feeling the upper right of your head. Then breathe out again watching to the upper

right.

For more on how to successfully wait, watch, listen and hear, see the web page, [How to Benefit from the Changing Power of God by Waiting on the Lord.](#)]

And those who are thus exercised with the measure of grace given to them, grow and increase in holiness and righteousness, by the working of it; and they increase in knowledge in the great things of the law, and the mysteries of the kingdom of grace. By the eye that God has opened, they discern that the working of his power in all ages has been for the extirpating, rooting out, and destroying of that root of iniquity, which has brought forth such a crop of sin and wickedness, which was not of his planting, nor of his creating.

For, from the beginning of the creation of God, unto this day, God has had a singular love and favor to the sons and daughters of men, as being (as, I may say) the masterpiece, or greatest piece of the creation, most nearly related to himself, created in his own image, in righteousness and holiness; and in that they now are not so, but marred, and spoiled from bearing the heavenly image, is not the Lord's doing, but has been wrought by the enemy both to God and man. Yet the Lord continuing his love to the work of his hands, has from age to age revealed and made known his power, for the restoring and bringing back again lost man, fallen man, sinful man, to be reconciled to him who he may, as was intended, enjoy and possess the love and favor of his Maker; but there was no profitability found for his reconciliation with the holy God, except by making him holy. For as the making him unholy, separated him from his Maker, so the making of him holy again, would unite him again unto his Maker. So that there must be a way and means for the reducing of him to his primitive state, before he could enjoy and obtain his primitive enjoyments; that is, the love and favor of God. And there has been a general universal sense upon the sons and daughters of men of this alienation and estrangement from God; and they have put themselves upon many ways and methods to obtain reconciliation, and to try if they could

restore themselves. They have sought ways and tried and proved the inventions and imaginations of their own minds, in their fallen wisdom, what they might do to please God, and be reconciled to him.

We are sinners, and we will sacrifice, we will bring a sacrifice for our sins; and when men have brought a sacrifice, it has not been accepted because there has not been a Mediator known, who might mediate for them with the Lord; so that all the sacrifices they have offered, have never being accepted with him, in order to obtain an atonement and reconciliation. Now only those who have a relation to the Mediator by faith in him, does he intercede for, so that he might present them again to God; and this has been the difference between sacrificer and sacrifice, from the days of Cain and Abel to this day. Some have had a relation to the Mediator in all their services and sacrifices, and some have had a relation only to the thing offered and the service performed; but they have not in all ages been alike. Those whose service and worship was performed to God with a relation to the Mediator, have found acceptance; and those whose worship and service was performed only with a relation to the thing offered or done, which was simply their own act and was only their will-worship, were always short and it was turned back again upon them *for there is no name given under Heaven, by which any can be saved, but only the name of Jesus Christ*; who is the Mediator of the new covenant, for which the old one was broken. When Aaron was set up to be an high-priest to God, he was appointed to offer sacrifices for the sins of the people, and he who committed a sin, was appointed by the law to bring a he-goat of the flock to the door of the tabernacle and to deliver it to the priest; and he was to make an offering for the sin committed after such and such a manner, and it was to be an atonement with God for him. So here was seemingly, a reconciliation by a sacrifice; and some saw no further than the bringing of a goat, and a ram, and the performance of the priest's office, and they counted all was well. And others saw further, long before the apostle spoke or wrote it, *that it was not the blood of bulls or goats, nor the blood of a ram that could purge away sin from their consciences*. And after the apostle had opened the mystery of divinity, who had a divine and

spiritual skill, in unfolding the restoration of mankind, he declared plainly, *that when the offering was made by Aaron for sinners, even then there remained still a consciousness of sin; for it was not profitable that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.* So that their outward performances, and their outward services, only pointed out the Mediator; they had a pointing finger, as it were, to the real, true and everlasting Mediator, Christ Jesus, who is made a Mediator between God and man; so that by and through him, man might be again reconciled to God.

So that now in these gospel-days, in which God is opening the mysteries of life and salvation, to the intent and purpose that the sons and daughters of men might be restored again into their primitive enjoyment of the favor of God; now in these days, it is the duty of all Christians, and of all who are seeking the welfare of their immortal souls, to have their eyes and hearts to Jesus, as to one who is able to reconcile them to God; to him it is committed, to him wisdom and power is committed, and to him authority is committed, that he should be an everlasting high-priest; and that all the services, and all the worships and religious performances that people offer up to God, should be in his name, so that by him they might be recommended to God. For no one will find acceptance with the Father, unless in all their performances, they have an eye to him.

So that it comes plainly to pass, according to that short and confident assertion of the author to the Hebrews, that *without faith it is impossible to please God.* But it is possible to offer sacrifices without faith, and possible for people to perform religious services without faith, as woeful experience has taught us in our days, that many have been exercised in a kind of religious service, who never in their lives had faith enough to believe the things that they prayed for; and so they were without faith. When people pray to God to send his Holy Spirit into their hearts, so that they may keep his commandments to their lives end, and do not have faith to believe it, and when they pray, *Your will be done on earth, as it is done in Heaven,* **it is only a religious performance;** and if it is not done in faith, it is only an

increase in sin and an addition to sin. Where is the man who is exercised in praying to God who believes that what he prays for is ever likely to come to pass? Go where you will in this or another nation, and inquire of people about their faith; they believe there is no possibility of extirpating and rooting out of sin while they live upon the earth; therefore all their prayers for it are vain, and their faith is a vain faith. And it is high time in such a day as this, when men are faithless and unbelieving, to preach up the object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ. People are of many faiths, and of many beliefs; but we have found by experience, that they do them no good, they do not bring a thing to pass, that of necessity must be brought to pass, before they can be reconciled to God; *their faith does not cleanse the heart*, nor extend so far as to believe that they ever shall be cleansed; in all the worship and religion that they perform, they do not come to this faith: that they shall be made clean. All they do is done only in sin and uncleanness; they cannot bring a clean sacrifice out of an unclean vessel. And our Lord Jesus Christ said concerning this subject: *an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit*; but there must be good fruit brought forth; how must we do it? *Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good*. When men's vain talk about religion and religious presumption come to an end, then all this religion will appear to be in vain, and will not answer the end for which it is performed, until men believe that it will make the tree good, and *cleanse the heart*, and transform men by *renewing the spirit of their minds*. So that religion must begin *within*; and it is not our changing of forms of worship, from one form to another, and taking up this and the other opinion, that results in the change of our hearts. Sad experience teaches us, that men may carry over their old lusts into a new religion; we can carry over our old inclinations into our new opinions. For though *the form of worship* is changed, the heart remaining unchanged and the lusts unmortified, their religion is in vain whatever their persuasion.

This great calamity has overspread all sorts of people, for there is no sort of people, but that there are those among them who are under this great calamity, of holding the profession of god useless with an ungodly mind, and

the profession of truth with a false and treacherous spirit. The remedy to this great calamity is the single way that all men are brought off from having their eye to their performances, and to the doctrines and tenets that they hold, and do, as the apostle said: fix their eye upon Christ, and look upon Jesus. This is the first thing that must begin our religion, for Christ must be the Alpha of our religion, as well as the Omega of it. If I do not begin there, let me begin where I will, I begin wrong. If I should begin at the most serious and sound doctrine, and at the most apostolic religion; if Christ and his apostles were here upon the earth; if I walked among them; if I believed all they said and did, I would begin wrong, unless I fixed my eye upon Jesus Christ, who is the taker away of sin, and is the sanctifier of the soul by his Spirit. There must be the beginning, and there must be the conclusion; he is the author, and the finisher of all true faith. There are authors of other faiths. Men have their different faiths, and creeds, and articles, and they have exposed and imposed them too; but this is the worst of it, none of them are right. Let them be exposed and imposed with ever so much force and violence, none of these will cleanse the heart; but that faith which is delivered over by Christ Jesus, who has the quality of cleansing and purifying; that is the faith when all is done, that will do the work; that is it that will save and sanctify, and do the business that all the world is about. Everyone would have a reconciler with God, and sin rooted out, and be as God would have them be; this is the public profession of Christendom; at least they would wish to find out something by which it might be done. Although many are willing enough to continue in sin and drunkenness, whoredom, lying, and hypocrisy; these are a sort of fools, who make a mockery of sin, and who swim in the streams of pleasure; and what worry do they have, so long as they make a profession of Christianity?

But I am speaking about a people who are struggling under their corruptions; who would mortify sin, and serve God in holiness and righteousness, and do God's *will on earth as it is done in Heaven*; and do it not in form, but would have power to do it; and they have tried several ways to do it, and it is not done; and many have been at this work until gray hairs

are upon their heads, and it is still not done. Now God has given Christ to make reconciliation. How can we, who have the love of God extended to us, but extend our goodwill to our friends, and signify to them that all the travail and pains they are at, and all the prayers they make, will do nothing until they have their faith fixed upon Jesus, who is able to save and deliver them, and *save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.*

[To *saved* is to be *delivered*. To be *delivered* is to be freed from the bondage of sin. Therefore, to be *saved* is to be freed from the bondage of sin. Salvation is to be delivered from sin, to be delivered from evil, like you continually pray for: ***deliver us from evil***, for yours is the kingdom, the power, and glory forever.]

But here some will object and say, it is true what you say, but is it not needful to preach such doctrines to us for we all believe in Christ, that is, the only Mediator and Savior. We know that Christ Jesus is the only Mediator, and that unless he commends us to God, we cannot be accepted by him. This is our general doctrine; therefore what need is there for your urging and pressing upon us, who have come into the faith already.

Let me search into the matter; it is of greater importance than to search into a bargain of worldly things. Men would willingly have others open and discover to them in what they may be cheated, to prevent their being imposed on in a worldly bargain. I hope then they will listen to know how, and in what they may be deceived by themselves, and deceived by others in matters of eternal concerns. There are no Protestants, but they reject any Mediator except Jesus Christ, and believe that no Mediator can reconcile them to God, but Christ alone, and they say he is the object of their faith. I would ask them this question, whether they believe in Christ at a distance, or as present, *really present* with them? Is their faith historical and at a distance, that they believe in Christ, as one born of the Virgin Mary and was crucified and dead before they were born, and arose again, and ascended

into Heaven, and is set at the right hand of God? If the reason of my belief is: that I have heard of this history of Christ; or whether the reason is: because by his Spirit, he has visited me in this age. The one is, I believe, because good men have told me so; but the other is, I believe, because, by his Spirit he had promised to send, to lead me into all truth, he has visited me. Now let me examine whether I am aware of such a spiritual visitation, by this quickening Spirit, which is the Lord *from* Heaven, and not only the Lord *in* Heaven. Whether I am aware of such a quickening power and virtue, which I have received upon my spirit, that he is not only at the right hand of God on high in Heaven, but has now come to knock at the door of my heart, and has raised in me a life; as opposite to sin, as his was. Let me consider if I am aware of a secret touch of his quickening virtue upon my soul, by which he has begotten me into a life opposite to sin; so that if sin remains, it remains as a burden, and oppression upon me, so that I am a sufferer; for as much as I am quickened, and made sensible of a better life, of a godly life, I would willingly be at it, and live in it, but iniquity, lust, and corruption lie in the way. He who has quickened me so far, as to bring me to a sense of the burden of sin, and my faith tells me that he will take the burden off, else my faith will do me no good, if corruption still prevails upon me. If my faith tells me this, it will tell the wickedest man in the world as much; but if my faith tells me I am a sinner, and my sins consist of this and the other evil thing I do, and am inclined to do, it tells me again that he that has quickened me, and brought me to a sense of sin, so he can take the burden off from me.

Here now is a true faith that begins in conviction, and ends in true conversion; this is the word of faith, delivered to the saints, and which we are to preach. They said of old, that the word of faith, they had to preach, was that which was near in their mouth, that they might receive it, and do it. I have something near that reproves me for sin; if I am obedient to it, then faith gives me victory over that which is sinful, for which the world reproves me; and I see faith gives me victory over any corruption, which I have been struggling under, I am encouraged to fix my faith upon him who has thus quickened me. So that this is the difference between faith in Christ at a

distance, and faith that quickens [makes God's spirit come alive in me] me by God's Spirit; which Spirit has been so much slighted in our days, by the highest notionists in our age; they supposed it to be a mere fiction; some have mocked and derided, and others have been discouraged from speaking of the Spirit of Christ and his operation upon their souls. Some have declared both in the press and pulpit, that they have had no experience of the touches of God's Spirit upon their souls. But our experience has brought us to another degree of knowledge. We know, and you may know if you please, and that before you sleep, that there is a way opened; God has made way for his Spirit to reach the spirits of men, to signify immediately to their spirits without another instrument: in this you do wrong, and in this you may have life, and seek after it. Now the Spirit that thus works is the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit that proceeds from the Father and the Son, which voice in men tells them they might believe and be saved. When he comes, faith, Christ, he will lead you into all truth. How shall the world know this is he? He shall convince them of sin. If there is any conviction that arises in man of this and that sin, it must be from the way the Holy Spirit has upon their spirits; he has a way to speak to men, and everyone that is a lover of his own soul, is bound to hearken to that voice.

In the latter days, said the Lord, when I shall raise a prophet in the midst of you, whoever will not hear that prophet, shall be cut off. All commentators agree on this text, that that prophet was Christ Jesus; it was not John the Baptist, nor Paul, nor Peter; but Christ who was promised to be raised. There was such an absolute command that went along with that prophecy, that *all should hear him*, and it had a threatening at the end of it, that *all that who will not hear him shall be cut off*. Are they not whoremongers, and drunkards, and liars, who will not hear this prophet? They will not hear him, because they love their sins. What becomes of them? They are cut off from the enjoyment of the love and favor of God, and when they draw near to God in prayer, and other religious exercises, it is with them, as it was with *Cain, sin lies at the door*. When they come into a storm at sea, or are arrested with sickness, and death looks them in the face, they

would have peace, but there is distress, and trouble instead. What is the matter? Were you not baptized in the Christian faith? Did not the minister tell you that you are a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven? Alas! My sin lies at my door. O! That I had time to live a better life! What ails your life, man? My life has been a life of deceit, lust, and vanity, corruption and hypocrisy. Did your teacher not teach you, that a believer has no guilt upon him, but that all his sins are pardoned from the day he became a believer? This doctrine will not hold in a storm, though it will do in fair weather; when men are swimming in their pleasures, it will serve them; but when they come to deal with their Maker, no faith will serve them, but that which purifies the heart, and that which makes a change from the earthly image to the heavenly.

It would be better for you and I, and every one of us, to take these things into consideration while we have health and strength, and while some sand (as I may so speak) is in our glasses [hour glasses - time], to consider what is my faith? What is the object of it? Have I a dependency upon my duties, and alms, and good deeds? They will fail me. But if my dependency is upon Christ as a savior, and a sanctifier; and if my sanctification is carried on gradually, he who has begun a good work in me will perfect it. And if the reason of my going to meetings, and going into my room, and bowing myself before the Lord, is to keep close to him who carries on the work of sanctification, I cannot expect to live in the world, except I shall meet with temptations; the devil will tempt me, but my Savior will be near me, as near to me as the Devil can be; if I will keep close to him, he will keep close to me. *My Father, said Christ, is greater than I, and none is able to pluck you out of your Father's hands.* I must expect to be tempted; *for the adversary, the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* Alas, said one, though I have made some progress in the work of sanctification, yet for all that, he may one day betray me. Have I grown strong enough to resist his temptations? Am I wise enough to foresee all his tricks and traps, which he leaves to ensnare me? But I know who can see them, and defeat them. I have my faith fixed upon one who can bind the strong man, and cast

him out. The life that I now live, is not in my own parts, and by my own understanding and sense; *but the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God.* This is that faith that gives me victory. The apostle had a battle for it; *I have fought the good fight; and henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, and not for me only, but for all those who love the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ;* and who come to have familiarity with Christ, with his Spirit and truth, with his grace and word, in their hearts. Though these are several expressions, they all signify one immortal seed of life, by which men are united to God. It is a leaven there, to leaven them into the divine nature.

Whenever such a one is tempted, he does not resist the tempter in his own power, but he waits to feel the risings of that life, and power, and virtue that was in Christ Jesus, and is in him still. He waits for that power, that in the name of Christ, he may say, *get behind me Satan.* Being fortified by Christ's name, and armed with his power, what is it that a Christian cannot do? What valiant, noble and wonderful things have they done, who have been shielded with this faith? See the eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews. All the repetitions of that chapter, from one end to the other; in all of them the apostle ascribes all the bravery and courageousness of those noble acts, to the power of faith. They looked to Jesus, before ever the Virgin Mary brought him forth out of her body. The prophets did earnestly seek to know those things, which the Spirit of Christ that was in them, did signify unto them, that there was to be this great Prophet, before ever the Virgin Mary was born. So that Christ was always the object of a true believer's faith. Though under the law, they had a high-priest, and he was placed at the altar, and they had offerings burnt upon it, yet they had an eye to Christ, they had an undervaluing of all that their sacrifices could do for them. *If you would have had burnt offerings,* said David, *I would have given them; I would not have withheld them from your altar; you should have had enough of them.* He was bold to say, in respect to acceptance and reconciliation, *burnt offerings and sacrifices you did not desire; but a body you have prepared*

me; for it is written in the volume of the book, I come to do your will, O God. He had an eye to Jesus who was to come, upon whom help was said to come, that there was a Redeemer who would come from Zion, and a law-giver from Jerusalem. They had an eye beyond sacrifices, to Christ. In all ages the people of God have had the answer of their souls, which is reconciliation, and the favor of God. Those who had this answer, never had it except by Christ. No man can be accepted with God, can ever have the desire of his soul answered in peace and reconciliation with God, until his faith is placed on Christ Jesus. Neither can any man have faith in Christ at a distance, and by this be reconciled to God, but must know his Spirit. I must have an experiential knowledge of his power and wisdom, and I cannot have this without his Spirit. Let me believe ever so traditionally, unless I have the Spirit of Christ, it will do me no good, it will be no advantage to me.

This is the word that was in my heart as a well-wisher to the souls of all men. As God has given goodness to my soul so I cannot but wish well to the souls of others; that, as he has found a way for my redemption and salvation, so likewise I wish the same for others who are bondmen and bond-women, and under the power of their corruption. God's work has been to destroy the bondage and the oppression, and to destroy the tyrant that reigns over the souls of people; God having made them for his glory, and the devil has stolen them away, so that they do not do what pleases God. But God's good pleasure is, *that all men may be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth. And God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him would not perish, but have everlasting life.* And he is called, *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.* He can take away sin; if my sin does not obstruct my faith and confidence in him, he will take it away; and if he takes that away, then he makes the tree good. Nothing hinders us from the enjoyment of God, but sin; and if Christ will take it away by the blood of his cross, no matter for all the scorn, contempt, hardship, reproach and persecution of this world; no matter, for he has not deceived us, but told us beforehand, if we would be followers of him, and be led by him, we must expect these things; sufferings, reproaches,

persecutions, disdain and envy. These things do not come uncertainly upon us for the world loves its own, and cannot love those who are not of it; but those who are not of the world, may be brought to the terms of God, and they may not be any longer in the world. Christ did not pray that his disciples would be taken out of the world, but kept from the evil. So that Christ is a Mediator, and a propitiation for all men, and he is working by his Spirit for the redemption of all men, that to as many as believe in him, to them he gives power *to become* the Sons of God.

The sum of all this is, that we have an opportunity put into our hands; we cannot deny it; you must all upon search, confess, that the grace of God often works in your hearts against any corruption, against any evil. Let not this price be put into your hands in vain, as into the hands of fools. If I knew that this and that was a sin, I would leave it; let us be of that mind, and we shall soon know it; and then say, if I knew such a thing to be a sin, and could get a thousand pounds [sterling] by it, I would not do it. Why should you love sin for profit or pleasure? I am sure it is an ill bargain when it is done. Whatever I am convinced is a sin, I will not do it.

Resolve upon this, and then the grace of God will be at work; we shall soon see that we must leave sinning. There is such a thing I must leave; God has set up a judgment in my mind against it; though it brings profit and pleasure, away it must go. Here is a step, a following step to follow Christ. He who will deny himself will follow Christ. My Redeemer shows me this to be an evil; I will not do it, but follow him, and imitate him. Here the soul is led step by step, even by Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, until it is gradually cleansed from sin, and reconciled unto God; and this can be done by no other means, for prayers and alms will not do it, all that can be done by us will not do it; none can do it but Christ alone, whom God has commanded to be your help, so that you may all wait for the divine operation of his grace in your hearts. That is what we labor and travail for, as knowing that God has wrought wonderfully by it, for the redemption of all those who love him more than they love their pleasures, more than they



Sermons by Stephen Crisp Continued

Text in [Light Blue](#) or **[bold Light Blue](#)** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

Quaker ministers, such as Stephen Crisp, served without pay and never spoke from a prepared text or notes. [Like the Apostles, the Quaker ministers only spoke or prayed under control of the Holy Spirit of God.](#) All sermons were unrehearsed and completely extemporaneous. The early Quakers frowned on recording the spontaneous words of a sermon, believing they were meant for that time and audience only. For that reason, there are very few recorded sermons of the countless delivered. Steven Crisp's sermons were recorded in shorthand by a non-Quaker, who found his speaking to be particularly inspiring and instructive. For a description of a early Quaker worship service, see [Proper Worship](#).

Sermon IV

THE STANDARD OF TRUTH

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, on July 29, 1692

There is a universal standard of truth, that God has set up over all the sons and daughters of men; he has given the knowledge of it in and through Jesus Christ; he has dealt it out to them, that they may be capable of joining and adhering to the truth, and to be delivered from eternal condemnation.

This standard and measuring-rule is revealed and manifested in every man and woman, by the light that shines in their hearts, by which they are able to discern, and give a sound judgment (if they are only willing) upon all their own ways. A man or woman may know in every word they speak, in every action they do, whether they speak, or do, according to the truth, or whether they are justified by the truth, in what they speak and do.

I tell you, my friends, this is no small mercy, that mankind has obtained at the hand of his Maker, that he is brought into a capacity of not acting blindfolded, but that he may see his way, and his own inclinations, and pass judgment upon them, whether they are good or evil. Whether they will stand justified in the sight of his Maker, or whether they will be condemned.

I confess, the veil of ignorance, that is come over the sons and daughters of men, through sin, transgression, and rebellion, is very great. And I may say, as the apostle said, sometime you were in darkness. And what can darkness see? What can darkness discover? the Lord our God, that made us, has not left us in that state of darkness, blindness and ignorance, but through the riches of his mercy and goodness, has found out a way, to command that light should shine out of darkness, into peoples hearts, for all that the Devil did to darken man, to alienate and estrange him from his Maker.

The same Almighty Power, that said in the creation, let there be light, and it was so; he has shined into our hearts, and the way by which he has done so, is through the mediator, through Jesus Christ the Redeemer, in whom the fullness of the God-head dwells. He has received power from his Father, not only to be a light and salvation, but to impart and communicate of the divine light to them, even to every one that comes into the world; so that by means of this, they may be delivered from their darkness, and ignorance of the mind of God, that they were liable to in the fall, and might be restored, through the mediator, to a capacity of judging of their own actions, and of their own words, and ways, and inclinations.

This is the standard which God has pitched in every one of our bosoms, for the trial of ourselves, either for our justification, or condemnation, of every word and action. Now, to make everyone sensible of the greatness of this blessing, consider, it is not only given to augment and increase knowledge, it is given on purpose to allure and persuade men into a liking of truth, into a love of truth. The apostle esteemed it a wonderful mercy that came by Christ; he has sent him to bless us, in turning every one of us from the evil of his ways. So that here is a capacity that the sons and daughters of men have, through the mediator of being turned from the evil of their ways and doings, to what is well-pleasing to God.

The next work, after God has wrought thus mercifully for the sons and daughters of men, is, that they would be good to themselves, and merciful to themselves, and take pity upon themselves, by a due improvement of the grace, and mercy, and kindness of God, that he has bestowed freely upon them and in bring all their deeds to that standard, all of their words and actions to that rule; so that whatever they may be, or however many, if they do not answer that standard and rule, they may deny, withstand and resist them, so that they may keep out of condemnation; for the apostle declared it plainly without a doubt, "there is no condemnation to them that are *in Christ Jesus*." If he had said, "to them that *profess* Christ Jesus," there had been a large latitude, especially for those nations; but the words are limited, and you will find so; that is, "to them that are *in Christ Jesus*;" and (as if he should say) that you may know rightly what I mean; "I mean such as walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." They that are in Christ, walk after his Spirit; for, those who walk not after the Spirit of Christ, are none of his; but those who are his, walk after the spirit the spirit of truth, and there is not condemnation to them.

It is not only the scriptures that ratify and confirm this doctrine, but you yourselves are all living witnesses of the truth of this, that so far as you do act and speak in obedience to the principle of truth, that God has planted in you, you feel no condemnation upon you: "Such a thing I did at such a time,

and I had no condemnation." Why so? "Because I did it in obedience, and subjection to that measure of grace that God set up in me;" and, "such a thing I did, for which I was condemned." Why so? "because I did it according to the inclinations of my own corrupt mind, and in contradiction to the truth that opened in me."

My friends, I would have you in point of the doctrine of christianity, to be the better for what you read and hear. It is for me to preach the truth, and you may believe what I say, and you may read the Holy Scriptures, and have the belief of what you read; but if you come to a perceived feeling of the fulfilling of things you hear, you will give a greater seal to the truth of the doctrine, than by all you have read and heard. And you will grow wise to Salvation, by trying and experiencing the effect of everything you understand; and not like the carnal men of this world, who do not have faith, who attend to only their worldly profits and pleasures, such are earthly, sensual, and devilish; but I would judge of actions and words, according to truth, and according to the effect I find in me. "I did such a thing, and I had peace in the doing of it; I feel no reproach, no condemnation upon me." Here is a way for people to grow up in the life of christianity; to keep to the standard of truth. For whether men desire it or not, they must do it at last; and they may now, if they please, make a trial of their words and actions.

As for the most part of you, you have gone further than Pilate. Pilate could make that inquiry, "what is truth?" said he. And I confess, it is not long ago, it is within the memory of man, that a more serious and better sort of people were confounded with the darkness and ignorance of those times, that they were ready to cry out, what is truth? and where is truth? Their eyes were so blinded, and things were so jumbled and confused by the disputations that men raised, that made things so dark people could not see their way. But God who has commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has brought a glorious day; has dissipated, and scattered, and driven away a great deal of that darkness and mist, that overspread men's minds. As many as have

sincerely sought the truth in the inward, they have found a divine principle of truth, that has a self-evidencing quality in itself, to convince the minds and consciences of the sons and daughters of men, that it is the truth. And to this the Lord has brought most of you, to be sensible of something that is truth in itself. There are many things that are true in the words of them; many true expressions; but there is truth in itself, the essential truth of God, which, as it is in God, is everlasting and eternal, and will stand over all errors, and falsehood and deceit. The truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, is a standard and rule for men to act by; he has given it to the sons and daughters of men; and as it appears in them, it is either a Judge to condemn them, or a savior to save them from their sins, and to justify them.

Now, what concerns us, is to find out the measure of truth, or manifestation, or principle of truth, which it has pleased God to reveal in ourselves. And whoever will turn their minds a little while inward, into serious search and consideration, how the Lord has dealt with them, they will find they are not quite destitute of truth. One that makes his practice to lie, cheat and cozen, is not utterly destitute of truth; for there is a principle of truth in him, that does check and reprove him for his theft, lying, and falsehood, and he lives under condemnation himself. He cannot draw near to the God of truth upon any occasion, but his lying and falsehood stand in his way. Now, if it is so, that this liar is made sensible of a principle of truth in him, and will bring his words and actions to the truth, so much of it as he knows will make him leave lying and deceiving, and to practice truth to escape condemnation. If he will but leave lying and falsehood, and live in the truth, and speak the truth to his neighbor, he will find another state, condition and frame in his soul, than there was before. He is now more at peace, and has a clear and serene way, to come to God by prayer, and for pouring out his supplication, which he had not before; for he had barred up his own way by his sin, which lay continually at his door; if you do not well, sin lies at your door, said God to Cain. So, when you do evil, you cannot but know it. When you are drunk, or swear or tell a lie, and deceive your neighbor, and carry on the design for sinful profit, you know it, whether men know it or no, and God that made

you know it; and *there* sin lies at your door, and blocks and bars you out, and you cannot offer your prayers to God with that clearness, as if you had spoken the truth. So that it highly concerns every one of us, to be waiting upon God, for the discovery of his truth to us; and then we must embrace, adhere and join to the truth, as our greatest good.

But some will say, this adhering and joining to the truth, is a hard lesson. It is pretty easy to find out a principle of truth, that stands against, and opposes all manner evil. Very few, now a-days, will deny a settled principle of truth in all men, that judges falsehood, and condemns deceit, and witnesses against it in others, and in themselves. But this same joining, and adhering to it, that cannot be done, without a cross to the carnal mind.

Now, if the cross of Christ is not taken up, there is no good Christianity among us. Where this is neglected, it spots and stains the profession of Christianity. It is so directly opposite to the doctrine of Christ: "he that will be my disciple, *must*" it is not, he may if he will, but, he "*must* take up the cross" of Christ and follow HIM. They were a sort of people, that were never likely to be made Christian, that wanted to be exempt from taking up a daily cross; therefore he presses it upon them to deny themselves, and take up his cross and follow him. No man is able to live a Christian life, without taking up a daily cross.

Now...when a light is broken forth, and men have a principle of truth in their own hearts, it comes to this; said one, "I ought to be holy, in all manner of conduct, and to be watchful over my words, and have my conduct honest and just, without deceit. See what a great deal I know, yet I can never live this life, even though I know it so well; I cannot take up a daily cross, which is so much against the contrary inclinations working in me. Then the question I put to myself is, shall I take up a cross or not?

It comes to this point with every man or woman, after they come to the knowledge of this standard of truth. If the world would but come to this rule

and standard, there would be no more cheating nor cozening, no more fraud, deceit or hypocrisy, nor war and bloodshed; but if men would, in everything they do, answer the principle of truth in themselves, they would put the question to themselves, shall I take up my daily cross, or not? Shall I deny myself those pleasures that my conscience condemns; and those ungodly gains that I seek after by falsehood, by lying, prevaricating and departing from the truth? Shall I do this, that I may be rich and great in the world, or shall I not?

You know what I say, many of you, and have put this question to yourselves, and some have made a good answer to it: "I will take up my daily cross, by the grace of God; this stand of truth shall be the rule of my words and actions to my dying-day."

Those who have learned this lesson, and obtained peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, they have not only made a resolution, but performed it in act and deed. By the power of Christ's cross, they are purified, and sanctified, and washed from their old conversations, and have their conduct in heaven; that is, live after a heavenly life, live a godly life here upon earth, when they have come to this resolution, and also the practice of it.

I would desire, and it is my labor, that you that hear me this day, who are unaware of what I am speaking, namely, the standard of truth, the principle of truth, that unerring Guide, which is placed in the conscience of every man, and justifies, or condemns his actions and words: that, you who are come to be aware of this, may all come to this godly resolution in yourselves, so I would have this dispute carried on in every one's bosom. When the question is stated, I would have you really answer it; shall I guide my actions and words according to this unerring rule, or not? "I cannot tell what to say," say some, "there is danger in it." What danger can there be to answer what a man knows to be truth? I will tell you what danger. The world is perverse, and most men live out of truth, and the Devil is a cunning adversary, and he would have none live in it. He abode not in truth; and he

would not have us live in it, nor regulate our words and actions by the truth in our own souls. What if most men in the world pervert the truth? What if so few walk in the narrow way, and so few come to life eternal; is that an argument that I must not come there? Should it not stir me to greater diligence, that by any means I may be of the number of that few that shall obtain salvation, and not go with a great company in the way that leads to destruction? If we improve our times, and seasons, and opportunities, and mercies, and blessings, that are vouchsafed to us, we at last may obtain life eternal.

But some may say, "I must sit down in despair, for I cannot come there of myself, though I do what I can to work out my own salvation. There is a decree against me; which, though I should pray ever so much, and spend my nights in grief and sorrow, if I am decreed to eternal damnation, there is not help for me, no hope that I should escape; and if I am decreed to salvation, though I take my liberty to sin, and be loose and wanton, as others, it cannot hinder me from attaining salvation at last."

For this reason, many have laid aside the spiritual warfare against corruption, and their spiritual travail, that they will do nothing to [gain] their everlasting happiness; therefore they think they might as well take their pleasure. But, my friends, the case is not so with us; let every soul among us praise the Lord for his mercy, in expelling that thick cloud of darkness, which is vanished and gone. This I know, and I hope you do all believe, that God does every where, and in every nation, call sinners to repentance, and that he delights not in the death of him who dies, but rather that they would turn and live; and in order to do this, he has given his Son, Jesus Christ, to be a savior and mediator; and he has sent forth the Spirit of his Son *into our hearts*, to give direction to us in our own way. Now our duty is, to make improvement of those visitations of mercy, that God has bestowed upon us, in order to come to our salvation, and not live in rioting and drunkenness, chambering, and wantonness, strife, and envying, and following the fashions of the world. But we must work out our own salvation

with fear and trembling.

But some will say, "is this not already wrought by our savior and mediator? Christ has tasted death for every man, and laid down a price for the soul of every man."

But still there must be a change wrought in us; **there must be a translation of our souls**, from one state to another. This is called in the scripture, regeneration, and being born again; this is called being baptized into Christ, and described also by other expressions. But the real matter is, to change your life; for there is a sinful source of wickedness, that is stirred up by the motions of the powers of darkness, and our own concupiscence; but God is always ready to bring us under the government of his Holy Spirit, that will lead us into all truth; and this cannot be done without a Cross. But the question lies here, "shall I take up this Cross or not? If I do, it will crucify my affections to the world. Let me see, how much do I love the world? A great deal, but do I love the world better than my own soul? What will it profit me, to gain the whole world and lose my own soul? Or what shall I give in exchange for my soul? I cannot get to heaven without denying myself; let me take care of my immortal soul. I am a poor creature; I will serve the Lord my Maker, and make it my business to glorify and please him. He can snatch me away by death when he pleases; therefore will I labor, that my thoughts, words, actions, and conduct, may answer to that rule that he has set before me, as a standard of truth, to square and regulate my actions by. I will not live any longer in vanity, as many do. I do not know but my breath may be stopped today, before tomorrow; therefore today, while it is called today, I will hear God's voice, and not harden my heart, but receive that counsel, that is offered to me, for the benefit of my soul. I am bought with a price, I am not my own; I will live to him who died for me. I have more reason to live to Christ, and serve him, that shed his precious blood for the redemption of my soul, and to be subject to him, than to be Christ's enemy, to the prince of the power of the air, who rules in the children of disobedience. I will take up a resolution to serve God, but I can

do nothing of myself; but the grace of God, which brings salvation, will teach me to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly; in this present world."* Take heed of being deceived and beguiled, for there is no way [that] will bring you to Heaven, but a holy and undefiled way.

[*The meaning of *grace* **has been transferred by the Protestant sects of Christianity from *the truth***: that with repentance the Spirit of God teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and how to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, **purifying for himself a people who are his very own, zealous for good works** — **transferred instead to the twisted lie**: that grace excuses all past, present, and future sins in *believers*, thereby excusing *believers* to live in their lusts and pride as they please with no laws. The false church has made the blood of Jesus an excuse for evil; therefore **they have made His blood an *unholy thing***; and so they trample on the son of God and show contempt for grace. Heb 10:29. It is not what one says that makes Jesus their Lord or Master, but their deeds. By claiming grace excuses all continuing to sin, these men *denied and disowned Jesus as their Lord and Master*, who said, "repent or perish, and sin no more." From the Word of the Lord within: "Remember, every person who sins denies Him as Lord and Master. Do you agree with any who in their arrogance have stated that God excuses evil in *believers*? It's not fair, but they don't care. They have taken the Bible and made it an unholy thing used to justify their immersion in sin. They would have no laws. The new law became unrighteousness. Christianity has no idea what I am or for what I stand." Peter identified the false christian leaders of his time also: "For speaking great swelling words of vanity, they lure through the lusts of the flesh and much wantonness, those who were barely escaping from those who live in error. Although these false teachers promise them liberty, they

themselves are the slaves of corruption [sin, immorality]; for by whatever a man is overcome, he is enslaved." 2 Peter 2:18-19. False teachers promise liberty to continue in sin, but Jesus said, "Truly, Truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin." John 8:34. The wages of sin is death. Rom 6:23. Not only has Christianity made grace a license for immorality, but Christianity has caused their believers' consciences to be seared as with a hot iron, leaving them indifferent to sin and evil. There is a liberty for a crucified son of God, free from all sin, walking in love and fulfilling the law; but until you are free from all sin, you are subject to being banned from heaven when you die.

There is no *consequence-free sin*; the wages of sin are still death. The Law of Sin and Death is voided only when have crucified your sinful mind and spirit; consequence-free sin is *make-believe Christianity*. From the Word of the Lord within: "Do not be confused; do not be misled; you must break a suspected action. Consequence-free sin does not exist; the consequences are truly staggering. There is a war you must win; sin must be overcome; the fleshly lusts war against your soul."

2000 years ago, Jude wrote of a few men who had infiltrated the true Christians, preaching their false message that grace excused all past, present, and future sins. Today grace, being a license for immorality, is the 400 year-old cornerstone of Protestant doctrine. Therefore **Christendom is now full of filthy dreamers: filthy** because their hearts are defiled with all manner of sins they still commit with disregard to the Lord's many warnings and requirements, and **dreaming** that they are saved and righteous. The Roman and orthodox sects are similarly full of filthy dreamers who **dream** that their heathenish masses, confessions, penance, and eucharists expiate the sin from their **filthy** defiled hearts, which rituals the Lord has described as

conflagration, (great destruction). From the Word of the Lord within: "Christianity has no idea what I am or for what I stand. The enemy is in all of Christendom. Everyone is expecting Jesus to be their excuse. They are a stubborn people; their hearts have waxed cold. They think to be saved by making a noise about being saved. They are a clueless, fruitless people. All are **filthy dreamers.**"

For more on this topic see: [True Grace vs. False Grace.](#)]

Therefore, come and take this standard of truth in your hands, to guide you in your way, that you may neither turn to the right hand or the left. This will show you the way that you should walk in, and be like a cloud and pillar of fire to the Israelites, in their journey to Canaan, which was a type of Heaven. The cloud they could see by day, and the pillar of fire by night. So this standard of truth will direct you in your travel to the heavenly Canaan. Let this be the rule and measure of your thoughts, words, and actions.

If a workman, that is a builder, has a rule to work by; and if he goes on and never examines his work by his rule, but makes his eye his rule; if he does not bring this rule to his work every little while, to see whether his work is right; if he works on, and never minds his rule, what a sad work will he make. But a prudent skillful workman will say, "I will not trust my eye too much, but I will look to my rule, my rule will not fail me; if there is bad work, it will discover it to me, that I may mend it before I go any further." Thus a discrete workman will often bring his rule to his work, and use his line and plummet, that he may make it workmanlike. He will say, "if I leave my rule alone, and not make use of it, but work as I please, and trust to my eye, no wonder if I make bad work, and what I build fall down again, and tumble about my ears."

You to whom God has given the standard of truth, as a rule and measure, to govern you thoughts, words, and actions by, let every thing be tried with it,

before you die, and leave this world. If you do so, and make this your daily practice, then ask yourselves, and you will be able to tell yourselves, and tell me, and say, "I have now obtained more hopes of God's favor, and a greater sense of his life and goodness to me, than ever I had before." The apostle does exhort us, "to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming our time." We have spent a great deal of time in vain, let us now be wise, and improve our time, for our eternal advantage; let us walk circumspectly, that is, look round about us, consider our ways, and try all our thoughts, words and actions, by the standard of truth. Today (my friends) while it is called today, hear the voice of God, and harden not your hearts, and receive the heavenly counsel, that is tendered to you, that you may be partakers of the inheritance, among the saints in light.

The Prayer After

Blessed and eternal Father! You have brought forth your glorious name, and revealed your power and your mighty arm; and you have caused a remnant to bow and worship at your appearance. You are wonderful, your majesty is great; those who do behold you, will, with reverence, worship before you. Your power is gone forth, and has reached the hearts of your people; you have humbled them, and subjected them to your Divine, Almighty Power, that they might appear in the earth, to the praise and glory of your great name.

And, O Lord, as you have begun a great work in the earth, so you have committed this work to your servants and children that bear your name among the sons of men, that they should show forth your righteousness, among the inhabitants of the earth; and our souls have said many a time, who is sufficient for these things? All our fitness and sufficiency, our fitness and preparation is from you. Reveal your power, and make bare your Almighty arm. We have found your presence from day to day, and you have beheld them that know your love.

O glorious God of life! Herein we have encouragement to go in the work which you have called us to; hereby we are enabled to worship before you, and to offer up living praises to your great name, for that refreshment and consolation, which you have ministered to your people.

And, O Living Father! We have never waited on you in vain; *whenever* we have met together in your name, we have found your Divine Presence, and the opening of the treasure of your love, of your wisdom, and of your favor to your children. So that from day to day, and even at this day, you remember your people, and you give them fresh occasion to draw near to you, and receive their daily nourishment and strength, from the operation of your power.

O living God of Life! Gather up the hearts of your people more and more, and draw them into a nearness to yourself, that their understandings many be more and more opened to discern your will, and subject themselves to your wisdom, that every thought that is exalted against your divine power, and living voice, in their own consciences, may be brought down; so that all the nations of the earth may bow before you; so that your truth may reign, and your power be exalted, and the righteousness which you have revealed, may shine forth more and more, in the brightness and glory of it, and enlighten those who are afar off, that they may be brought to seek after God.

And, Living God of Life! Let those who are bowed down under the weight of sin, be supported and raised up; and those who are weary and heavy laden, let them have rest to their souls.

Powerful God of Life! Keep your people in a fresh and living sense of your love, and of your heavenly virtue, by which you nourish the children, and satisfy them from day to day; not only when they are met together, but when they are separated one from another. Let your people be preserved from the evil of the world, while they are in it, and let your wisdom and power give them victory over it, that you may have the glory of all the mercies and

blessings, vouchsafed to them. For you alone are worthy, who are God over all, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON V

The Great Duty of Remembering our Creator

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire-House, on April 6, 1692

THERE is only *one living and true God*, Creator of Heaven and earth, whom we are obliged to serve and worship. I have so much charity as to believe, there are none among us, but who will own and acknowledge this. And my soul wishes that this obligation would always rest upon everyone's mind - that they might remember their Creator, who has given us all life and breath, and continued all our blessings to us, that so everyone might apply their hearts unto that universal duty, that we are all convinced of.

And those who are thus employed and exercised, are considering how and by what manner they may complete and discharge their duty, performing obligation that lies upon them so that it may be accepted at the hands of God. I speak now of those who considerate, not of those who go on in a form of religion, and matter not, nor regard whether they are accepted of God or not; but all who are conscientious towards God, they desire to serve God, and worship him, so that they may be acceptable to him, so to perform duties; and so that they may receive their reward, and that encouragement that God in all ages has discovered, and made manifest to be in his purpose towards those who truly serve him.

When people come to this consideration, how they may serve God correctly, and worship him acceptably, the Lord is near unto them, to instruct them, to teach them, and guide them in the way that is everlasting. And, blessed be

his holy name, a great many in our days have met with this divine teaching and instruction; and are taught in this age, as in former ages, to understand the worship of God that he requires; that is, in spirit and truth; and do find, that the Father seeks such worshippers, and where he finds them, rewards them, and they have an answer of peace in their bosoms, and they are encouraged to go on in the worship and service of God, to the end of their days.

And it is a great mercy and benefit, a great blessing that God has bestowed upon a remnant, to open their understandings, to let them see and know the way of being near to God, that so they may know whom they worship for you have read there have been worshippers who *worship they know not what*. As our Savior said to the woman of Samaria, *you worship what you do not know; we know what we worship*. So all who are taught of God, know what is the first lesson of Christianity, as the apostle said; he who turns to seek God, must first know and believe that he is; that is, people must first be sensible, that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, before they can properly worship him.

Now, for lack of this knowledge, the world is scattered, and people are divided into a great many sorts of worships, and fashions, and ways of religions, for lack of the knowledge of the true worship, of the true and living God. So although men are universally convinced that there is a God, and that a worship is due to him from every one of us, yet people are confounded, scattered, and divided about the performance of their great duty; and in the day that the Lord has visited his people, he has come to answer this doubt and question for them. It has been the great question of the world, and is still of many thousands; they say, I know we should worship God, but I do not know the way and manner in which to find acceptance. The Lord has answered that question in abundance to those who have ears to hear; let them hear what the Spirit says, that is the short answer to it in all.

Let people profess whatever religion they will, there is no acceptance with God except through Christ. So that if people come to be of this, and that, and the other profession, and change their religion ever so often, and go from one religion to another, if they don't come not Christ, they fail to come to him in whom they may find acceptance. In him God is pleased with everyone; but out of him he is pleased with no one. The great mystery of religion lies in Christ; people must come to God by faith in him; *for without faith, it is impossible to please God*. Let people perform whatever so much service and duties, all must pass through the hand of the Mediator, before their performance will ever reach to God, or before peace and comfort will reach to any man's soul. Therefore, it is the wisest way for everyone who would have acceptance with God to come to him in the name of the great Mediator. People would be glad to have acceptance with God and not to have their services turned back upon them, as Cain's was. Now, every one who wishes to have acceptance with God must come this way; there is only one way, it is not the way that men have invented, trying to come by their works and merits. Some by their made-faiths, and made-beliefs, and by many articles and principles, holding this principle, and the other principle; but our Lord and Creator, he has shown one way, in his infinite wisdom, and unspeakable mercy to mankind, that was forever lost, and could never return to God, by all his sacrifices, offerings, and performances; he was never able to return into unity with his Maker, if God had not shown a way; and that way that God has shown, is by his beloved Son Christ Jesus. God spared not. He spared not what? He spared not his only begotten Son. Why, what did he do with him? *He gave him for the life of the world*; in him who God gave, there is life. *It pleased the Lord that his Son should have life in him, as the Father had life in himself*; for Christ was with the Father before the world began; in him was life, and the life was the light of men; John 1:1-4,9. It was no created life, the life that is in his Son; it is not a created life, but is an eternal life, and it was given for the life of the world, and the life is the light of men. *This is the true light, which enlightens every man that comes into the world*. So that here is the dignity of that life which God has bestowed upon us; we are endued with that life, which was with the Father

through Jesus Christ, before the world was. Let us consider the dignity of that light, with which we are enlightened. The question is, whether we should obey this light, or not. It is the question of every one. I am enlightened, says a man, shall I obey it, or not? If I obey, I must take up a cross, and say goodbye to my beloved lust and corruption. No doubt of that; we must persuade people to do that, before we can bring them to Heaven and happiness, and fellowship with God. It must not be by the way they lost the life, but by the contrary way, by which God will bring men to happiness again. They lost it by transgression, and sinning against God; by this way and means men came out of the presence and favor of God. But what way shall they obtain it again? Shall it be by committing iniquity, and breaking God's law? No, here is the way that God has revealed to bring poor man back again to himself: by the sufferings and obedience of his Son, Jesus Christ. He has given to him **all power in Heaven and Earth**, that all should be subject to him; here is a dignity which Christ has obtained.

It comes to the question with us, whether we are enlightened? Now we know we are enlightened; God has bestowed something upon us that wars and fights against sin and iniquity. How did we come we by it? Is it any faculty in nature? No; nature is corrupted and defiled, because the **carnal mind is enmity against God**; for it not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be; yet there is something in me that answers the pure law of God, which makes me to hate things that are reprobable, namely, light. How did I come by the light? It is not natural, for then it would run parallel with the natural inclination that is in my soul, to lead me further and further from God. These are set in opposition one against another, the flesh and the spirit; the **flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh**. Here is part of an **inward war**, that you may all be sensible of. Now, these two warriors, the flesh and the spirit, make war one against another, and one of them is overcome. It is true, there is such a principle in me, that strives against sin and corruption. How did you receive it? If you believe the scriptures, I say, you came by it through the life, of the Son of God, that light which

enlightens every man that comes into the world. Now, many have rejected and despised the light; I believe they did not think, at the same time, to mock and make a scorn of the life of Jesus, though that was what they did by rejecting the light. But if people come to a true esteem and value of the light that God has planted in the soul, then they will give more reverence and respect to it. It is this that brings those who preach Christ, to preach him in those terms, and under those denominations, that he is near them.

We do not doubt of Christ's being born of a Virgin, in the land of Canaan, and that he wrought miracles, and preached many godly sermons, and that he was crucified, dead and buried, and rose again from the dead, for these things are certainly true. But we would have him our Savior in this age, we would have a nearer knowledge of him, and a sense and feeling of the virtue of that power, by which he saved those who lived in former ages. He is not a Christ and a Savior of one age only, but of all ages to this day, from Adam, to the last man that shall live upon the earth. That age and generation that does not know not Christ, will not be saved by him, if there is ever any age in which he is not known. There is no other name under the heavens by which you can be saved. If you ask where is this Savior? Say not in your heart, who shall ascend into Heaven? That is, to bring down Christ from above; or, who shall descend into the deep, that is to bring up Christ again from the dead? Because the word is near you, even in your mouth and in your heart; that is the word of faith, which we preach. He is near your soul, he is the Lord of life, and a quickening Spirit, if I know that quickening Spirit, after this I know the Lord Christ, when he comes to work in me by his power, changing my heart, and translating me from death to life, then I know the true Christ. God has manifested in all ages that it is the duty of people to come to the knowledge of the Son of God; for he has sent forth his Spirit to teach us, and to lead us into all truth.

For when Christ was with his disciples, he told those who he would pray the Father, and he would send the Spirit, the comforter; and when he came, he would be known by his divine and inward teachings and operations, guiding

and leading them into all truth; that was his work to them. But what shall other folks do? He will be made known to others too. When he comes, he shall convince the world of sin. So that his work to his disciples was: to lead them into all truth; and his work to the world is: to convince the world of sin. Who will deny, but that there is a Spirit in our age, as well as in other ages, that will convince men of sin? Is this the Spirit of God, that convinces the world of sin, or is it the spirit of the Quakers only? When people come to consider really and truly, how they may serve God correctly, they will find there is no serving God correctly, unless they come to Christ the Mediator, that in and by him they may put up supplications to God, and through him, they may expect at the hand of God, peace and comfort; and there is no other way, nor ever will be.

The Jews, they had another way, they had an outward way of serving God that stood in various offerings, sacrifices, washings and observations; this was a way of worship of God's own institution to that people, but what came of it? When the apostle came to grasp it, he said, the comers to it, had not been made perfect. What were the transgressors of it then? Those who would sin on, and continue in sin, and not bring a goat, or a ram, or other oblation; those who did observe it, and came up to the point of the law, they did bring their offering when they were convinced of their sin. If a man sinned, he was to bring an he-goat, and to bring it to the door of the tabernacle; but when he sinned, the conscience of sin, the guilt of sin remained upon him. *For it was impossible, said the apostle, that the blood of bulls and goats should take away the sin. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies, to the purifying of the fleshly, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God.*

When there is no hope of atonement and reconciliation with God, by all those offerings under the law, he tells you of *one offering of the Son of God himself, through the eternal Spirit, by which he became a propitiation; for*

this will do; if I believe that Christ offered an holy offering to the Father for my sins. I believe he offered his body, and that through the eternal Spirit, that he might be a propitiation for sin, and take away sin, and have power over sin and death, and conquer death and darkness. The apostle drives the matter further; you must come to the inward work of this outward offering, this eternal offering, that was in due time offered to God. You must come to know the operations of it, by the *sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience*, so that there was to be an applied faith for the offering of that. The way to a Savior was not made by man, no more than the way of salvation by Christ was found out by man; no more than the application of the benefit is effected by man.

When it pleases God to call a people by his grace, he calls them by his Son; not by this and the other form. *No man comes to me*, said Christ, *except the Father, who has sent me, draws him*. The first thing that a man or woman comes to be aware of, is the secret sense and feeling of the Lord's Divine Power upon the heart, to seek Christ Jesus;* as soon as they feel this, and embrace it, this is a token of the love of God. I hope all of this congregation will acknowledge, that they have sometimes felt his drawings, and that they have not embraced and closed with them so well as they ought.

[*this can also be a drawing to seek the creator, without really knowing his name. God will provide that hunger to know your creator; then, as Jesus said: If anyone desires to do God's will, he will know whether my teaching is from God or if I speak from myself. John 7:17.]

When people are aware of these drawings inwardly to holiness and righteousness, and are sensible that they should, with care and attention, close with them, for the good of their poor souls; and that it concerns them to be happy in the other world that is to come, and therefore resolve to be led by these drawings of the Spirit of God, these are not weeds that grow in the fields naturally; these are Sparks of Divine Fire, kindled in the hearts of

men by God himself. No man comes unto God, until God comes to him, and touches him, and gives him sense and motion. These are the motions and stirrings of God's Holy Power, in the hearts of many that are wicked and abominable; yet the Lord does not despise the work of his own hand, but reaches to such.

[Further, the word of the Lord within has said: "no one can come to me unless they have had a life-shattering experience." That life shattering experience can take many forms, but results in a man's loss of confidence in himself being able to control his happiness and satisfaction in life; and so, that man turns to God for help and answers to life.]

When the Lord meets with those who do not despise this wonderful grace, but highly prize and close with it, and are glad of it, such a person says: "I was fearful that the Lord had forgotten me, and had passed by me, and was done with me; but I see he visits me again, and he has visited my soul this day, inclining me to walk more answerably to his love; he has doubled his power upon me, and has kindled a holy fire in my heart, and caused me to seek after him; he has touched my heart, and I will pour out my soul in supplication, feeling he has touched me; he will take hold of me by his power, and he will keep me from being any more, drawn away. I will live in the sense of his power and mercy, that keeps me night and day, that I may increase in it, and grow in grace." When the Lord meets with such a one, he will draw him into the way that he has appointed. *None can come unto me, said Christ, except the Father, who has sent me, draws him.* If I am drawn, into what form shall I now go? What ordinance shall I take up now? This is all under feet; this is none of my work; I will come to Christ the Mediator, and he will take the government and rule of me. It is not my best way to study a form, and an outside religion; I will wait upon that power that has thus touched my heart, so that he may by degrees bring me to the obedience of Christ.

But some are ready to say, who, and what is this Christ Jesus that you are speaking of; that directly experienced Christ Jesus who is exists and present, that I am to have to be the object of my faith; that I may believe in him, and come to an acquaintance with him, that I may partake of the life of Jesus Christ, and have it communicated to my soul?

We have not a thought, or a word to speak, that may diminish the wonderful grace of Christ, who died in his person on earth for the salvation of our souls. Yet we must know, that the Lord Jesus Christ may be spiritually present with us, and take the government of us, and we are to be subject to him. How shall this be? I am speaking of one that has felt the Father's drawings, when he draws them to his Son, and draws them to something that is holy and pure. This God the Father has begotten. We read in scripture, *that God has begotten Christ who is the only begotten of the Father*. It is strange, you will say, to speak of begetting Christ again. God begets Christ again, that is, spiritually; he being the first born in many brethren, in every true believer, and there is a travail of soul that Christ may be formed in him. See what travail of soul the apostle Paul falls into the second time, for the Galatians. They were a brave people, they worshiped God in Spirit, and believed in Christ Jesus, and afterwards they came to be seduced by false prophets, and false teachers, that set them about their works, and told them they could not be justified and saved without their own works. These false teachers that came among them, were as bad as Popish priests and friars, telling them that it is not your obedience to Christ, and the Spirit [hearing of faith], that will save you, you must be doing [works of the law]. So these poor people were deluded and bewitched; and to give you the apostle's own words, they were infatuated, and *drawn away from the simplicity of the gospel*, and they thought by the works of the law to obtain salvation. The apostle writes a letter to them, and tells those who he travailed in birth again, until Christ was formed in them. If this was not scripture, it would look like a strange work; there must be a forming of Christ, a birth there must be, and a begetting. Who must beget in this and that moment, but the same that begat from the beginning? The same is the

Father, who begets Christ in all who believe and obey the gospel. He is begetting something in me that is holy, though I am unholy; the Father, by the operation of his divine hand, begets something in me that is holy. This I find, though I am not so good as I should be; I have had given to me given me, what will tell me, that the more I adhere and join myself in my desires and affections to this good principle, the more I will partake of the quality of it this good principle, though it starts like a little grain of mustard-seed, I cannot tell what to compare it to for littleness, in comparison of the great lump and mass of sin, corruption and filthiness, that wars against it; yet this will overspread all that is bad, and make me holy, as that is holy; pure as that is pure, and to have a love for him, from whom it came, even to Christ and God; it will gather the affections from corruptible things, and place them upon things above.

This faith tells people that it is *the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*; such a one lives by faith, such a one that comes to be joined to that, that is begotten of the father, *he lives by the faith of the Son of God*, and can do nothing of himself, but through Christ who strengthens him; he says unto God, I perceive I can do nothing without you; I cannot pray to you, nor serve you; of myself I can do nothing acceptable, but through Christ the Mediator; such a one becomes like a little child, and he must be led; and who must lead him, but the Spirit of Christ?

You cannot preach, says one to him, unless you be moved by the Spirit. You cannot pray until you are moved by the Spirit. How should I? No, *without him I can do nothing*. I cannot preach, or pray, or do anything acceptable to God the Father, but by Christ; and he has revealed him in me.

This is no new doctrine. We see the new and living way; it was an old way to old Christians, and a new way to the new; and so a thousand years from now, if the world lasts so long, men will see that they cannot do anything to please God, except as they are gathered into Christ.* They will see that their own righteousness, works, and doings, avail them nothing at all. This is all

laid at the feet of Jesus, whom God has exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to be Lord and King.

[*Do not confuse what Crisp is saying. Before *we are gathered into Christ*, we must do the work of denying our self interests, and carrying our cross to crucify the sinful human nature within us.]

Now, my friends, we are engaged in this age, abundantly engaged, to offer thanks to God, through Jesus Christ, that he has provided and opened a way for the sending forth the Spirit of his Son. And that God has gathered a people, and has made known to them the way of life, that they might walk in it; but there is no walking in it, but through a daily cross, and self-denial. It is not likely that a man should be brought back to God the same way that he went out from God; and the prophets and apostles do allude to this turning to God; *when you turn aside to the right hand or to the left you shall hear a voice behind you saying, this is the way, walk in it*. There is a voice that calls to people in our days, to look behind them, for they are out of the way. This prophecy is fulfilled in our day; we cannot turn away from the good ways of God, but that we hear a voice behind us, saying, "you are sinning against God, and breaking the holy law of God." Now, if people return, it must be by the cross. "I will not return to God," said one; "I have pleasure, profit, and honor, and whatever my heart desires in this evil way that I am walking in; if I return, I shall have nothing but shame and reproach; I shall be undone and ruined, and I fear the loss of favor and friendship of my friends and relations; I cannot return to God through a daily cross, and self-denial." What then? It is likelier to be the right way, by this bearing the cross. Christ tells us, *if any will come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*. This voice of Christ calls me to repent and turn from sin, and gives me a strong argument, that it is true; that it is the same way that will bring me back to God, by the Mediator. It brings its own evidence with it; we need no argument to prove that it is a right way; it is a right way, because it is the *narrow way*; it is the right gate, because it is *the*

strait and narrow gate. Everybody can walk in the broad way with ease, without any cross.

When people have come so far, that they are convinced of their duty, when they are called to amend their lives and conversations, to forsake their lives and turn to the Lord, this is the great question: do I have the power to accomplish this? This question has caused a great many to stumble, when they have some beginning thoughts of turning to the Lord; and at last they have settled themselves in a belief that they can't do it. It is true, and nothing truer, that men, convinced of their sins, do not have the power to leave their sins by themselves. This is true, but not all the truth; to men that God convinces of sin, he gives them power to be made willing to forsake their sins. He has given power to all that are in Christ Jesus, to believe and become the sons of God; then they have denied ungodliness and worldly lusts if they are the sons of God, and live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world.

[Grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. As we are charged with lusts and ungodliness, one at a time, by grace, we are taught the unrighteousness of them; we then repent of them, and grace gives us strength to deny them. Grace will also teach us how to conduct ourselves soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Do not mistake Crisp here to suggest once we decide to be a Christian, we can live without sin, as long as we have faith; this is a common error in Christendom and is not true. We have to be taught about the sin within us; we have to be shown in such a way that we are ashamed and motivated to change. We receive this teaching, purifying grace by silently listening for the voice of the Lord, hearing, and obeying.]

But what shall they do, who are sensible that they do not have the power to forsake their sins, until God is pleased to give them power? Such have nothing to do but to wait upon the Lord, for the giving of this power; and

there is a duty incumbent on them then to answer this power. The apostle, upon this subject, tells us what people are to do for their own conversion. He ascribes the power of conversion to Christ Jesus. The prophets and apostles, they tell us, there is something for man to do, that is, if he does not have power, and he is willing to receive it. The apostle has a notable table expression to this purpose; he puts them in mind, how they used to do things by the devil, when they were the devil's servants; they obeyed his commands and yielded their members servants to unrighteousness. How did they yield? They did it heartily, with pleasure and delight. Thus you did when you did not know the power of God; but now you have come to the knowledge of the power of God, *Neither yield your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but yield yourselves to God, as those who are raised alive from the dead, and your members for instruments to be used for righteousness by God. Rom 6:13.* Let your minds, and wills, and affections, be joined to the power with which God has visited you; in love to God, give up your members as servants unto righteousness.

Here is something for man to do in the day of God's visitation, *your people shall be willing in the day of your power*; when they come to that, and experience that, this shows that they are the people of God. But those who are not a willing people, are none of God's people, God's people are so; and I pray God make you all so, to be a people willing to be God's people, when he gives you power, and it will not be long before he gives you power to forsake your sins, to forsake this, and the other foolish, proud, and vain actions and fashions. He has made Christ Jesus to be Lord and King, and he shall reign over death. He has made all things by Christ, and he is become the Savior of all men, but especially of those who believe; so that I would have a **special** salvation, and you would have it too. Christ has made a way, and opened a door for us to be saved, *that we might have an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom.* But if I am to have a special salvation, which invests me with the love of God in my heart, before I die; it is to be had through Christ; therefore to him I will come. To him everyone must come, and every knee bow to his name, and every one must wait for his appearing in the

Spirit. When Christ appears, truth stirs. Now, if a holy, divine life is in you, it is Christ; if a principle of truth stirs in you, it is Christ; the same Jesus, only in a smaller manifestation. He, who is faithful in a little, will be made ruler over much by Him. This is He, whom God has ordained to be the Captain of our salvation; this is what we preach in his name, and testify and declare to all people, that there is no other salvation, no deliverance from death and hell, but by and through him; *in him there is a reconciliation and that peace which passes all understanding*, and power over all those things which have captivated us, and made us disobey our great Lord and Maker. Let us wait for the coming of Christ; he is our King, our Lord and Law-giver, and he will save us. This was the cry of his people of old, for the glorious and great salvation he has given, and the work he has wrought. Let the prayers and supplications of all people, that desire salvation, be put up more and more, that he will visit the earth, and give power from above, and *bring us into that new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh*; to whom be glory, forever and ever. Amen,

His Prayer after Sermon

MOST blessed and glorious Father, and Fountain of Life! and of all living blessings, whose glorious day dawns; by your power you have brought the children of men out of darkness, that they might walk in the light of your power. Great joy, and strong consolation, have you brought unto your Israel, unto the people that you have gathered by your arm of power; then you have caused them, Lord, to take great delight in your ways; for you have caused the light of your countenance to be lifted up upon us, and your holy and divine presence has gone along with us, from time to time, through all those states and conditions, and through all those trials and exercises that we have met with, and that you have led us through.

The right hand of your power, O Lord, has been with us, and therefore we have not failed; and your heavenly blessings have been rained down upon us that have made your heritage to grow and become fruitful, to the honor of

your great name, and the eternal consolation of our souls.

And, therefore, O heavenly Father! in the consideration and feeling of the great things you have wrought for us, and for the continuance of your love to us, our souls are always engaged to offer high praises, and humble thanksgivings to your great name; and the supplications of our souls, whom you have quickened and brought to life, are daily poured forth upon your altar, that as you have previously helped us, your holy and divine presence and power may still accompany us to the end of our days; and that in all the exercises, and trials, which you are pleased we should meet with, we may find your presence with us, that your eternal, heavenly power may surround us, so that we may be more than conquerors, through Christ who has loved us.

And O powerful God of Life! Our souls rejoice, and our hearts are made glad to behold the progress of your power in our day, how you have brought down the mighty from their feats, and have exalted those who are of low degree; how you have laid the mountains low, and exalted the inhabitants of the valleys.

Blessed Father of Life and Power! Praises, praises wait for you in Zion; and dear Father, by the operation of your wonderful power, preserve and keep your children, whom you have gathered into a living sense of your presence, that they may bow before you, and be exercised in a daily, holy, divine worship unto you; that so, powerful God of Life, you may daily pour down your blessings upon us, and delight to manifest yourself to be our God; and let us live as becomes a people that are gathered unto you,

Lord God Eternal! Carry on your great work in the earth, and make known your power more and more; there are many breathing-ones, and many that cry to you daily. Living Father! It is the operation of your Spirit that has raised these breathings, and kindled these desires in them, and it is you alone who are able to answer them. Therefore, living God and Father, they

are committed to you; the mourners, the bowed-down, and those who are laden with sin and iniquity, and that groan under the pressure and burden of it; let their burdens be taken off, and the yoke of Christ, that easy yoke, be put on, and let none of your commandments be grievous to them, that they may be made fit to enter into your kingdom; let them be brought through the labor and travail of regeneration, and let none be exalted into the airy vision and sight of things [presumption without possession], except by your living power, be rising to eternal life in their souls.

And Lord, we pray you, fit and prepare all your people for the work and service that you have been pleased to call them to, that so your name may be exalted over all, and your truth spread more and more; and let all error and darkness be expelled and let the power and influence of your name be great in the earth, that all your scattered people may be brought home, to reside in your house, that there may be unity and concord among them, and they may all with one heart and mind, return, and ascribe praises and honor, and glory to your holy name, for all your blessings, mercies and living refreshments, that we have received at your hands, for you alone are worthy, and God over all, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON VI

The Divine Monitor; or, Light from Heaven

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, June 19, 1692

IT is a great privilege to the sons and daughters of men, that it has pleased God Almighty to open a way, how they may come to the true knowledge of himself. And O that there was a heart in every one of us, that could rightly prize this privilege as we ought to! For in the knowledge of the true God consists our true happiness; and without this, the mind of no man or woman

can be good. There is nothing that seasons the mind and soul of man, and prepares and fits it for an everlasting well-being, except the divine knowledge of the living God who made him. And there is a propensity in the soul of man, even since the fall, to return again to God, and to have that acquaintance and communion with the Lord that man had before he fell. And those who have regard to that inward spark of divine love, which they find in their own souls towards God, will experience that the Lord is merciful and gracious, and propitious to what is of himself.

For though the soul is lost, and man is lost through transgression, and a great alienation has happened between him and his Maker, yet the mercy of the Lord endures forever; and his kindness and favor to lost man is such, that he stretches out his hand all the day long, and presents and offers to the children of men a friendship and acquaintance, and a communion again with him. And though by sin and transgression, there is a rebellious nature grown up in the sons and daughters of men, yet the soul of man is not wholly so. There is something that strives and labors in a contrary way, and persuades the soul to turn again unto the Lord, and to wait for the knowledge of God; and whosoever hearkens with care and diligence, to that divine Monitor, who is daily drawing and persuading people to seek after God, they come to understand, that the Lord is not so angry with mankind, but his love, and mercy, and good will, reaches towards all the sons and daughters of men; and the bar that hinders their communion with God, and peace with God, is not in the Lord, but it is in themselves; and therefore the remedy must be wrought in themselves.

This is evident to every eye, that there is something gotten into mankind, which the Holy God cannot own, and can never have fellowship with; that is, another contrary spirit has wrought upon the souls of people, and has seduced and drawn them out to what is unholy and contrary to God, and the terms of God's covenant to mankind, which is, that he should forsake what the contrary spirit has wrought in him. *Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.* Why should he forsake his ways?

Because the Lord never led him into those ways. He who made him, never led him into them; but the devil, the enemy of mankind, seduced him into those ways. Therefore the Creator cries out to him, *let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts*; I cannot have union with him, as long as he walks in his evil ways; I cannot dwell in his mind, so long as evil thoughts are in it. So may the Lord complain of the works which the devil has wrought, that man is carried away from God, by his evil thoughts, and the works of the devil.

Why does God not destroy those works, when he is Almighty, and able to do it? * Very true, God is so; but he has offered to mankind, through the son of his love, a way and means, how man may come to be purged, and *cleansed from the evil* that the devil has wrought in him, and how he may come to be reconciled to God. God has not chosen the way of coercion and force, and to work altogether by irresistible power, that man shall go to Heaven whether he will or not. There was no force used for his going to hell and darkness, but it was the choice of his will. The devil could not have forced him, and led him away out of covenant with God; he could not compel him to break the holy command of God, but the devil tempted him, and he yielded to the temptation. So man was driven out of the presence of God; yet God has found out a way for the sons and daughters of men, to turn again to him. What, by force and coercion, and irresistible power? No, but the scripture says that He has offered life and salvation to all men: *He has freely given the Son of his love, out of his own bosom, who making himself an offering for sin, has presented a way and means for mans returning again to God.*

[* There is another reason God doesn't just do away with the evil in us:

God will never take away our free will; and if he purifies us without our having learned to *loathe and hate our selfish habits and addictions*, once instantly purified, we would drift back into the same patterns of selfish behaviors that cause us to embrace

sin. So in this life or the next, we have to: 1) discover the bitterness of the passions and pleasures that our hearts desire, and 2) over time suffer the consequences of our passions and pleasures, while longing to have them removed by desperately seeking the grace of God to be changed. In Hell, our passions are unrestrained, similar to how we are without restraint to lusts and violence in our dreams. For our passions are the worst of tyrants. When we are placed so that we are entirely given up to them, they will torment the heart, and, like a torrent, sweep all before them, and yet never be satisfied. We must discover that true liberty is to be found only in him, whose truth shall set us free, and who shall lead us to understand only in virtuous, righteous actions, (in serving Him), are we really free. In this way, when our heart's defects are removed, one at a time, we are certain not to return to sin in our free wills. Love never forces its own way, instead it helps us see the error of the wrong way, so we can choose the right way; and then rewards us with the grace of change, finally resulting in purity.]

How does God present Christ to us? He presents him to the view of every one's mind, to the understanding of every soul; he offers and presents him for salvation to the ends of the earth. There is a damnation come in by man's being subject to Satan, but salvation comes in by his being subject to Christ; as damnation came in by his being defiled, so salvation came in by his being cleansed. As the devil is the defiler, so Christ is the cleanser, and man is the object upon which both contend; and those who have been defiled and corrupted (as we all have) by the unclean Spirit, can any of us give a reason they should not be cleansed by the Holy Spirit? We have lost our right to Heaven by sin and transgression, in the first Adam; and can any give a reason why we should not be restored, and redeemed, by Jesus Christ, the Second Adam? No reason can be given of our redemption, but that God is free in his love, and Christ is his offering. *He has offered himself a sacrifice for sin. Every priest has something to offer; this man, the man, Christ*

Jesus, offered himself, through the eternal Spirit, a sacrifice for sin; and now the sacrifice is offered, and a door is opened, and a new and living way consecrated through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.

Now, who can be wise enough to find out a reason, why all men do not enter in at this door? Just as all men entered in at the other door, which the devil and Adam opened, to run from God; all could run in at that door. Why then do all not go in at that door which Christ has opened, and God has revealed, and which cost Christ so dearly to work our way back again, for mankind to return to God? If we go about to inquire into the reason, we shall find it very little, for there is all the reason in the world we should serve God, and seek our own happiness; there is all the reason in the world we should part with sin and iniquity, and with the devil's work, which he wrought, if we only knew but how. Now this, I say, is a great privilege, that God has afforded to the sons and daughters of men, that they may know; for here the terms of the gospel and of salvation, are brought into a narrow compass, to a short sum, there is no need of a catalogue of them; those who will be ruled by the wicked one, must have their part with him; and those who will be ruled and governed by the Holy One, shall have their part with him, *that where he is, there they may be also.*

Is this in the power of man's will? No, there lies the mischief in the will of man, for you cannot but know by experience, if a man may have his own will, he will always run headlong to destruction, and run in the way of wickedness. And if ever he comes to turn out of that way, into the way of righteousness, he must do it in a way that is a cross to his own will. Some have said, because we have spoken of the free grace of God, in a way that is universal, of his kindness to mankind, through Jesus Christ, they have said, that we hold free-will, that men might be saved if they would; but alas, we have tried it, and we have an universal knowledge, that is able to convince us, and all the world, that it is far enough from our own will. Man is far enough from being able to save himself, from being saved by his own will. He can run on to damnation, there is a current goes with his affections, and

with his corrupt desires, they go with the current and stream; as long as a man goes on in sin, he swims down the stream.

Now many, after they have long gone on in sin, and their evil ways, they think of returning to God; for they think there is a better way, a surer and safer way for their souls, than to go on in wickedness. So there is, if there be so, said the sincere soul, O that I might walk in it. Why do you not? I am convinced that I see a more excellent way than my way is, a better walking and conduct than my life is; but alas! it is too hard for me to walk in it. Why? What is the matter, what makes it hard? Because of my own will; I cannot walk in it and have my will. I cannot walk in it, and enjoy my affections and desires, and my interest in the world. This is no wonder that you tell me; now you are convinced of a better way, and would walk in it, and you cannot walk in it, but you must take up a daily cross; we might all of us say the same, and read [within] it before [taking the cross up]. I pray God you may come to read it within, what a cross it is you are to take up, and what way it is you are required to walk in. The cross is the way of God, the way that leads to Heaven; it is a narrow way; but the way that the devil would have you to walk in, is a broad way, there is no problem [of self-denial] in it.

O would you but once come to experience how hard it is to walk in that way that leads to life, you would find that you cannot do it without self-denial. It comes to this point; I have read of it before, but now I find it so. Such a man, or such a woman, will seriously apply themselves to live blameless, harmless, and inoffensive towards God and men; they will set a bridle, and a watch before their mouths, that they may not speak a vain word; they will take care of the frame and temper of their minds, that they sin not in their thoughts, that they sin not with their lips, nor with their hands. This is not as I was accustomed to do; I was used to having my liberty; now I find myself yoked, I dare not sin against God. Now I find, by experience, what I heard before, that no man can follow Christ, without denying himself, and taking up a daily cross.

I would have you experienced in this work; wicked men think it a pleasant life, to follow the devil's work, and to walk in the broad way; but the way of self-denial is uneasy, there is much strife and opposition in that way. If I have a mind to speak a vain word, I am limited; if I have a desire to wrong my neighbor, and cheat and defraud him, I am limited; I am not to do it, that belongs to the broad way. If a man will seek after the Lord, and walk in the way of holiness and righteousness, the end of which is peace, he will find it is a narrow way, in which he cannot enjoy his own will. Such a one must be a David, who said, *I behaved myself as a weaned child*; that is, as one that is afraid to be beaten.

But you will be ready to say, I am a man, and not a child. I have come now to be a man, a man of parts; I have seen much, and read much, and would you have me become a child? How great a man was David? If you speak of a man, he was a man of dignity and honor, a man of valor and experience; yet when he speaks with respect to the frame of his mind before the Lord, he said, he behaved himself *as a weaned child*, as one that feared to be beaten, feared to commit an offence. He feared the rod of his God upon him. He feared something of judgment upon his conscience. David was an old testament man, but he had regard to what never grew old, which is the same in all times, new and old: *Alpha* and *Omega*. Christ Jesus was his leader, before he was born of the Virgin Mary; his word was a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths. David had acquaintance with God, who did lift up the light of his countenance upon him.

And when Christ himself came to preach upon earth, he said himself, everyone that comes into the kingdom of God, must be converted and become as a little child. He must become as a little child in simplicity and subjection [and innocent again]; he must be under government; he must become as a little child, or he must in no way enter the kingdom of Heaven; they must not think to enter into Christ's kingdom because they are men; men of parts, men of courage, men of understanding, learned doctors, masters of liberal arts and sciences.

That may help to make them men, but they must become children. All their wits, and parts and manhood, courage and valor, will do them no good; for little children, babes and sucklings, may understand more than they of Divine Mysteries, and have greater communion and communion between God and their souls than they; so that all who enter into Christ's kingdom, must become like little children.

So that here is a way provided by Jesus Christ, for man to come again into the favor of God, which is by Christ alone, not by anything that a man can do; Christ must be their leader and their counselor, he alone can give them the true knowledge of God. No man can know the Father but the Son and he to whom the Son reveals him. Men can never attain to the saving knowledge of God by study, and by argument, reading books, and listening to commentators or observers of matters of religion. Time would fail me to speak of the multitude of books that have been written about the knowledge of God. You must come to Christ for divine knowledge; theology, the knowledge of God, and divine and heavenly things, are from Christ. He shall have this divine knowledge, however simple a man may be, who comes unto Christ for it; he cannot have it any other way, for God has ordained this way. Said God, he shall have it of my Son, who is the Reconciler, the Mediator between God and man; he shall be beholden to Christ for all. All men's own works and labors will not justify and save them, for God has committed the whole work of salvation to Christ. One would think it should be no great matter for men to lay aside their own works and duties, and submit to Christ; but I tell you it is very hard, and I found it hard myself.

Men think by reading and learning, and hearing this and the other man's notions and opinions, they may be edified and profited, and come to the true knowledge of God, but while they are waiting upon God, in the way he has appointed, they may receive knowledge from Christ, and be more certain and infallible in that they do know, than by consulting all the wise men and learned doctors in the world. For no man knows all at once; and no man

knows all things either. It is not a thing necessary that man should know all things in relation to God, for as he is in himself, he is incomprehensible. No man knows the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him; yet what he knows of God, he may know it is certain and infallible.

Suppose a man know nothing of God, except that *he is the searcher of the hearty and trier of the reins*. There are many that have tried this, and say they know it, that yet doubt whether there is a God or not. But when God comes within them, and convinces them of sin, and searches them, and brings judgment upon them for what they have done, then they know infallibly, that God is *the searcher of hearts*. This is not a man's work, this is the work of God; if I find God does approach my spirit, I know it is God's work; Now I have gotten some knowledge of God; buy how did I get it?

Who gave it to me? No one but he who has all knowledge; he who was with the Father from the beginning, and was glorified with the Father before the world began; he gave me this knowledge; and how did he give it to you? *By his Spirit; for he has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into my heart*; and that Spirit of Christ searches the hearts, and tries the reins. He tells you this is evil that you have done, this is what God, who made you, has against you; this you must forsake, and this you must repent of; here I have an infallibility of what I know, but I cannot get rid of my evil.

Now, if I can believe in the power by which my heart is searched, and trust in him who has begun to deal with me, then his work is not only to reveal his light to convince me, but to put forth his power to convert me;* so that by the power of that truth *by which my heart is searched*, I come to be converted, and turned from my sin, and break off from it; and when I am broken off from it, I am sure, and have a certainty that it is so, that I am broken off from such a sin, and that my heart is turned against it; I am sure that now I hate it, and detest it, and that God has turned my inclinations another way. I am sure this is God's work, I can witness this infallibly, that something is now done in order to my redemption. But there is something yet remaining to be done. What then? If I will go step by step by following

my guide, I shall be sure to be making some progress every day, to that state to which the Spirit of Christ will lead me. These persons come to a certainty of knowledge by their own experience.

[Without the power of God working **in** you, there is no victory, there is no overcoming. There are three sources to the power of God being released to purify you: 1) power in the true hope and gospel, 2) power in the inward cross of self denial, and 3) the power in the name of Jesus. This **power of God works in us**, and keeps us through faith to salvation, which is to be delivered from sin. Christendom today is without the cross and without the true hope; and so without the power of God, left only as a form (hollow shell) of the original Christianity, without the new life of the new creature, without holiness, wallowing in sin, boasting of their imperfection, perishing, whose end is destruction. For without the power of God released to change a man, his heart remains full of sin and unacceptable to God, whatever his lips may say in the form of worship. The only way to be changed is to carry the inward cross of self-denial with obedience to his spoken and heard words; when waiting on God, meditating on the name of Jesus; with the true hope in your heart: the combination of all, to access the changing, infinite power of God to work in you, cleansing you, purifying you, delivering you from all sin, and bringing you into union with God into his kingdom, while on earth and then forever.]

Some will say, take heed of being deluded and deceived by the Quakers, and I agree with them. Take heed of being deluded by anybody; if any go about to persuade you to believe what you know to be a lie, I am sure they are about to delude you. I would have everyone to have an evidence in themselves of what they believe.

Does a man believe he is a drunkard just because the scriptures declare

judgment against the drunkards? The scripture says, *woe to the drunkards of Ephraim*. There are judgments denounced against the drunkards in the old testament; consider the scripture does not tell such and such by name, that they are drunkards; but the Spirit of God, by a work and operation upon a man's conscience, singles him out, and charges him with the guilt of drunkenness [in unmistakable words easily understood].

There is a great condemnation pronounced against whoremongers in scripture, but it does not tell us who they are by name; but their consciences tell them so, and gives infallible judgment against them; and says, you are the man, you are a person that God judges and condemns. Whoremongers and adulterers will be judged by God, but that does not concern you or affect you, unless you are one. I may read about this a hundred times in the scripture, and not have a reflection in my own conscience, unless I am guilty. But when God meets with a guilty person, and judges and condemns him, there will be an infallibility in what such a person knows. If a whoremonger is rejected upon by his own conscience, if his conscience tells him he is guilty of whoremongering, even if the whole world would flatter him, and say he is not guilty, he would certainly know that they are telling him a lie.

So that here is no dependence upon any man's judgment, but upon an invisible judge in a man's own heart. Who shall delude and deceive this man who has an experiential knowledge [by God's judgment heard]? Those people who try to turn him from his evil ways are not trying to deceive him. These do not go about to deceive him, who will tell him he must listen to that principle of truth and holiness in his own heart; rather the deceivers are those who tell him he is converted and leave him in that state of sin, when he has not been converted. But when he is really converted and turned from sin to God, some will tell him he is deluded and deceived; I pray God every one of us may be so deceived. Said the apostle, *we are [by evil report] deceivers, and yet we are true*. All that are truly converted, though men cry out that they are deceivers, though they are called deceivers, yet they are still

true; they have come to the favor of the knowledge of God, through Christ; and so shall certainly come to be partakers of the inheritance that is undefiled and that does not fade away.

Friends, you know that this has been the proposition of all the prophets, and apostles, from the beginning to this day; the thing that they have proposed to the sons and daughters of men, has been to inquire after the knowledge of the true God. It has been wonderful to consider, what the devil has done to present many doctrines that he has found out, and stirred up others to invent a company of Gods, that other people have adored and worshipped. It is hard to find any nation that does not worship some God; it is natural for man to desire to come to some God; he thinks he must come to some God, and cannot be happy if he does not come to God in some way. But the devil has invented many Gods, and set the people to worshipping of idols, the work of men's hands; such Gods that are so far from helping their worshippers, that they cannot help themselves, they cannot wipe off the dust from their own faces; and if they fall down, they cannot rise again.

But this is not our case, we have but one God preached among us, and but one Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator between God and man. Our condition is happy, in having but one God, in comparison of those who have many Gods.

If the true God, that you worship, were only trusted in, you would be the happiest people in the world. If you would inquire seriously, you will find that the devil has in this nation, and in this age, stirred up people to worship as many Gods, as he did in other nations in ancient times, among the *Sidonians* and *Amorites*, and others.

But you will say, we worship one God, and trust only in one God, and one Christ, and one Holy Ghost, the only living and true God.

Do not tell me what god a man *professes* to worship, but rather in what god he trusts; that names his god. Whatever a man trusts in, that he makes his

God, whether it is gold or silver, or the honors and pleasures of this world; if he trusts in these things, he makes them his God. Let a man but search and try himself, and he will find something has gotten a place in his heart that he cannot part with for Christ's sake. He will be ready to say, I cannot part with my house and land, with my wife and children, and my goods and possessions, because I have a confidence in them, and believe they will do me good, and are a defense for me; I trust that in times of peril those things may do me good. Here is a divine adoration, here is that trust, that confidence, that all true Christians ought to have in the true God, but instead their trust is placed in these earthly things. Now, wherever the trust and confidence is placed in transitory and earthly perishing things, these men trust in transitory Gods.

Nothing so shows that a man makes the Lord his God, as when he casts all care on him, and puts his whole trust in him, when he makes a profession and acknowledgment of his dominion and greatness, and of all his other perfections, that by his wisdom he can procure for them all that is good, and by his power, keep off from them, and secure them from evil. When I make the Lord my trust and refuge, and trust him for my God, I choose him before all the Gods of the heathen, and trust in him above all things under heaven, upon the account of the profundity of his wisdom, and the almightiness of his power. When a man has this sense upon him, he will walk before the Lord with resignation of mind, and be willing to be at God's disposal, and he will not only give up himself to God, but he will hearken to him, and hear his voice when he speaks to him.

[We must know that God is perfect, kind, pure, gentle, wise, and all-knowing. He loves us beyond our ability to measure; whatever he asks of us is perfect, is asked in love, is asked for our benefit, is the best possible thing we could ever do. We place ourselves in his hands, with no reservations, because we know he is far better able to guide us than we are by our own minds; in fact when we grasp his infinite love, wisdom, and power - then we rush to offer

all to him, nothing held back. The only thing he asks us to forgo is what he knows is necessary for our progress to purity, holiness, righteousness, and a life of perfect noble words and deeds, here and then forever.]

God, who at sundry times, and in several manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his Son. But, where is his Son, you will say? He is in Heaven; but though he is the high and lofty one that inhabits eternity, yet he dwells with meek, humble, and contrite hearts, who tremble at his word. If I am one of the number of those who tremble at God's word, I have that promise that he will come home to me, and dwell with me. It is well for you, if the over-ruling power of God has prevailed upon you, that you can be willing to be at God's disposal, and say, Lord, what would you have me to do?

Therefore, friends, I would advise you all to love your own souls, that when God desires your hearts, you would give them up to him, that there he might delight to dwell, and have his habitation. Harken to God's voice, and have regard to his word, which is a more sure word than any man's in the world. There is a more sure word of prophecy, said the apostle, to which you will do well to take heed. This will check you, and reprove you, when you do evil, and show you in what you have transgressed, and will encourage you, and be a comfort to you, when you do what is good. This will make you wise to salvation, and thoroughly furnish you, and give you understanding for every good work. This word will tell you what you must not do, lest you offend God, wound your conscience, and grieve the Holy Spirit; this word will help you so to speak, as to administer grace to the hearers; such a one as has regard to this word, has a chaplain in his own bosom, that will direct and teach him how to steer his course, and order his conduct among men, and how *to serve God acceptably*. This *High Priest's lips will preserve knowledge*, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who speaks to us in his word; we can do nothing but by his direction. If you come to him to lead you into all truth, he will bring you to the Father, and reconcile you to him, that so

you may obtain his favor and everlasting life. When one of Christ's disciples said, *show us the Father, and it will satisfy us*, Jesus said too him: *he who has seen me, has seen the Father, so why do you then say, show us the Father?* If you subject yourselves to Christ, and to the government of his Spirit, he will bring you to that life and immortality, that fades not away.

This has been our labor and travail from time to time, to preach Christ among you, and not to preach ourselves and gather a church for ourselves, but to gather a people unto Christ, who is Lord of Heaven and Earth. We would preach Christ Jesus the Lord; we would not have you admire men's words and sayings, and charge your memory with them; but we would have you remember the words and sayings of Christ, who is the great Mediator, to reconcile man again to God, that you may know him by his power, working effectually in your hearts; we labor for nothing else, and we want nothing else. *We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in, Christ's stead, be reconciled to God;* That you may so live, that whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, you may do it all to the glory of God, your great Creator, who has given his Son to die for you, and redeem you from all iniquity, that you might be a peculiar people, zealous for good works.

Let God have all the honor and glory, for all his mercies and blessings; let us render unto him hearty praises, and thanksgiving, for his wonderful love, and acknowledge that it is a great privilege that we may obtain by Jesus Christ, even to be brought again to have the knowledge of the living God, which we lost by our transgression.

His Prayer after Sermon

GLORIOUS are you in your appearance, O Lord! And very wonderful is your power, and your ways past finding out. And in this your glorious day, you are opening a way for the sons and daughters of men to turn to you.

And, O Lord! Those whose eyes you have opened, rejoice and are glad, because they have seen the way of your salvation; and the breathings of their souls are, that their feet may be kept therein, and that they may make strait steps in their way to your kingdom.

O Lord! We are sensible that our strength, and our power, and our ability is only in you; and therefore are the souls of your children bowed and subjected to you, waiting for the renewing of your power, that as our temptations are renewed from day to day, you would make known your power in us, that we may feel the stretching forth of your hand to save your little ones out of the hands of the destroyer.

And so, powerful God of Life! Break forth more and more in your glory, and make known your power in expelling the clouds of darkness and ignorance, and bring the minds and understandings of your people to know you more and more, until they come to the blessed inheritance, among the saints in light.

Holy and powerful Father! Break in upon your people by your Almighty Power, and scatter the dark clouds of temptation, and cause the light of life to shine upon them; you that have commanded the light to shine out of darkness, do you shine into the hearts of the sons and daughters of men. Open their hearts, that they may receive the truth, and make tender their hard hearts, that they may live to you who made them, and give a comfortable account to you of their thoughts, words, and actions; and let them turn to the Lord before it is too late to repent of them.

Powerful God of Life! Your mercy and loving kindness does abound, to a little remnant who believe in Christ and trust in your name. You have been with them in their fiery trials and tribulations, and to this day you have been the glory of our assemblies and the joy of our meetings. We are sensible of your holy power working in our souls, and of your renewing your love upon us. All of those who desire a full sense of your love, who are seeking and

crying after you for your love, O let them be brought to a due sense of you the living God! O arise for the help and the comfort of the sorrowful, the sighing, and the needy soul. Pour forth the treasures of your love upon those who follow hard after you, and breathe for deliverance; that so, powerful God of Life! praises may arise to you for all your mercies, and abundant blessings, for your goodness and loving kindness, bestowed upon us from time to time.

Most powerful God of Life and Light! Let the eye of your favor be turned upon this land of our nativity; spare the inhabitants of this city and nation, that they may seek after you; let them know the weight of your hand upon them, to bow them down to humility and brokenness of heart; give them repentance for their sins.

Living God of Life! Display your power to all, from the highest to the lowest among us, and advance the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom you have given a name above every name; and let his kingdom and glory be exalted over all, and shine in the midst of us.

Blessed Father of Life! Give wisdom to our counselors, that they may counsel for you; make known your will, and send help from Heaven to all who stand in need and who wait upon you for it; give them your Holy Spirit, that they may be guided in your way. Let your Son Jesus Christ have the steering and governing of all things, and let glory be rendered to your great and worthy name, and keep us in the love of God and in union with one another; let the stroke of your power remain upon the hearts of all whom you have touched at this time; let them be bowed down always in your holy worship, and remain in a belief of your truth, and cease to do evil, and learn to do well, and walk acceptably before you, so that transgression may be finished and sin and iniquity may be put an end to; and that truth and righteousness may be set up and shine among us, and that our souls may rejoice in you, that we may magnify and praise your power, and glorify your name; for you are worthy of all honor, praise and glory, and humble

thanksgiving, for the manifestation of your love and power. All which we desire to offer you through Jesus Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON VII

The Inward Preacher; or, the Office of Conscience

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, June 21, 1692

My Friends,

MANY have been sent among you and have declared their testimony for the truth from living experience so that you might all be brought to wait for the testimony of truth in yourselves. This is what will stand you in stead, to know the testimony of truth in your own hearts to be for you; therefore you are to wait, especially at such times as these, to hear the voice of truth in your own souls. For whatever the preacher preaches, if the truth in your own heart does not speak peace, it is not well with you. Whatever testimonies are born of the truth itself; it is the truth that must bear testimony of you, that unerring word, which gives to every one an infallible evidence of their peace with God, or against what hinders them.

You know our labor has been to persuade all people to hearken to the truth in them, and to make it their business, and travail, and endeavor, that they might have unity with the truth in their own hearts, that their consciences may not condemn them.

For such as you, in whom God has raised his witness and has exalted the truth for a judge, you are not ignorant or covered over with darkness, as

many others are; you do not remain in doubt, but you know the truth, and have an answer of peace in well-doing, and a condemnation in evil-doing; not administered to you only by preachers without, but by the evidence and demonstration of the Spirit of God in your own hearts. This is that standing mystery which God has raised, which can never be put down again, but as each one may put it down in themselves.

I grant that men may put it down. You have read, and had it plainly witnessed to you, even killing the just and crucifying the Lord of Glory; and of spiritual Sodom, and Egypt. These things you have read of, and you that are turned to the light, know the meaning of those sayings, by woeful experience; for whenever you have turned aside, from a due subjection to the grace of God, by which we are convinced, then there has been a piercing, and crucifying of the Son of God afresh, and vexing and grieving the Holy Spirit, by which you should be saved to the day of redemption. Then there has been anguish and tribulation upon your souls; and if this is minded, it will plant a fear upon your minds, and make you afraid to do so again; but where this tribulation and anguish is neglected and put off, there a habit of sin takes away the sense of sin. You know many have had more judgment at some time upon them for a vain word, or a vain thought, than afterwards they have come to have for the most abominable wicked action. How came this to pass? Was sin ever the better? Or has it changed its nature? No; but they are further off from the sense of the evil of it. This is the word of truth, to which you must stand or fall; this is the stone, that whoever falls upon it, shall be broken and tendered; but if they stay until the weight of truth falls upon them, it will grind them to powder.

They will have a life of liberty, regardless of what the truth says. I will have my liberty, and use my tongue as I like; I will be wanton and proud, and envious and malicious, though I know these things are of no value, and the witness in my conscience testifies that these things are wicked, and contrary to the will of God; yet I will have them. Whoever comes to this mind, the stone is near falling upon them, and they will be ground to powder; they are

like to barren earth, which bears thorns and briers, and is rejected, and is *near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned*. Therefore, friends, I entreat you to hearken to the word of the Lord, it is a holy word, and an old word; many have professed it. There are many preachers that will cry hearken to the word of the Lord in such a chapter, and such a verse. My testimony this day is, hearken to the word of the Lord. But where shall we find it, some will say? I tell you, it is written with the finger of God in your own consciences; and it is either for you, or against you. Let your profession among men be what it will, this Minister of the Covenant has no respect of persons, or regard to profession; he will not excuse this or that man, because he makes a greater profession of his name than others. This rather is his judgment, and his condemnation shall be more swift and sharp upon him who makes a profession of Christ's. If judgment begins at the house of God, what will the end of them be that obey not the gospel of God. Those who take upon them a strict profession, they do greater dishonor to God, than those who cry out there is no reforming; there can be no living without sin. These profess what they do, and they do as they profess. But when people come to profess holiness and righteousness, and profess a power also by which righteousness is obtained, but live not strictly according to their profession; these are those who cause the name of God to be blasphemed among the Heathen more than those who say there can be no living without sin.

Now this witness of God has no respect to, but has respect to the state and frame of the mind of a man or woman, that they serve God with, whether it is with sincerity and uprightness of mind, and with breathing desires, that they may know the good and acceptable will of God, and what is well-pleasing in his sight; and that they might perform what is according to his heavenly will. Where this sincerity is, where this cry of the soul is, the Lord has regard to it; but where people's religion is only to bear up a profession, and hold up an external fellowship and communion one with another; when this sincerity is lacking, the Lord abhors their worship, it is an abomination to God, and no benefit or advantage to themselves. It is not for the glory of

God, that they make a profession, but for some design to themselves, and so they become abominable.

This was the state of Israel of old, and it is the state of a great many now, that think they do great matters, if they conform so far to the truth, as that outwardly they may not be charged with a lie, and that they are of such a society. It is well if some would come so far as to maintain their society with God's people, and their external profession; but if they have no regard to the truth in their own consciences, what is their profession worth? What will all your unity with them signify? If there is a breach between God and your own soul, who can heal that breach? What will the profession signify and amount to at last, except, *go you cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels?* And all the reason to be rendered for it, is this; *depart from me, you are workers of iniquity.* He did not say in that sentence, you are liars, you never prophesied in my name, and you never preached in your streets; but He allowing what they said to be truth, that they had made a profession, and held communion with other Christians, allowing these things, yet notwithstanding it is, *go you cursed*; and the reason of the sentence is, *you are workers of iniquity.*

Let the dread of the God of Heaven rest upon you. My friends, it is another thing to make a profession of the Lord God of Heaven and earth, than most are aware of; *let every one that names the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.* What is iniquity? It is all things that men or women do to gratify their own wills, which is contrary to the will of God;* that is iniquity. Where did all men have liberty? Where had Adam and his sons their liberty to fulfill their own wills, and to contradict the will of God? Yet nothing is more common in nations, countries and families, than for people to assume a liberty to perform and fulfill their own wills, and to bring about their own interest, designs and contrivances, though at the same time they are convinced that it is contrary to the will of God. Where this liberty is taken, there iniquity is wrought. Iniquity is unjust because it is committed against him upon whom we have all our dependence every moment for life and

breath, for food and raiment, and everything we enjoy; we have a dependence upon that God that made us, yet vain men and women assume a liberty of gratifying their own wills, and setting up for the flesh.

[* For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another. So that **you cannot do the things you wish.** Gal 5:17

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "**If any man desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.** Mat 16:24

So that you should **not live the rest of your time in the flesh in the lusts of men, but [live] to the will of God.** 1 Pet 4:2

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of heaven; **but [only] he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.** Mat 7:21]

You may remember that passage of the good apostle, when he saw some libertine professors of Christianity, grow loose and careless; they thought it was well they did acknowledge God in their meetings and worship, but as to the affairs of the world, they had forgotten that God was concerned in those things. The apostle takes notice of such libertine looseness, *go to now, you that say, today or tomorrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain; whereas you know not what shall be tomorrow: For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little while, and then vanishes away. For that you ought to say, if the Lord will, we shall live and do this or that. You ought to live in subjection to him who made you; you ought to have regard to God's honor in whatever you do. Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* Is this not scripture? Is not this found among the apostle's writings? Do not we hold the name of Christians, which was given to them at Antioch? Yes, we

are called Christians, and these writings of the apostle are holy writings, and what then is the matter that we take so little notice of them? That men do not apply these wholesome exhortations to the particularities of their conduct, but that they go from country to country, and from one place to another and do what they please, without having any regard to give their subjection to the great God. This looseness has brought into the minds of some, such a liberty, that they live without God in the world; when they go sometimes to religious meetings, and when they hear the name of God mentioned, it may be there is a little awe upon their minds; and they have some regard to that God that gave them breath and being for the present. But if there is not religion, if there be not a tie, (religion signifies a tie, a being bound to God), if men are not bound and tied to God, by what is made known to them, everyone will desire that which is good in their own eyes.

To walk after the imagination of your own heart is worse than
worshipping idols. Jer 16:11-12

Yet they say to everyone who walks after the imagination of his
own heart,

"No evil shall come upon you." Jer 23:17

Therefore it is necessary for you, my friends, above all people, you who have come to a measure of the ministration of the Spirit, to know and to mind what it speaks. Such a thing I did this morning, and I am reprov'd for it; such a thing I did well, and I am justified and warranted in the doing of it. Thus it is when a thing is well or ill done. Sometimes some men act two or three days together, and never bring their actions, to the rule; that is, like a man that is building and never minds his rule, so what he builds up, tumbles down again upon his head. You know there is something in you that has a speaking voice, an infallible voice, and gives judgment on your actions, and passes a sentence, either of justification or condemnation upon you. If you would live so as to answer God in what you do, you need not fear answering men. I do not fear answering men in all I do or speak. If I only answer to my own conscience, I fear no man, though he is of another persuasion and

judgment opposite to me. If I keep peace in my own conscience, I shall answer the principle of truth in my adversaries consciences, though they hate me, and despise me, and seek occasion against me. If my actions answer the truth of God in my own heart, they will answer the truth in any man's heart. This makes a man as bold as a lion.

When the people of God obtain a reputation, to be true and just, and holy and righteous, all men will expect holiness and righteousness at their hands. What if I profess to be one of these people? If I do not have the truth in my own heart, though I put on this reputation as a cloak to hide my insincerity, the lack of that truth takes away my courage. It is truth that has a power in all men in the world, and it is the power of holiness and righteousness that makes wicked men afraid; and therefore the apostle argues upon that subject, the magistrate is clothed with power. What power does he have? the power of justice and the power of the sword. What sword does he have? A sword of justice; and *he is a terror to evil-doers, but a praise to those who do well*. It is true, if I have done evil, if I meet with a man that is but my equal; if in buying, and selling, and commerce, I have wronged him, and deceived him, though he is not aware of it, yet I am afraid of him, I am fearful that he will discover me and find me out. But if I speak the truth, and do what is honest in the sight of all men, I shall not fear any man. There is no nation under Heaven, but there is a principle of truth to be found among them in the hearts of men. If I act according to the principle of truth in my own heart, there is the same principle of truth in all men. If I walk up to the principle of truth in myself, I shall likewise walk up to the principle of truth in all men's hearts; if my own heart does not condemn me, all the world cannot condemn me.

If professors were resolved to answer the principles of truth in their own hearts, and adhere completely to what they profess, they might live courageously. Truth will crown them with victory. But if they do not live according to the rule and standard of truth, they are like *salt that has lost its savor, which is trodden under the feet of men*. But where all are one in

truth, they are gathered into the truth, and they will live according to it, so far as they are convinced of it. If you would give them a world, they will not give away a hair's breadth of the truth which they have professed. When truth thus comes to have dominion, then truth shall overspread the earth, and the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, and righteousness shall rule, and the scepter of it is swayed over the nations, and those who rebel against it, shall be broken by it,* and those who are found in it, shall have dominion, and they shall condemn hypocrites and dissemblers. Now if you wish to grow up in this dominion, you have an opportunity for it, because the truth is revealed in your own hearts.

[Crisp and other early Quakers speak of the time of righteousness spreading across the earth, all kingdoms be subjected to Christ, sin being done away with in the world. This has been spoken of by most of the prophets also. The time fast approaches when the world will be ruled by the Lord, through his presence in his saints.]

They who undertake to walk in the truth, merely from what they hear the ministers of truth preach, laying up in their minds a company of doctrines, notions, and tenets, they will stumble and fall; but those who will hearken to the truth in their own hearts, and regard the voice of it in all their ways and undertakings; these have a Minister at home with them, they have a chaplain in their own houses. If there is anything they do not know, and if they do not know what to do, they ask the Minister of the sanctuary; others will ask their ministers, but your minister is at home [in your heart] with you. Where has God appointed any man to rule over your conscience? No, God has appointed Christ only to rule and govern your conscience, to be the author of faith and the finisher of it too. You that have come to the dispensation of the Spirit of Christ, keep to the testimony in your own hearts; then you have fellowship with one another in the truth; and you have cause to bless God for it, that God has so opened the hearts of one toward

another, that the suffering of one, is the suffering of all; and the consolation of one, the comfort and rejoicing of all. But alas! Who is in this fellowship? Only those who are in fellowship with the truth, in their own hearts, and really so. If a man shall break fellowship with truth in his own heart, he will make no bones of breaking fellowship with his brethren. As soon as men break fellowship with truth, they are unruly, heady, troublesome, and make no matter of splitting, and tearing, and rending of fellowship with others. How does this come to pass that you have done this; you did not do such when you feared sinning against the witness of God in your own heart. But when men have once made light of the great minister of the gospel in their own hearts, it is an easy matter to make light of the rest; if, as Christ said, they have done so to the green tree, no wonder that they do so to the dry tree. *If they despise me (said Christ) do you think they will love you?*

It is most evident in a great many at this day, they dispute against truth, they have taken a liberty to speak contrary to the truth in their own hearts, and then they cry down the ministers of it. Do you think they do so who keep their first tenderness? When they were convinced, the power of the Lord rested upon them; when the power of the Lord first wrought upon you, and brought you to *yes* and *no*, and to plain simple language and habit, this was with joy and delight for Christ's sake. Those who keep up this tenderness and simplicity of mind, there is no scattering, nor rending, or tearing among them, they keep *the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace*, and they are kept together in one.

Friends, you have an opportunity in your hands; see that you make use of it. You may bear up, and not be deceived by men, or devils, if you keep faithful to the principle of truth in your own hearts. Let what reproach and persecution whatever come, here is a standard, a foundation and a rule, for you to be governed by, every hour of the day; search your hearts, and try your consciences by it. As you do this, and keep to the rule of the new creature, of the regeneration, being changed from a carnal birth to an incorruptible birth. *If you are born of the incorruptible seed*, the devil

cannot corrupt you, evil passions cannot corrupt you; if you keep up that foundation that is incorruptible in itself, then nothing will corrupt you, nor your ways and manners. If you will live according to the simplicity of the gospel, you will serve God and be examples to others in the life of holiness and righteousness; and by this God shall be glorified. This is what will shine forth to the whole nation, and give a good report to truth. But if any who profess the truth, are found false to their profession, and are found unholy, and deceive and over-reach their neighbor, they lose by it, and the devil rejoices at it.

Thus we know the life of righteousness is brought forth through the Spirit of truth, and out shines all, and will reach God's witness in those who are afar off, and bring them near; and happy and blessed are those who are found in this divine work, conforming their lives and conduct, according to the new creature; peace be upon them, and upon the whole Israel of God. There is a Minister that abides with you, that goes home with you, it is his testimony that you must stand or fall by. If any one should be a false professor, and be cried up, if he is not sincere, he has no peace; though he flutters awhile, and makes a show, the worm of guilt gnaws and torments him; such as these do not have peace with God, nor fellowship with the church. Though they seem to be alive, yet they are dead; as it was with the churches in Asia, they had a name to live, yet they were dead; though they have an empty name, such a one is a living man or woman, they are esteemed friends to the church, but though they are commended and cried up, and have a name to live, yet they are dead. *There are a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; they shall walk with me in white, said Christ, for they are worthy. I know your works, that you have a name that you live, and are dead.* See what Christ, the bright Morning-Star, could do: He could look into a meeting, and see whether few or many had only a name to live, or were really alive; if they were dead as to sincerity and truth, though they had been among the church, they would help to break it down, but not to build it up.

You who have this divine life still stirring in you, and feel the operation that

first quickened you to God; prize this principle of the divine life above all. What is there can rob you of it? Value not the friendship of the world. Alas, what can it amount to? Count it *as dung in comparison to Christ Jesus*; look upon all things with a sound eye. Peace with God is of that concern, that you cannot be happy here or hereafter, without it; the friendship of the world I can be without, and the customs and fashions of the world I can be without, I can spare these things; but the favor of God I cannot be without, and grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and a sincere profession of the gospel; I cannot be without these things.

My friends, though you do not make a show and flutter in the world, as some others do, yet your glory is within, those who are living members of this divine body, the glory, and beauty and brightness of such, appears in the sight of God. If you *grow in grace*, you will be a comfort to one another; and as the apostle speaks, *you are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men*. The Lord preserve and keep you simple, keep you in all sincerity, in that truth that has wrought in your own hearts, that you may have acquaintance with your teacher, that he may not be driven into corners; for you may do it, and stop his mouth, and silence him too. If you let your perverse will of mind rule, you may slay the just; but there will come a day of his rising, then down you go. Whatever men may get by it at present, when truth rises, when the Just One that was slain has a resurrection in them, then most certain down they go. While you have an opportunity in your hands, and an interest in the covenant of life, walk with God according to the counsel and dictates of his Holy Spirit, that you may be brought to a heavenly fellowship, and to partake of the good things that God has prepared for his children.

My friends, pray prize your seasons, let no day slip away, for fear you miss a day at last; wait upon the Lord, and let his fear and a holy awe be always upon your hearts. Then peace will be upon you, and there will be acceptance of all that you do. Mark the imperfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace; when he can reflect upon his past life, and say, I

have walked before the Lord with a perfect heart, and done what is good and well pleasing in his sight, and have not turned aside to the right hand or to the left, but the Standard of Truth has been the guide of all my spiritual and temporal actions. If truth has been your guide here, then truth shall be your portion hereafter. If truth guides you in your way, then you shall rejoice with the saints, and receive an inheritance with the people of God, and enjoy that glory and felicity which God has prepared for those who love him.

His Prayer after Sermon

EVERLASTING, glorious, eternal God of Life! Whose kingdom rules over all; your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; a glorious, blessed day has dawned, in which you are making your self known to the sons and daughters of men; and you have opened an eye in a remnant, (which the God of this world had blinded), to see the glory of this day. For though we have lived without God in the world, yet you are near to us, and you have called us to repentance, and inspired our souls with a desire to you, and to the remembrance of your name. Praise and everlasting thanksgivings belong unto you, who is the author of our salvation; who has reached out your hand and laid hold upon us, and sought us out when we did not seek you, and has made known your power and love for our redemption and salvation; and you will make it known more and more to every upright, sincere mind.

O powerful Father of Life! How has your power and goodness been revealed on our behalf for your own name's sake? You have stood by us in all our trials and exercises, and we have found you a God near at hand, and you have brought a remnant to desire nothing so much as the enjoyment of your presence; you have brought them to be sensible, that without you they can do nothing; therefore, in all our assemblies and meetings, we desire to be acquainted with your power, to hear your word which speaks life to our souls, by which we may live.

And dear and powerful Father! The continuation of your goodness among

us, does greatly engage the hearts of your children, to offer up praises and thanksgivings to you. You have inclined the minds and hearts of your people to wait upon you, and have opened their understandings to receive your heavenly truth, and those rich and heavenly treasures which you offer them, and have provided a cup of salvation to refresh the poor and needy soul.

O Living God of Life! Reach forth your hand, to support and save those who are breathing after you; those who are sensible of the lack of your presence, and are frequenting the assemblies of your people, with a hope and desire that they may enjoy a blessing from you.

Living God of Life! Touch their hearts with the finger of your power, let them know that you are ready to open the treasure of your love, and life unto them, through the Lord Jesus Christ, that their souls may be comforted, and they may offer up sacrifices of thanksgiving. And let all your children everywhere, render to your name, through Jesus Christ, blessing, and honor, and praise; you, who are God over all, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON VIII

Saving Faith, the Gift of GOD alone

Preached at Grace-Church-Street, March 8, 1687

YOU that are made partakers of that precious faith, which has brought you to an expectation of that redemption and deliverance that comes alone by Christ Jesus, your minds should be continually exercised in that faith which God has given you, for it is a great gift, a blessed gift that he has given to us to believe. This never came of ourselves, never was there a true believer in Christ Jesus, unless he received his faith of God; unless it was the gift of God; unless it was given to him to believe. Other sorts of believers there are

in the world, that can communicate their faith one to another, but the only true believers have their faith communicated to them by the Spirit of Jesus Christ; it is given to them, who believe; and because it is so excellent and so heavenly a gift, and has such large privileges belonging to it, it is necessary that everyone who receives it, should have a continual exercise in it; that you may know what it is, and what it does for you, and so come to be experienced Christians. Now all that are partakers of it, they do believe, and know in whom they have believed, and for what they have believed, even for the saving of their souls.

The true faith, that is the gift of God, it is not at all short of a complete saving of their souls; those who truly believe, their faith stands in one that they know is able to save to the utmost; and so a true believer has a great comfort in his faith above all other believers in the world; for he knows that his faith reaches to a complete redemption, unto a complete sanctification, unto a complete fitting of him for the kingdom of God.

[Without faith in becoming free from sin, redeemed, sanctified, purified, holy, and righteous, the power of God is not released. But with faith in the true hope and gospel, which faith and gospel is given in revelation from God to a man, the power of God is released to leaven the whole lump, to grow the tiniest mustard seed to the largest of all trees, to bring a man to see the salvation of his God. From the Word of the Lord within: "Faith within purifies." This takes time and patience; you will see gradual improvement, untill finally you will have overcome the world and its lusts — victory over sin and the devil.]

Now there is no such faith that ever was made by men, there is no such faith that all the wise and learned men upon the face of the earth, have either preached or given forth to be received; for if you come to consider the many forms of faith that men have ministered, they will fall short of saving their souls, they fall short of redemption, they fall short of fitting and preparing

them for the kingdom of God, and so they have not that comfort, that satisfaction, and that inward refreshment that belongs to the others, or that accrues to their souls, that have the faith of God's elect.

And in this has been the privilege of the people of God in all ages, as well as in our age; their faith has had a farther extent, it has reached farther in order to the good of their souls, than the faith of all others has done. What comfort can a serious Christian take in a faith that falls short of righteousness and redemption? Would it not make a man or woman's heart ache, to think I am a believer, but yet I have no faith that reaches to sanctification, and holy living, and redemption from sin? All my faith leaves me a sinner all my days; to my dying hour there is no mastery to be had, no getting victory over sin, it will prevail over me as long as I live.

This is not that precious faith that God's elect have been made partakers of, that works effectually in their souls; this is not that faith that can Minister real comfort to the poor soul that is laden with iniquity, and weary of sin. The faith that falls short of sanctification, and redemption from sin, is such a faith as God never gave his people; it came some other way into the world, and it has captivated most of the sons and daughters of men, and they have expelled the true faith (as much as in them lies) that saving faith that purifies and cleanses men from sin, and gives them victory over the world, and have got another faith in the place of it; and they live in their sins, and in their lusts and sexual desires, and still remain in captivity.

But God was pleased to hear and answer the cry of the souls of a remnant, (for which many of us have cause to magnify the name of our God), when we had traveled from mountain to hill, to seek where true comfort might be found, where one would say to us that we will be able to overcome. We know there is no eating of the tree of life until we do overcome; nor entering into God's kingdom until we are cleansed. Some told us that way was impossible, which made many of us to mourn. What, must we never be cleansed? Must this crooked heart, and perverse will, always remain? Must I be a sinner and

a believer? Must I be a sinner, and yet call myself a child of God? How can these things hang together? These have made many to faint in their minds, and to say as David did in his distresses, *one day I shall perish by the hand of Saul*. One day this corruption will be my ruin, for all my prayers, and hearing, and other duties and performances, this sin will be my utter ruin at last.

After many have mourned, and been afflicted by reason of the burden that was upon them, it has pleased the Lord to visit a remnant, and to open their hearts to make known the precious faith, the faith of God's elect; the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Is this the faith that is worthy of an earnest contending for, and preaching for, and suffering for? Who was ever so mad as to suffer for such a faith that leaves a man under the power of Satan and his own lusts? No wonder that such have a faith that is not worth contending and suffering for. Who will expose themselves for such a faith that will never do them a kindness? Now that faith which belongs to a purified soul, to one that is sanctified, that faith delivered to the saints, it is called a shield; when once a Christian comes to make use of this faith as a shield, he will find the power of it. A shield is what is worn by persons that are among enemies; it is for the defense and safeguard of one that is beset with enemies; and a good Christian is so situated.

There is a sort of blind Christians, friends to the world; their Christianity is worldly, and their faith worldly; but all true Christians are in the midst of their enemies, inward and outward; and if they did not have the shield of faith to defend them, they would certainly be wounded every day, they would be slain and lose their lives. The faith that is called a shield, it is that by which a Christian is to be defended and saved from harm designed against him every hour; *for the devil goes about like a roaring lion, continually seeking whom he may devour*. The apostle speaks more particularly to believers; the devil, your adversary, he is an adversary in himself, but more especially your adversary who are believers; who have believed to the saving of your souls. If you that believe that Christ is sent of

God, endued with power sufficient to break his head, and power to redeem you out of his service and bondage, the devil will be your adversary. Let him be so, if I have but my shield. This shield of faith is what, if a man uses it, will quench all the fiery darts of the devil.

If a man comes once to receive the faith, the true faith, faith in the power of God, this faith will remain victorious over temptation, but if you don't keep your faith in a continual exercise, you don't deserve the name of a true believer. If a man receives the true faith, and grow careless in his Christian exercise, will not this adversary, the devil, be about his ears? Will not he send forth his fiery darts at him; his temptations, and snares, and traps, to entangle him, though he is a believer, if he does not keep in the continual exercise of his faith? But a true Christian, that feels the power of the grace of God, and is in the continual exercise of true faith, he is like a watchman or sentinel, that has his armor on, and his shield ready. He knows he is on the borders of his enemies' quarters, and he keeps himself in perpetual watchfulness, in daily expectation of the devil's fiery darts. He keeps his shield in readiness. I see a temptation lies in such a thing, but I see the Lord's power is able to keep me out of it. I see there is profit or pleasure in the snare; it is a hook that is baited, but I see the hook through the bait, blessed be God; and I have a confidence in his power, and that he is able to keep me from that thing, for all the baits of profit, pleasure, or the friendship of the world.

A believer keeps in the exercise of his faith, and considers that his salvation is nearer than when he first believed. The people that first believe, are not immediately saved for the work of salvation is to be wrought after they believe; for *without faith, it is impossible to please God*; nevertheless the foundation of God stands sure for it is founded upon the power of God. When a man believes, the work is begun; though some foolish professors tell us that the work is done when the act is only in the mind. They will tell you what day of the month, and what a day of the year their conversion took place; but they do not know what they say. A man may possibly know when

it was brought about: A man may know about the time when God communicated faith to him; but he must know after he is a believer that then begins the work of salvation. The believer is to be saved from this or the other enemy; he is not immediately saved from all. There must be warfare, *a fighting the good fight of faith*, before these enemies of his salvation are overcome. The devil will not give up just because I am a believer, and because Christ *promised to break his head. The seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head*. I am now but putting on my armor for the battle is not fought; I have not yet gone through the peril of the fight. I am now buckling on my armor; when the fight comes, if I do not have my shield and my armor ready, I may be slain for all this. Some *have made shipwreck of faith*; they have not held it, nor kept the faith, but given it away. But said the apostle, *I have fought the good fight, I have kept the faith, I have gotten the victory*.

Jesus, the author and finisher [perfecter] of our faith. Faith is revealed, Gal 3:23, by revelation to a person. Learning about Jesus, him being crucified, him being resurrected, and believing those events to be true, **is not faith and is not believing in Jesus**. Faith is hearing the word of God, (and believing it to be the Son of God who is speaking); hearing **the word of God that is in your heart**, so that you may obey it. Faith is listening, hearing, and obeying. Faith comes when you are led by the Spirit of God. Until you are led by the Spirit of God, you are under the law, which is your schoolmaster; Paul says in Gal 5:18 : *if (and when) you are led (prompted, ordered, commanded) by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Gal 3:24. When you hear the Word of God in your heart, and when you obey the Word of God in your heart, then you evidence your belief by walking in faith.*

Faith is a journey. It has a beginning and a finish [or a perfection

of your faith]. Faith is a series of revelations. Listening to, and obeying Jesus, is him being the author and finisher of your faith. One does not hear the Lord speak to you once to be justified. You must keep hearing and obeying until your sinful nature has been crucified on the inward cross of self-denial, to then receive faith as part of the fruit of the Spirit, which frees you from the law and justifies you. Faith must be authored by Jesus, and he authors faith by revelation, but not just by your belief that the Bible truly states Jesus to be the Son of God. From the Word of the Lord within: "Until you can witness receiving faith from Christ, you are under the law." When you hear and witness Him author your faith, **he lays the foundation of your faith on rock;**

Whoever comes to me, and **listens to my words** and **does [practices, obeys]** them, I will show you what he is like. He is like a man who built a house, and dug deep and laid the foundation securely built on a rock; and when the flood arose, the torrent beat violently upon that house, but could not shake it because it **was founded on a rock.** Luke 6:47-48.

And when you hear Jesus speak his words to you, and you believe it to be him, **the foundation of your faith has been set on rock**, a rock so solid that the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it.

One does not hear the Lord speak to you once to be saved or justified. You must keep hearing and obeying until your sinful nature has been crucified on the inward cross of self-denial, to then receive *faith* as part of the fruit of the Spirit, which frees you from the law and justifies you.

Jesus finishes [perfects] your faith when you see him bring your

salvation:

To those who persistently and patiently wait for him he will appear the second time, not to bear sin, but **to bring full salvation.** Heb 9:28

For the grace of God that **brings salvation** ... Tit 2:11
looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to **bring eternal life.** Jude 1:21

Receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls. 1 Pet 1:9

You are saved through *faith*, and by *faith* your hearts are *purified*; but obviously in the beginning of faith, you are not purified, neither are you saved. Before purification and salvation, **your faith must be tested in several trials, in which you must grievously suffer** in order to be purified of sin. Before purification and salvation, **your faith must be tested in several trials, in which you must grievously suffer** in order to be purified of sin. You must contend for the faith, grow in the faith, build up your faith, increase in faith, perfect what is lacking in your faith, fight the good fight of faith, until victory when your faith is finished by the finisher; faith is a process and a journey, the end of which is to see Christ bring your salvation, to bring your eternal life.

So people, after they are believers, they must wait to have their faith strengthened by renewed manifestations of the same power in which it first stood. They must wait upon the Lord, and he will renew the strength of their faith, zeal and courage; and as temptations are renewed, they have new courage, and new strength and new ability, and all by this divine, spiritual and Christian exercise; they every day come to see the work they believed, what their faith tended to, see the work in some measure wrought. They see some enemy of their souls brought down and slain, and they see their souls

come up to a little more dominion than they had before; they see the devil's power is weakened more than before, and that he has not so much power as he has had over them. These things are some encouragement to rise up in a true Christian, living praises to God; seeing, by believing, he has found thus much encouragement by the working of the word. So why should he not wait on the Lord for the accomplishment of this work, that he may believe to the saving of his soul, that he may come to receive the end of his hope and faith, the salvation of his soul? Now, by thus keeping their faith in exercise, *they know that their salvation is nearer now, than when they first believed.*

It is not so with every one, for many who have believed, find their salvation is further away because of their negligence, professing one thing with their mouths, and doing another thing in their practice. There are some things which they believe and profess, and yet do the contrary; that puts their salvation further off, and draws them secretly into desponding, and into a losing their courage and zeal for God; the custom of sinning has at last taken away the sense of sinning. It is so with a man when he first transgressed the rule, he is somewhat tender, and does it with some regret; but after he becomes accustomed to doing it, he is pretty well at ease; and so by degrees he goes on towards the state of being past feeling. At last such sinners come to dying; they were dead once before, and were quickened through the operation of the Spirit of Christ Jesus; they were quickened, and they shall die again.

If you die a second time, pray remember it is a second time; you that are careless and ready to die, remember it is the second death that you are going to; and consider that if you die the second death, you shall have no part of the first resurrection. Better such had never been born at all, than after they have lived in hope, they lose it again.* This is what was upon my heart to commend unto you, that you may partake of this precious faith that has a tendency to the saving of the soul, and fitting you for the kingdom of God. Has God given you to believe? And will you not believe that you shall live without sin? If you do not come to obtain this precious faith, you will not

believe that you can come to live without sinning against God, and have the light of his countenance shining upon you. He that truly believes, his faith reaches to this, and he will say to himself, "I am saved a little from the liberty of my tongue, and from many sins of an evil practice. God has redeemed me from my vanity, pride and passion, and other things that were troublesome; the Lord has redeemed me from them. I see the work is going on, and I am nearer to the kingdom of God than when I first believed. I have gotten victory over many of my spiritual enemies, and I hope the Lord will carry me on, and keep me by his power through faith unto salvation. Till now the Lord has helped me, I have not fought in vain; I have not been beating the air, but God has given me victory over the tempter inwardly and outwardly, so that he could not prevail, while I kept the shield or faith over my head; but when I have been careless, and not exercised my faith as a shield, I have been weak as other men."

*Those of whom it would be better if they had never been born:

1) they had the true faith, based on their belief in the power of God to deliver them from all sins, the true hope, 2) they failed to exercise their faith to build their faith more, 3) they sinned repeatedly until they seared their conscience, being past feeling regret for sin and twice dead. These are those of whom the Lord spoke: And that servant who knew his lord's will and did not prepare himself or did not do according to his will shall be beaten with many stripes. Luke 12:47. Since faith is authored by Christ, and is the gift of God, which not all men receive, to then fail to follow-through to true salvation is worthy of greater punishment.

Until they have killed their conscience in sin, they can still hear and possibly be motivated to renew their efforts to exercise their faith; but for every act of disobedience they committed, after being convicted of some particular sin in the light, they must first effect the same number of acts of obedience before that sin is taken out of their heart. From the Word of the Lord within:

"When the light shows you something to do, every act of disobedience has to be carried away by an act of obedience."

You are not called to weakness and feebleness, but to the power of God, that you may be exercised in it, and by it be kept from the evil of the world. There is a possibility of being kept, if you are faithful to him who has called you, that is, *Christ Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation*; if you follow him step by step, and do not run headlong all at once. When you see a great deal of sin and corruption before you, and seek to master it in your own strength, you will lose the victory. The same word that shows us our sin, shows us our own inability to overcome it, and that we can do nothing without divine assistance; though we lie long struggling under the weight and burden of sin, we cannot of ourselves get victory over it, we cannot bring judgment into victory. God must have the glory of it.* If you keep to Jesus, he will carry on the work; you did believe in him, for he did work this faith in you, and he will carry on his own work, and his own work shall praise him. All others that talk of faith, and make an empty profession, they dishonor God; they talk of perfection, and living without sin, but never experience it, and so bring dishonor to God. If you wait to see this work carried on, if you believe and exercise your faith for the overcoming of your sins, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God, you will hereby bring glory to God, who alone is worthy of all praise; who is God over all, blessed for ever more. Amen.

[*No man is able to change his own heart by fleshly efforts. Only the supernatural power of God can change a man. No man can even understand his heart; only the wisdom of his creator can show a man his true condition. We are saved by grace. No man can glory in front of God. All the glory of our salvation, the miracle of our change, the supernatural mercy freeing us from the bondage of sin, is to the glory of our creator, and his alone.]

His Prayer after Sermon

MOST blessed, holy, and **unchangeable** Lord God! You have visited us by your dear Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ, to gather us to be a people unto you, who once were not a people, and once not gathered.

Everlasting Father! Your mercy is great, and your goodness is great, and to be greatly prized by us all; you had compassion on us to help us when we could not help ourselves; and you have laid help upon one that is mighty and able to save to the uttermost all that come unto you by him.

Blessed God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! We give you thanks for your abundant mercy and goodness extended to us. Lord God Eternal! Extend your mercy more and more and visit the children of men in all nations with the knowledge of your truth.

Blessed Father of Life! We pray and cry to you, that your work may go on, and that it may prosper and increase, and let the day of your visitation be extended, and reach forth your Almighty Arm, that the children of men may be gathered unto you.

Blessed Father of Life! You have shown mercy to our souls, and we have seen the goings of God in his sanctuary; you have, by an out-stretched arm, gathered us to be a people to yourself. You have appeared for your people in all ages, and you have saved them cut of oppression, and stilled the fury of the enemy. You have cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon, and made way for your people Israel, so that they passed through the Red-Sea as on dry land. Lord. Do so for your people spiritually in our day, and make way for them, and open the door that your gospel may spread, and run, and be glorified, and have a free course among us; and that your worship may be set up, and pure incense may be offered up to you. Lord! This is the cry of your servants, and the voice of their supplications to you, that your Spirit may be poured out abundantly and operate upon them, that your word may be profitable and welcome to their souls.

Blessed Father of Mercy! You have blessed your children and people with spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. You have given us your pleasure this day; and blessed be your name, you have refreshed our souls at this season. Let our praises ascend as a sweet smelling savor, and acceptable service to you. And for all your mercies and renewed favors and blessings to us, and to all your people, both here and everywhere, let thanksgiving and living praises be rendered to you; for you alone are worthy of all blessing and praise, who are God over all, blessed forever. Amen.



Text in Light Blue or **Bold Light Blue** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

SERMON IX

TRUTH'S TESTIMONY AGAINST THE Power of Sin and Satan

**Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church -Street June 3,
1688**

My friends,

GOD has made you witnesses of the great work of this day; the Lord I say has given you eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand the great work of the day; he has called you forth, that you may be faithful witnesses every one in your measure of what he has brought to pass in your sight, for he has revealed his power, the eternal power by which the world was made, he has revealed and manifested that power for the raising up of life, for the subjecting and bringing under death, and the power of it; for a great while a testimony that has been born in the nation has been unto death; he that has the power of death, that is the devil, he has had a great many who found out his power, to declare the continuance of it, that death must reign, and darkness must continue, and that the kingdom of the man of sin will never be brought down.

But now in our day, glory to God on high, there is another found come forth, the Lord Jehovah has uttered his voice, and who can but prophesy! The word of prophecy is given of God, and many are raised up to publish it, and

to sound forth the name of the Lord in the extirpation, the ruin, and destruction, that is and shall be brought upon the kingdom of iniquity, upon the kingdom of the man of sin, and to prophesy and declare in the name of the Lord, that righteousness shall run down like a stream; this is the gospel, the glad tidings that we have received from God and Minister unto you, that you might believe, and that in believing you might come to wait upon the Lord, and behold the accomplishment of it.

For, my friends, in this has consisted all the labor, travail and exercise, of the servants of the Lord; and for this cause have we suffered many things and gone through many trials because we have steadfastly believed; and therefore have we spoken that the Lord will by his Almighty power lay waste, destroy and bring to an end, that power, that the wicked one, the devil, has had upon the minds and spirits of the sons and daughters of men; and that he will set up and establish, in the very same soul a law of righteousness and a law of truth, and will cause the beauty of holiness to shine forth through them, where iniquity has lodged, where the wicked one has ruled.

Now you who have believed this testimony, you have received it, as glad tidings unto yourself, for you are weary of that old service, you are oppressed under the power of that strange prince. There was a kind of spirit and power that had ruled over you that neither gave you life nor breath nor had done any good thing, and yet you were subject; and many there were who through the grace of God came to see that a state and condition of sin and iniquity was not a happy state By a secret kindling of the spark of God's love in your souls there you knew him. There was a cry raised to be delivered, "If it is possible there is any deliverance, O why may not I be delivered? If there is any redemption, why may not I be redeemed! If there is a power that can set me free from the service of this wicked one, why may not I be set free?"

Ah, friends! Remember the days and nights in which these living cries run

through you, then you were poor indeed; then you were humble and broken, and the Lord beheld you in those days, he saw your state and condition, he saw how helpless you were, and did not he arise to help you. Did not a power spring forth in the day of your humility, in the day of tenderness, by which you became able to make war against the lusts of your own hearts, and did not you overcome and prevail in your war? Did not you make a progress by the power and by the grace that first raised desires in you? And as you made this progress and gained ground, as I may say, of your own corruptions, your faith came to be strengthened, and you were confirmed in the belief and in the obedience of the truth; and the more you trusted and relied upon him, the more did he manifest his power in you. He made known his ability and his strength in your weakness, so that you did become righteous, every one in your measure because there was such a power. That that power was able not only to save from a little, or from a few, but was able to save to the uttermost, to save out of all that was polluted and defiled, and to cleanse and purify the conscience from all dead works, and to enable you to serve the living God.

Now the Lord having thus established you and confirmed you by his power that you were found in the faith and firm in the believing of the truth my friends, all the labor, travail, doctrine and exercise of the preachers of the gospel, to those who were converted and confirmed, became very acceptable. So we preach, and so you believed; here was a unity in our faith, here grew up a fellowship, a communion in the faith; and the Lord became glorified in the assemblies, not only of those who preached, but of those who heard because each one had a place in the body; and each one had a favor of the word of life by which the body was nourished.

Now, my friends, what lies particularly upon me to leave with you for my testimony, (and I pray to God that it may be placed in the hearts of all of you who have believed), is that you may all wait upon the Lord, to see all that brought to pass, which you have believed. For I take notice by the eye that God has opened in me, by which he has made me to take care of his flock,

and sometimes put his word in my mouth, that I may speak a word in due season. I say, by this eye, I take notice of many that have received this precious faith, and thereby have believed the great and high state; their faith, reached so far, they knew that power was able to bring them into a perfect dominion over their lusts and passions, and corruptions, and over the spirit of the world; over pride, over anger, over all things that are opposite to the divine life; their faith is as sound as we can preach it in respect of the extent of it, but their faith has not readied thus far in its operation upon their hearts; they have not had the power to go on to accomplish and fulfill what remains.

Are there not some here and there that are settled in the belief of the truth, but have gotten into an ease from the labor of the truth? But if I am found in the faith, my understanding is opened; I do not only believe this matter, but have inward evidence and demonstration, that I am certain, past all doubt and question of it, that the Lord reveals his power in those who believe, that purifies them, and makes them every bit clean; and here I have a fellowship and communion with those who preach, and those who believe.

But, my friends, all this will not give you communion with God; though there is communion with the church of God, with respect to men, who have come into one faith and doctrine, yet for fellowship with God, it stands in a life beyond all doctrines, and beyond all words and expressions. Therefore your business and mine, and everyone's, is what we undertook when our faces were first turned to God, that we may be followers of Christ in the regeneration. For many may be firm in point of doctrine, and yet may not follow Christ Jesus. Many hold the truth, but do not hold it in righteousness, but unrighteousness.

Now, my friends, take care for your religion and your souls' eternal welfare are concerned. This doctrine I leave you in charge in the name of the Lord God. Do not anyone of you flatter yourselves because of the soundness of your belief, but look for soundness of heart and for a right spirit to be

created in you; a spirit that can no way endure anything that the light of Christ has made manifest to be evil; if it is truth you own, then exercise faith upon it, and whatever sin or temptation assaults you, say, "I shall overcome in the name of the Lord Jehovah; I shall bring it under, be what lust, passion, or corruption there is, in the name of the Lord, I shall overcome it, and bring it under."

Travel on in the faith committed to you, and you will be **more than conquerors**; you will not only grow into external fellowship with the people of God in the sight of men, but into a [spiritual, internal] fellowship with the church of the first born, whose names are written in Heaven; and your communion will not be in words and doctrines, and principles of faith, but your communion will be with God the Father, and his Son, Jesus Christ; and so in all your meetings together, the joy of the Lord will be your strength, and the joy of his great salvation your covering, and he will manifest his gracious presence with you; and that power which has kept you to this day from your childhood, and preserved you in all your battles and conflicts with the world, and strengthened and encouraged you when you went sometimes sorrowing and mourning night and day, and fearing lest you should not overcome your adversaries; that power that has kept you till now, will do greater things for you than you have yet been witness of.

Therefore, dear friends, this I would leave with you, there is nothing will keep you and me in that little time that remains to us here to spend on earth, but what will keep us in the exercise of faith towards God, and his Son Jesus Christ, who is able to save us to the uttermost. Let us **wait** to see the power of God for sanctification and holiness; that will reach as far as saving us from our sins.

This has been the greatest reproach that ever our adversaries have thrown upon us, that there are some among us that talk of believing in the power of God, and talk of an ability to overcome their sins, and living a holy life, and living without sin, while they themselves live in it.

This is the greatest reproach that ever our adversaries have thrown upon us. Whoever has been the cause of this reproach, God will require it of them, for the Lord is jealous of his name and glory; and he will have the praise and honor that is due to his great name, *for working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, said the apostle; though I know nothing of myself, yet am I not hereby acquitted. When you come to that, that you cannot charge yourselves, then only the Lord can charge you; but take heed that you do not place this as your justification, for by this you are not justified.

Therefore have an eye to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. He begins the work of faith, and he will carry it on until he is the finisher of it, and the justifier of it; he is the Mediator of the New Covenant that alone justifies the Children of God. Depend not on your own holiness and righteousness for justification.* Keep your eye to Jesus, the author of your faith, who will be also the finisher of it; keep your hearts with all diligence, and walk humbly with God, watching, lest your adversary prevail against you. By going from the power, there is no safety for the flock, but only while they keep in the shepherd's fold. Be faithful and keep yourselves in the love of God, and he will be perfect with you, and keep you to be his witness to the end of your days; and he will raise up another generation to be witnesses to his power, when he has taken you to himself.

[*There is no righteousness or holiness apart from God. You must possess the Spirit of Christ in sufficient measure that you are in the Kingdom eating from the tree of life, with the life and light of God being your guide in every thought, word, and deed.]

To that mighty power of God I commit you, for preserving you in humility of mind and soul; and my prayer for you shall be, that you may go on, and make a progress in the good ways of the Lord, until his work is finished in you.

[To be finished is to see Christ bring you your salvation, to see him resurrected in you, to see yourself as the new creature, to sit down with Christ in the heavens, to enter the rest, to enter union with God, and be translated into the kingdom of heaven, where you walk by the light of God in the inheritance of the saints in the light.]

His Prayer after Sermon

HOLY and powerful God of Life! who is the Creator of us all; in whom we live, and move, and have our being; you have made us all for the purpose of your praise and glory that we might serve you in the land of the living among the sons and daughters of men; and not only that, but you have given us your Holy Spirit as you did to the people of old.

O living God of Life! You have ordained a remnant to give up themselves to be led by it; you regard them and are with them, and they enjoy from time to time your holy presence, which makes glad their souls; and they have fellowship and communion with you, and your Son, through your Spirit, by which they are quickened to offer up pure and living praises upon your altar.

O living God of Love and Life! You have shed abroad your love upon their hearts, by which they are enabled to pray for enemies, that they may come to salvation, and the pleasures which are at your right hand, which are infinitely better than all the pleasures of this vain world.

Holy and powerful Father! Have respect to all our souls, and touch all our hearts with a sense of your divine love, so that we may feel the cords of your love drawing our souls nearer to yourself and assuring us that you have a gracious purpose to save us.

O powerful God of Life! Show forth your power, that our hearts may be touched and quickened thereby, to come to fear you, and reverence your

name, and be acquainted with your operation in our own hearts, so they may be humbled and broken before you, and bow down and worship in sincerity and uprightness. That so holy God of Life! If it is your pleasure, none may depart out of this assembly without some sense of your love and feeling of the powerful drawings of your grace, and without being raised up to purity of heart, and convinced of the evil of everything that is contrary to you, and serve you in holiness and righteousness and pursue it with all their hearts, and minds, and soul, and strength, that you may have mercy upon them, and pardon their iniquity, and love them freely, for so you have ordained in your Son Jesus Christ, that we may receive remittance of sins through the belief of your everlasting truth.

And holy, powerful, God of Life! that all your people may partake of holiness and sobriety, to the praise of your name, and that they may all come to obtain a victory over all those spiritual enemies that war against their souls, that your holy work of redemption and regeneration may be carried on; to the praise of your grace, and the exaltation of your holy name, to whom praise, honor, and wisdom belong , and pure and humble thanksgivings; and unto you, the living God of Life, we desire to offer up our praises and adorations, for you alone are worthy; who are God over all, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON X

Bearing the Cross of Christ, the true Mark of a Christian

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire-House, October 12, 1690

HE who knows the day of the Lord, and the stretching forth of his arm, is quickened to feel the power that is in Christ Jesus, the Head of the Church;

that so he may be enabled, through his power, to bring forth fruit unto God. The eye of the Lord is upon you all, and he expects at the hand of every one, that they bring forth fruit unto God, that according to the abounding of his mercy towards you, and of his patience and long-suffering concerning you, there might at last be an answer in the soul of everyone, unto the mercy and goodness of God. Those who do not know and experience this, that the long-suffering and patience of God leads unto repentance, they know no part of Christianity; let them make their profession ever so high, and proclaim their notions ever so loud, those who know not the work of repentance in their hearts, as yet, need to learn the first principle of the Christian religion. You know it has been the custom of people to teach their children principles, and those who have learned their principles, they are named Christians, whether they repent or not; though they go on in sin and iniquity all their days, yet they go under the reputation of Christians; and it is high time to examine and find out (if you can) a reason for this, that a man shall be accounted a Christian upon any other terms now in this age, than the Lord Christ did preach and publish in the days of his flesh; for he did absolutely deny that any man could be his disciple, without taking up a daily cross, and without self-denial. Now how should a man at this day be a Christian, or a disciple of Christ, without taking up a daily cross, and without self-denial?

It may be some will tell you, that they are baptized into the Christian faith, and have been taught, and have made a profession of Christian principles, and associated themselves among those who make profession of Christ; but here is not a word of a daily cross in all this, nor of self-denial; so that they would have you to understand in this, that the terms of Christianity are **changed**, and that men may be Christians without the terms of Christ, or at least so they say.

[The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, **changed** the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate; therefore the inhabitants

of the earth are burned, and few men are left. Isa 24:5-6.

How much more severe a punishment, do you suppose, will be thought worthy for one who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and has counted the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing, and has acted with spite [contempt] to the Spirit of grace? Heb 10:29]

And this has been occasioned by the great apostasy that has been brought into the church by a long night of darkness, and the revealing of Antichrist. Antichrist has been discovered and revealed, and has set up, in despite of Christianity, a false Christianity; and, there came in the terms of a man's being accepted, and being reputed a Christian upon Antichrist 's terms. And if you will conform to do thus, and say so, you shall be admitted into the Christian Society. Now all these terms of Antichrist, have been such things as an unregenerate man could conform to and comply with.

And the opening of this door, has let into the church abundance of hypocrites and evil-doers, who were in too unregenerate a state to conform to those things that were required; for in the public society of Christians, it was **not** said, you must be regenerate, and take up a daily cross, and deny yourselves, and walk as becomes saints, and so behave yourselves that God may be glorified, and the profession of Christianity honored by you. These were the terms of old; but there are other terms of being Christians that are of a later date.

[But just as there were false prophets among the people in those times, so there will be false teachers among you, who will subtly and elusively introduce destructive, distorted teachings, even denying the Lord [by their continuing to sin] who bought them, and bring swift destruction upon themselves.

And many will follow their destructive ways, and because of them **the way of truth will be maligned.**

And in their covetousness they will make merchandise of you [accept money] with deceptive [made up] words; 2 Peter 2:1-3]

Now this apostasy has prevailed and spread over whole nations and countries, not a few, so that whole kingdoms have become Christians upon these latter terms, and God is greatly dishonored among us, and Christ the Holy One most horribly profaned. It is not so common among Heathens and infidels, to find people wronging and deceiving one another, and killing and destroying one another; and yet it is the practice of many that are called Christians. These are the fruits and effects of those latter times of Christianity. Now seeing it is thus, which no mortal man can deny, I have this question to ask, and I desire that you would seriously weigh it in your hearts and souls, both while you are together, and when you are separate one from another, whether it is not high time for all of us to return again to the first terms of Christianity, and to consider no man a Christian, whatever he professes, unless that person knows and witnesses that the long-suffering, and patience, and goodness of God, leads him to repentance; and unless that person has so much faith towards God, that for love to God, he will deny himself, and take up his cross, and be a follower of Jesus in that way and life he lived in.

It is high time for all of us to return again to the terms of Christianity, that were set up by a higher authority than ever Antichrist had, and before Antichrist was revealed; for though it is true that Antichrist has obtained power on earth, to establish his sort of Christianity, that is, without the cross, and a sort of religion whereby they indulge themselves in whatever pleases their carnal hearts, and corrupt minds; yet Antichrist has not all power, he is not Almighty. I hope neither Antichrist, nor the beast, nor the dragon, nor the false prophet, nor the whore, have all power on earth, though they have a great deal, and by that power **they have established laws, decrees, canons, and innumerable things about religion;** and some cry, this is the way you must walk in; others cry, the way to heaven lies here, and here you must travel if you will go there. Some cry, this is

truth; others say it is error. So that the world is divided; Antichrist's government in the world is divided; and when the house is divided against itself, there is hope that it will fall at last.

[The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed **the laws, changed** the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant. Isa 24:5]

But there is one, to whom all power in Heaven and Earth is given and committed; and his Christians are not divided among themselves, but they are of one heart, and of one mind; and he who has all power in Heaven and Earth committed to him, can crush and bruise that power that others have. Herod had some, and Pilate had some; but Christ said, *your power is limited, this is your hour and the power of darkness; and you would not have power*, said Christ to Pilate, *were it not given to you from above*. Here is power given to the dragon, to the false prophet, and the beast, to speak great things; but this power of Antichrist is going away. Christ Jesus was sent into the world in his day, to bring people back again to God, and to primitive Christianity and obedience, and to the first terms of society and communion, and to a fellowship in Christ Jesus through the Holy Ghost.

Now if we had set up a way of religion, as other people have done, which is contained in some canons, articles, doctrines, and such and such commandments of men; and if men will confess these articles, and observe these canons, they shall be of our society, and then we would have done like the rest of the fallen Christians. However, we have declared from the beginning that professing our doctrine and the principles of religion does not give any man fellowship and communion with us. Our communion is in the self-denying life, and a daily cross, in opposition to sensual lust, vanity, pride, bitterness of spirit, corruption, enmity and wrath. This has brought us to a holy fellowship and communion in the Holy Ghost, and to live in unity from one head, which is Jesus Christ; so that there is not this man's church, and the other man's church among the people of God.

Do you read in the primitive times, that Paul had his church, and Peter his church, and James his church, and Jude his church? Indeed they had their meetings as we have now in many cities and countries among the Jews and Gentiles; but these holy apostles that were the first publishers of the everlasting gospel after their great Lord and Master, Jesus Christ. They never appropriated any church to themselves; that was not their business. Our work and business, said the apostle, is to gather you to Christ, and *present you as a chaste virgin to Christ*; our work is, to turn you *from darkness to light* that you walk in it, and be the children of it; our work is, to *build you up as a spiritual house to be presented to Christ* the Mediator.

This is primitive Christianity that has its foundation in holiness and righteousness, sincerity and truth, not in words, and terms, and articles, and canons, and decrees, and other observances. This is not the foundation of true Christianity, nor will it ever be, for the devil's kingdom must be destroyed; and his kingdom is shaking, for He in whom we believe, has power from his Father to break the devil's head, Antichrist, and the dragon's head. Christ Jesus is signified by many names, the second Adam, Lord from Heaven, the Way, the Truth, and the Life; but he is the same Christ. Likewise Antichrist is expressed by several terms and names, but he is the same power of darkness; he has made the nations drunk, to stagger and destroy, and devour one another.

[The people of the world are drunk on the pursuit of their lusts, pleasures, and passions; wholly unmindful of sin, wholly without love of God, wholly wallowing in wickedness, plunged into iniquity, void of common sense.]

This has been done in the fallen state of Christians, and the design that the Lord Christ has in sending his ministers and workmen to labor among you, is to restore men to the first Christianity, and to bring men to God. That religion is not made up of doctrines, articles, canons and decrees of men, but

it has the word of God for its foundation; *he, who has an ear to hear, let him hear*. There is some spirit, and power, and visible work in a true Christian, which the false Christian never had. The false Christians have taken the name and profession of Christ, and *their fruits have been dishonorable to him*; they might as well make profession of Antichrist and Satan. They have a form of godliness, they have some of the words, but they deny the power. What is their religion and outward profession, when they lack the internal life, and the motions of the Holy Spirit; if they bring forth the cursed fruits of the flesh, enmity, wrath, sin and corruption, which belong to the fallen nature and unregenerate hate?

The apostle takes notice of this deceit and hypocrisy in religion, which was growing up before he died; *men having a form of godliness, and denying the power thereof, from such turn away*. If there are any brothers who *walk disorderly, have no company or fellowship with them*, if you would have the holy name of Jesus free from scandal.

This has been the work of all the faithful ministers of Christ, to keep their holy profession of the name of Christ free from reproach; that the holiness of God's ways might be seen in the holy lives of the professors of them. Until men come to know this, and take up their daily cross, and exercise self-denial, their Christianity is good for nothing. I would not have you trust in it; neither in articles, tenets, or observations; but see how with your lives you answer your profession. *Christ was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*. And why should not Christians be so too? How can Christians be followers of Christ, and not separate from sinners? Christ was so. He went one way, and sinners went another; they followed their sins and lusts, but he followed the work his heavenly father sent him about. If you are a follower of Christ, you must be worthy of the name of a Christian. Do drunkards and swearers follow Christ? Do the wanton and proud follow him? Do the unclean and *hypocrites* follow him? You know they do not, so why do you call them Christians? This is a reproach and shame to the holy name of Jesus, and to true Christianity, that any of these people should be

called Christians; but such as are followers of Christ, who are holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

This seems a strange kind of doctrine, yet if it had been preached in the primitive time, there were people that would have received it as apostolic doctrine, that a man should crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. For said the apostle, *mortify your members which are on earth; if you, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live; but if you live after the flesh, you shall die. And to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.* This was sound doctrine then.

Now go and tell a man he shall certainly perish and come to damnation for all his profession, if he does not mortify the deeds of the flesh; if he lives in sin and dies in it, he is likely to perish. How many have been hauled to jails and dungeons, only for preaching this doctrine, and when we were first sent to preach, we dared not do otherwise? And God did not send us to preach until he had washed us, and sanctified us, and fitted us for the work of the ministry. Now when we saw in the holy scriptures, that God did work upon others by his Spirit, before he sent them to preach the gospel, was not here sufficient authority given to preach the downfall of sin, and destruction of it? One would think that such a person, thus called and sent by God, had as good authority to preach the everlasting gospel as the laws enacted by all the princes of the world could give him. A man sure that he has an authority for preaching the gospel, would not need to wait for orders and approbation; he would not wait for an induction. The apostle Paul took it for a commission that was creditable, when he tells you of his mission, it was not by man, but by the will of God, that he was called to preach the gospel. If we should say we were made preachers, if you ask by whom, not any man in the world can tell you; but we were made preachers many years ago. Not by man, or by the authority of man, but by the will of God. What was your commission? To turn men from darkness, (which darkness we had formerly lived in), to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The apostle sums up his commission in a few words; the Lord told me I must

turn men from darkness to light. This is our commission that we have received from God in this age, to turn men from darkness.

But some will say that we have not human learning and qualifications for the work of the ministry. To this I answer, if I heard a man swear or tell a lie, I could tell him that this was not of God. I have learning enough to know and tell men that, and say, whoring, drunkenness, swearing, and lying, were works of the flesh and fruits of the devil's power. I would have you turn from these works to the power of God. What is that power of God?* I will tell you, it is a manifestation of grace in your hearts that will draw you away from the love of all these things; the grace of God, is the power of God to salvation to those who believe. To as many as received Christ, those who believe in His name, to them he gave power to become the sons of God. Such Christians will show forth the power and life of religion in their conversations. So here is a sufficient authority and no lack of authority.

[*Without the power of God working **in** you, there is no victory, there is no overcoming. There are three sources to the power of God being released to purify you: 1) power in the true hope and gospel, 2) power in the inward cross of self denial, and 3) the power in the name of Jesus. This **power of God works in us**, and keeps us through faith to salvation, which is to be delivered from sin. Christendom today is without the cross and without the true hope; and so without the power of God, left only as a form (hollow shell) of the original Christianity, without the new life of the new creature, without holiness, wallowing in sin, boasting of their imperfection, perishing, whose end is destruction. For without the power of God released to change a man, his heart remains full of sin and unacceptable to God, whatever his lips may say in the form of worship. The true hope is to be delivered from sin and enter his kingdom of heaven. This occurs by carrying the inward cross of self-denial with obedience to his spoken and heard words, with the name of Jesus in mind: the

combination of all, to access the changing, infinite power of God to work in you, cleansing you, purifying you, delivering you from all sin, and bringing you into union with God into his kingdom, while on earth and then forever.]

I have been sometimes examined, "by what authority do you preach?" By the highest authority in heaven and earth, by the authority of God that came by Christ, the Redeemer. "What do you preach?" I preach truth in the inward parts, grace and truth, and against all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

[They say] As long as Antichrist has a rule, you must not preach down sin without authority; you must have power, you must be ordained, and have an induction before you undertake to preach the gospel, and preach down sin and wickedness. The devil has got such power and rule, that some tell us, that no man can live without sin; if it please God here and there to raise a man and bring him to a holy and righteous life, this man lacks a license, a commission, an induction, an ordinance to preach and cry down sin in other people; what commission did the Psalmist have when he said, *Come all you that fear God, and I will tell you what he has done for my soul.*

Is it not high time for people that have evidences of the love of God shed abroad upon their hearts by the Holy Ghost, to bear their testimony against sin and wickedness? Is it not high time for every one's mouth to be open, to testify against such a horrible mist of darkness that is come over men; to testify against hypocrisy, uncleanness, and unrighteousness?

It was the great design of the primitive preachers of the gospel, to cry down what some ministers cry up, so that Christianity is not like what it was, for then they told those that there was no happiness but by breaking off from sin by repentance. No possibility of salvation without confessing and forsaking sin, and trusting in the mercy of God through Christ for the pardon of it. Tell them of the mercy of God, and the blood of Christ, they will tell you that they cannot be cleansed from all sin, they cannot live without

sin. How comes it to pass that there are ministers that preach an impossibility of living without sin, when we are warned in the holy scriptures, that *without holiness no man shall ever see the Lord*? And that there shall in no way enter into the kingdom of God, anything that defiles, neither whatever works abomination, or makes a lie? Rev 21:27. How can ministers preach the impossibility of living without sin? “Will any of you,” says such a false minister, “be so presumptuous as to say a man may live without sin? I will prove it from good authority, both from scripture and the fathers, that no man in the world can do it.”

If any set themselves to it in their own strength, the devil will make fools of them; some indeed have gone about it in their own power and will, and have cloistered themselves up in monasteries, and shut themselves up between two walls so that they might be separated from all society and live without sin; they would do it in their own power, and the devil is stronger than they.

Let me tell you, men of the greatest wisdom, courage and strength, of the most excellent natural talents that any man can have, are not able to grapple with their enemy the devil by their own power; there are seeds of sin, and lust, and sexual desires sown in all their hearts; so far this is right and sound doctrine, that no man can do anything in his own power and strength. But here is the mistake: a man has been a long time wrestling with his sins and lusts, to get the victory over them; but by woeful experience he finds his weakness and insufficiency; he is sunk in his bondage, and so gives up the battle, saying, “I shall never overcome the devil and his temptations, my sins and lusts are too hard for me, I despair of ever overcoming them in my own strength, by all that I can do.” That is true enough, but must your need to be delivered from sin will perish because you can never overcome your corruptions alone? If ever I am saved, it must be by the power of God, the free grace of God that must save me. How can you come to lay hold of the free grace of God? I am told I must lay hold on Christ by faith, who is the Mediator between God and man, and is my only Redeemer; there is no salvation in any other. This is very well; now you are a believer, what do you

expect, what do you hope that Christ will give you? He will not give me power over my corruptions, so as to live without sin, that is more than I hope for; but I expect that Christ will reveal his power in me, and give me so much strength and power against my lusts and corruptions, that they may not have dominion over me. Now if you tell me that you hope for strength and power from Christ against sin, Satan and corruption; do you now tell me that it is still impossible? It was impossible before indeed to live without sin, when you only trusted in your own strength; but now, when you come to have grace and assistance from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and Savior of the world, who gives you ability to withstand temptation, and overcome your corruptions, and the lusts of your own heart, is it impossible still to live without sin? Then you may say, “the devil's slave I am and must be;” for there is no other power in Heaven or earth for you to lay hold of, if your own power, nor Christ's power neither can suffice. If they say this, they have just said that the devil is Almighty. Thus they tell us, when Christ has revealed his power, it is still impossible still.

If I would call this anti-christian doctrine, it would make more sense. Blessed be God, I do believe that Christ is able to preserve me from the devil's temptations, and all his instruments, if I believe; though I could not do it in my own power, yet by Christ's power I may be preserved an hour without sin. If an hour, then a day, and if one day, then a thousand days, if I live so long; Christ has promised that he will bruise Satan, and tread him under feet, and destroy his works. Now judge for yourself whether sin is not the devil's work; shall I despond or despair to have the devil's work destroyed in me?

[And while Christ in the beginning gives us strength to not commit sin, he also eventually even takes the desire to sin out of our hearts, particularly as we show our acts of repentance, however weak we are in conforming. We receive power immediately to keep our hands and feet from grasping and running to sin, but we do not have control over our mouths and

minds until later works of the power of God within us, by his increased grace.]

Here is ground for you all to believe, he that has faith may lay hold of this power which is offered of God; therefore lay hold of it, else your religion will be good for nothing. This is the enjoyment of a true believer, that he receives power from Christ to deny himself; therefore all their pretended Christianity and professions at the day of judgment will melt away like snow. These canons, articles, forms, and liturgies, will all melt away when the day of the Lord comes to burn upon them; none but those who feel the redeeming virtues of the blood of Christ, that have their souls filled with the love of God; and those who will part with whatever they love in the world for Christ's sake shall be accepted.

I am not for setting up this and any other sect or opinion; if it is among those of my own profession, if they profess holiness, and bring forth unrighteousness, they are all part of the same hypocrisy, and I shall not value their profession. There are many in this city and nation that have sheltered themselves under the profession of truth and talk of perfection and have brought their lusts and imperfections with them. Here Antichrist is trying another game to bring them under a profession that will serve his turn; the devil will allow men to profess perfection, if they will live according to their own hearts' lusts, so that they may save his head from the blow that God's power will bring upon it, so that they may dishonor the holy name and religion they make profession of. As the apostle said, *I have told you often and now tell you weeping; they were Christians, so called, to whom he spoke, but they were enemies to the cross of Christ, not to the profession of Christ; he did not say they were strangers to the cross of Christ, but enemies to it; they let it fall, they kept the name, word, and doctrine up, but they let the cross fall; how much were these Christians worth? Surely only a little.*

No, Antichrist has been so silly, that because the words are so put upon the

cross, *no being disciples of Christ without the cross*; the words of scripture are so put upon it, Antichrist thinks to himself, "I shall never persuade the people to be at ease, unless I give them a cross;" therefore he sets them to making crosses. They must be baptized with the cross; they say we do not deny not the cross of Christ; we hang it about our necks; we set it up in our meetings and academies. Many princes, wise men, and learned men, have been so bewitched and drunk with delusions, that they have called this the Christ which they have made with their own hands; they have made Christs, and prayed to them; and all their religion has been putting together crosses, crucifixes, forms, and liturgies, which they have made with their own hands.

Here is Christianity in an empty profession, but where is the soul of it? I would inquire for the life of it; I would see Christianity living in love to God above all, and loving our neighbors as ourselves. When this Christianity comes, there will be no killing one another, nor persecuting one another, nor fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, nor pleading for it either.

Blessed be God, that our eyes have seen the witnesses raised, and life from Heaven come into them; and now religion begins to have a life and soul, and shows itself in a little remnant. There is a people raised by God that feel life in their worship, in their families, in their conversations, and in their behavior towards relations; they do what they do as to God. Many lads and lasses, menservants and women-servants, do their work and service, not merely to please their master and mistress, but to please God. *The life they live is by the faith of the Son of God*; they live as becomes the members of his body. Husbands love their wives, not simply because they are their wives, as the men of the world do, but they do it upon the account of inward religion, and of the divine fellowship and communion they have in Christ Jesus. *Husbands should love their wives as Christ loved his church*, and laid down his life for it; so a man should love his wife, and be tender over her, and minister to her.

The life of Christianity has taught us to behave ourselves as though we were

doing everything for God; may he have the glory and Christianity be restored to its ancient luster and beauty that it had in former times.

But some will say, "do as well as you can, men will never love you; if you have the soul of Christianity, you shall be reviled and scandalized. Men will make works against you, and serve legal papers against you, and set the magistrates against you; live as well as you can, they will follow you and disturb you."

This is more than you know. If a man once comes to feel the life of Christianity working in him, and the power of it keeping him from doing evil, and wishing evil to his enemies, and disposing his mind to a frame of praying for them, inclining him to pity them; if a man comes to this state, he is at peace in himself, and enjoys tranquility of mind; he looks up to the Mediator, Christ Jesus, and feels an answer of peace in his own soul, and is come to rest in himself.

Now concerning persecution, hatred and enmity, between the woman's seed and the serpentine seed, and how long it will last. God, whom we serve, did say to the devil in Paradise, *I will put enmity between you and the man, and between your seed and her seed; it shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel.* So that it is not to be expected, that the seed of the serpent, (those who are born of that seed), can love those who are born of the woman's seed. It is possible that those who are born of the seed of the serpent should be translated and brought out of that corrupt state; but it is impossible that those who are born of the flesh should love those who are born of the spirit while they continue in their unregenerate state, but rather persecute them. It is like a natural instinct, like water to run downward, and fire to fly upward. Were not all men and women born children of wrath, and naturally enemies in their minds to Christ Jesus? And did he not die and suffer for them all? So that the very nature of the thing is the very reason why Christ died: to redeem those who were his enemies to be his friends.

Suppose I or any other member of Christ is persecuted by men who revile me and hate me; should I not love them and do good unto them when I see one infinitely better than either you or I, [him] do the same for us? When we were enemies, Christ has sent his Spirit into our hearts, that we might become friends of him, and of him who sent him. This is the effect of the righteousness of Christ and of his innocence, that enemies may become friends; thus have many been brought to a friendship of truth that were enemies to it. If we could not suffer for the testimony we have received of God, what was it worth? But seeing God has not only given us to believe, but to suffer for his name, many have been turned by this means from darkness to light, and many more will be; the light breaks forth quickly, despite there has been so much effort to stop it.

It has been the design of many learned men of this nation: “how shall we stop these men's mouths that preach the doctrine of truth in the inward parts, the light within, and Christ within them?” I will not repeat the many laws that have been made against those who will not preach lies, instead preaching the power of Christ and his truth; now what will you do? You cannot lay hand on [fight] them as you used to do; no, but we will reproach them with the tongue. We will render them odious to the government, as persons that will overturn church and state, and that preach false doctrine, and when all is done, and they have said their worst, people will still believe that sin and wickedness is hateful to God, that God takes no delight in sin, and that the devil will lead us to sin; he that keeps most from sin, keeps most out of the devil's clutches; and he that lives most holy, is most like to God.

These things we will preach, and we will go on in this testimony, that the best way that man can take, is to break off their sin by repentance and turn to God their Maker with their whole hearts; and they will look to their ways, and search, and try and examine their hearts, and if they see evil, to keep out of it. This is such a thing, as there is no withstanding of it, it will go through this nation, and all the nations of the earth.

What if a company of people should combine together, and say, we will not have the sun to shine upon the city of London; what course must we take? When the sun is down, we will build a bank or high wall to intercept its light; but notwithstanding all their endeavors, when the sun rises, it will get over their high banks and wall. Similarly all their designs and all the contrivances against the light of the gospel, and against Christ the Son of righteousness, and against the Spirit of Christ, the light will ascend and get over the heads of them all, and it will confound them, and break through all opposition.

I exhort you all, my friends, that laying aside all doctrines, and tenets, and contrivances among Christians, to come to this simple thesis and position; it is no matter what I profess of religion, if my life is not answerable to it, if there is not a love to God, and my neighbor, and to mine own soul; there is no life nor power in my profession of religion. I will rest satisfied in the measure of knowledge that God has given me; I must not do to my neighbor what I would not have my neighbor do to me; I must be upright and sincere towards God; God will not accept of any worship from me when I am unclean in body and in mind too. We must see that we become purified, for God will not accept of an offering from an unclean heart; *you cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean heart*, said our Lord Jesus Christ, the great preacher of truth and righteousness; I must *first make the tree good before the fruit will be so*; you and I are these trees; until we have something good in ourselves, we cannot bring forth good fruit.

Therefore you must have respect to the principle of sanctification in your own hearts, and turn to what you may feel an experience of in yourselves, some principle of grace and light in your hearts, that can distinguish between good thoughts and evil thoughts. Is this good for me to do? I will go on in it with faith and courage; but if it is evil, I will not touch it, though there is profit and pleasure to allure and draw me to it; I will not touch it, though I might gain the world by it.

Here is Christianity with life and soul in it; we have been scandalized as if we preached up error for justification. We say there is no justification without sanctification; so you that know the power, so live in it; and you that desire to know the power, turn your minds to the light and grace of God, and you will feel the power that will oppose sin in its motion, and it will never trouble you in its actions and workings. If I would not do ill to my neighbor, and I judge such a motion when it is suggested, it will never trouble my conscience, because when the devil moved me to it, I rejected it, I would not follow him. It is no sin to be tempted; for our Savior, that was perfectly holy, and free from all sin, was yet tempted; he had motions in his mind, but he withstood them, and resisted the devil in all his temptations; Christ was tempted that he might be able to succor us when we are tempted; and he will do it for all those who wait for him.

Therefore, friends, trust in the name of the Lord, and you shall feel the stirrings of that power, that *has called you out of darkness into the marvelous light* of the sun of righteousness in which you live, and which will shine to his immortal glory and praise, and the everlasting comfort of your immortal souls.

SERMON XI

The Spirit of Christ, the Only True Guide

**Delivered by Stephen Crisp at at Grace-Church-Street,
October 10, 1690**

YOU who are met together in the name of the Lord, and have your expectation from God, and are really waiting to receive a blessing from his bountiful hand; you are they to whom the Lord will communicate the good things of his kingdom, and instruct you in the divine knowledge that the wisdom of this world cannot find out; you shall have your portion in the

blessings prepared for you and laid up in Christ for you to be handed forth to you from day to day for your support. And hereby you have been preserved and kept alive unto this day. You have received your nourishment, and divine and spiritual refreshment, always in the presence of God; when you have been out of his presence, you have met with troubles, and darkness has gendered upon your minds and veiled and clouded your understandings, that you have been sometimes in danger to lose your way, until you have returned again unto *the great shepherd and overseer of your souls, by whom you have had access unto God*. You who have had these experiences, O let your hearts and souls be engaged to continue together in one heart and one mind, serving the Lord and waiting upon him for something that may do you good; that may strengthen and confirm you in the blessed truth.

For there are a great many that are convinced, who yet do lack establishment. There are a great many that know the truth, yet cannot be brought to abide in it, but are sometimes drawn out of it; and then they meet with trouble in their minds, and distress and anguish lays hold upon them; and they do not enjoy that tranquility, peace, and inward joy, which they believe others enjoy at the same time; and which they might have enjoyed if they had lived steadfast in the truth. Now what is it that will establish such a person, but their waiting upon God to receive power from him to resist the temptations, and the manifold wiles and snares of their soul's enemy, by which they are daily in danger to be drawn away from God and drawn out of the way?

You know, friends, how the Lord brought us into this exercise of waiting upon him by making us sensible that there was none who could help us but him. Teachers we have always had, and men that have spoken of God, spoken of his power, and spoken of his wisdom; but how to dwell in that power, and stand established in it, so as at all times to resist the power of the wicked one, is what no man can help us do; and upon this account it was, that the Lord's people were willing to cleave close to him, and by faith to have their dependence upon him; and cry in their souls, "Lord, unless you

establish me, I shall never be established."

The confirming power that stays and settles their minds upon the Lord comes from him, and it is handed to us through the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we have believed in; those who kept their faith in him have had longings and breathings of soul, that they might receive some divine blessings by him, and through him. So that those who meet together in this mind find a settlement in the truth as it is manifested and revealed in them, and goes down into the deep where unity is known. Here they are of one mind, and the soul is made capable of putting forth strong cries to God, and living breathings and prayers to God that he will teach them how they shall profit, how they shall grow, and how they shall serve him and honor him in their day; that he will reveal his power in them, to expel any darkness or veil that has been gathered upon their minds, that does hinder them from beholding so much glory and excellence in the truth, and in the ways of God, as some they have beheld. And so these are travelers that are traveling with the Lord in faith, to receive a blessing at his hands. Their minds are not left to this, or that, or the other man, or to mere words or visible things; but they feel the word of truth answering the truth in themselves, and they receive a comfort and benefit, because they find a blessing to arise in them. These words reach my soul; these administer help to me, and I am comforted in them, because I find those works working in me, or wrought in me.

For, alas! my friends, many of you know, that there are some who hear the word, and the declarations in the word are but found with those who have no experience of the work that is signified by the word. Many such people do hear the lovely sound, and they are affected many times to hear talk of the work of regeneration, and of the enjoyments of God's people, and how they are borne up in all their trials by an inward and divine power, and how they are always kept alive to God, and preserved in his living presence; but this does not bear them up in a time of trial. For if a trial or an affliction comes, they sink under it, and they are filled with anguish and perplexity; so that the word barely heard spoken, and not rooted in the mind, does not Minister

to the work; the words spoken do not carry that kind of operation upon them as to witness an inward work wrought upon them. But where there is an effectual work and operation in the soul, it continues in its labor and travel from death to life. And as those heavenly things, those divine operations of God's power are spoken of, there is an Amen in your souls, saying as far as you have traveled, thus has God dealt with me; he has indeed by his power carried some beyond my state and condition; and my faith is hereby strengthened, and my hope is confirmed. He that has begun a good work so gloriously in my soul, will carry on his own work and bring me to higher attainments and further experiences to which that some of his servants bear witness. So that now being exercised, the work goes on, and the pleasure of the Lord prospers in Christians, that when they meet together in the name of the Lord, they know for themselves that the Lord is present with them; they know what the word of the Lord is unto them. If they hear the word preached to another state and condition, yet they abide in and keep what makes manifest to them in their own state. And this prevents the soul from being carried away with the word, sight, and vision of a higher state than their faith can witness to; so they keep low and humble and tender, and have a care of their own souls; as the apostle when he had come to glorious and high attainments in the work of the Lord, yet he would not glory of anything but what the grace of God wrought in him. We do not boast of things that are not wrought in us.

It is profitable for the creature to gather in, and comprehend the form of things, of which the work has not been done in them; and a great many have done so to their great damage; and some, it is to be feared, to their utter ruin. They have comprehended high things and the notions of great attainments; they have heard them declared and spoken of thus, and so some have in their speculations declared to others their conceptions about those things, yet those things were never wrought in them. They could preach of humiliation, when the root of pride was not removed; they could preach of regeneration, while the old man had not been put off, and the new man created in righteousness not put on. All this kind of preaching has been

in the world, and is still too much in the world; but it has not produced and brought forth any profit and advantage to the soul, either to preacher or hearer; for it has not been accompanied with a divine and heavenly blessing; but the true ministry ordained of God brings forth a work of holiness and righteousness in the soul.

And therefore everyone whom God has thus reached, and has opened your understandings, and has made you capable of comprehending and understanding divine things, take heed, lest by the subtlety of Satan and the wiles of your great enemy, you are at any time lifted up and exalted in your minds in the notion of the things that you have not attained; not that you should not so understand the things of God that God opens to you, as they are many times opened to the creature before the work of them is in the heart of the creature. And why so? Why are they opened to me? It is for my encouragement, that if you do hold on, and are steadfast in waiting upon the Lord, these things God has in store for you [a hope of things to come].

Now the creature waits, and says, “though I have not attained such things as I have seen, yet the very sight of them encourages me to wait upon the Lord, that I may experience the witness of them in myself.” There are many that have some taste of great joy, and apprehensions of heavenly things, which they have not attained; but they know what they are waiting upon God for; not that they may have a little joy, which passes through them, but come to have that joy and tranquility that will accompany them in all their doings, and their whole conduct. God has opened many things to you, and you have seen the way of righteousness that he has cast up for you; and many have taken strait steps to themselves, until they have attained to say, “now my salvation is nearer than when I first believed.” Let such go on and follow that guide by which they have been directed, and they shall at last attain to a further state, not only to know that their salvation is now nearer than when they at first believed, but that they may come through the Divine Spirit of grace that they followed, and so closely cleaved to, as their blessed guide in their way, to have an entrance administered to them abundantly into the

salvation of God, whereby they may sit down, in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and have a wall about them, which is the salvation of God.

Here is a great encouragement for sinners, and upright ones, *to follow on to know the Lord*, and then they are sure they shall know him, for they shall behold his glory, and their souls shall be satisfied, for nothing else will satisfy them.

People may have great openings, and great discoveries of things, and may have delight and joy in the opening of things, as it was with the disciples, when Christ our Lord converted with them in the flesh; he opened many things to them, and they had great joy and comfort in those things that he opened to them, yet there was something lacking to satisfy them. Philip said to Christ, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” John 14:8. There was something further to be discovered and revealed, so that they could not find their souls to be satisfied and sufficed until they had it. Christ gave them such an answer as relates to that ministration that we are now under; he that has seen the Son, has seen the Father.* Now they had seen Christ daily, and conversed with him, and had eaten and drank with him in that fleshly and bodily appearance in which he conversed with them; but they had not a light of the Eternal Son of God in a spiritual manner, as he was the Son of God, and their Savior; they had not seen him so. And he that has seen Christ in a spiritual manner has seen the Father also.

[*Jesus is the only visible representation of the Father to be seen, "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Col 1:15]

So it is with us in our day. We have, in our profession, the teaching of this and that man. We have conversed with Christ, as it were, to his fleshly appearance. We have read the history of his birth, and of his life and great miracles, and of the great love he had to mankind, by which he laid down his

life for them. We have been conversing with Christ as to his fleshly manifestation; but consider whether there does not, until now, remain an empty place in our souls, something that is not sufficed and satisfied?

What would you have? Don't you have scripture? Do you not read there of the birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ? I would still have something more, for that will not suffice me. I would have pardon of sin, my peace with God, the light of his countenance lifted up upon me, and further manifestations of Christ to my soul. We can never see the glory of God, but in the face of Jesus Christ. This is the discovery that Christ makes to the soul that believes in him; this is what gives satisfaction.

A Christian's work is to be conversing with him, and exercising his mind under the gathering and teaching of him who can lead him to the Father. None but Christ can do that: lead them to the Father and show them the Father; and he has in our day revealed himself and made himself manifest by his spirit, that spirit, by which we come to know his holy teaching, reproof and instruction, daily discovered in our souls. The spirit is our guide; that spirit we are led by and are to walk in. Let men go under whatever form and denomination they will, those who have not the spirit of Christ are none of his until they come to be guided by his spirit.

People are not led into sin by the spirit of Christ; they will tell you these are the devil's temptations, and the frailty of our nature, and the corruption of our hearts, by which we are led into sin; it is not the spirit of Christ. It would be a horrid thing for men to say that the spirit of Christ led them into sin; there are few or none so wicked as to say so. The business we are to do in the world is to obey the will of God. And where the understandings of men are so illuminated, that they are satisfied in their minds that God has been pleased to give them a manifestation of the spirit to benefit all; all those who have this spirit of Christ, are directed by it to do the will of God and to deny their own wills and the will of others that would draw them from their duty that they owe to God in their generation.

It is an excellent state and condition for a man to be guided by the spirit and to be brought under the government of Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. So that those who come under this government are directed and pointed out every day to do the will of God. This you must do, and God will be pleased with you; and that [something other than his will] you may not do, for if you do it, the Lord will be angry with you; it is sin against God. So that we have a heavenly advantage of being taught of God by his spirit and to have the divine and heavenly teaching of the spirit of God revealed in us; if we are at a loss, or have a question, or dispute about a matter, the spirit will lead us into all truth if we give up ourselves to his guidance and teaching.

This has been our desire and labor many years, not to draw people to observe what we say, for who can direct another man in all things relating to the service of God? If we were ever so certain ourselves, we could not convey certainty and infallibility upon all occasions to another if we should speak ever so much and be ever so conversant with them. Therefore our work is that all people in all things relating to their souls might have recourse continually to what the infallible teacher and guide, which God, through Jesus Christ, has made known to them. If people are ruled by this, they cannot but live in unity and love one another; they will not fall into malice, contention, and hatred against one another. It is impossible for nations to make war and destroy one another if they were guided by the unerring spirit of Christ, for how should it contradict itself? For how can anything agree with the standard of truth, which Christ has set up that is in contradiction to it? For nothing is truth but what concurs with it; therefore it must agree with itself. If we are directed by the spirit, we shall call something good that is really good; and something evil which is so. If there are thousands directed by the spirit of Christ, who leads into all truth, what is good to one, is so to all; and what is evil to one, is so to all. We must first know what is good, and then receive power to do it. If we come to be instructed by the unerring spirit, to know what is the good and acceptable will of God, we shall daily receive power from him to do the will of God; we shall all speak

the same thing and be of the same mind and be in love and unity. There is no evil willfully done against God, where the spirit of Christ, the gospel spirit, comes to prevail upon us; it will bring us to a peacefulness of spirit, to live in love and unity. And the great work we have in the world, will be to do the good and acceptable will of God, both with respect to our solemn worship of God, and our duties towards our neighbors. Then there will be tranquility, peace, joy, and comfort to all the churches of Christ that are under his government. And it is given to the sons and daughters of men everywhere, when they come under the yoke of Christ, and take up a daily cross, and live in self-denial; this will bring peace and concord among them.

Many will come to our meetings and spend a little time to hear what we say. We exhort them to give up themselves to the peaceable government of the spirit of Christ, that will finish transgression and make an end of sin and bring into the soul (where sin reigned) everlasting righteousness. Where there is a great deal of pride, malice, and envy, the spirit of Christ will root it up; and all that evil that the enemy has planted in men, he will pluck it up and bring in everlasting righteousness and plant love in the same soul, and establish and settle it. **Such a one will have more joy, pleasure and delight, under the government of the Spirit of Christ in one day, than anyone can have that is governed by the evil spirit in a thousand days.**

You say the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to benefit all; what profit shall we get? How does it appear, that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to benefit all? Because there is that life and grace stirring in the heart that makes it profitable, and truth does so prevail that it makes us do those things that are good and profitable and to avoid those things that are reprobable. If you would hearken to the spirit that is the reprover that convinces of sin, you must turn away your mind from what will lead into those things that are reprobable; otherwise you will be under condemnation in your own bosom.

When the Spirit of God illuminates men to see sin, the evil of sin, he will give them power against it; but when they come to receive power against it, and steadfastness in the ways of God, what will be the effect of that? If I become righteous and live a holy life, and my companions are wicked, they will mock me and reproach me; what benefit shall I have by being righteous? I see evidently I shall lose many advantages which I might otherwise reap and reach with my own hand. I must forsake my profits and pleasure and other delights of this world.

The disciples said to Christ, we have forsaken all and followed you; what shall we have? Before they would forsake all, people would have something in the place of it. Christ tells them that he who has forsaken all, father and mother, brother and sister, and house and land, for his name sake, shall have in this life a hundred fold, and in the world to come, eternal life. What is the meaning of: “they shall have in this life a hundred fold?” Christ, who is truth itself and cannot lie, has promised that those who forsake all, shall receive a hundred fold. Now people are ready to grasp at it; they think it is something that will answer the loss of what they part with. What you receive in this promise must not be of the same sort and kind with those things you parted with, but when you have parted with all for Christ's sake and the gospel, you shall receive what you shall acknowledge is a hundred fold better and will make you a hundred fold richer and happier; and it will give you a hundred fold more than all that you have parted with could give you.

If we part with sin, we part with what brings bondage and fear of death; having parted with that, then your fear and bondage is gone, and you lived then the rest of your life-time at liberty. But this is not all, you live in the enjoyment of the favor of God; you shall have the sense of his love and the comfort of his Holy Spirit; and you shall live in peace and righteousness and treasure up to yourselves, glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life. Whereas before you treasured up only wrath against the day of wrath and the revelation of the righteous judgment of God; you shall receive a hundred fold, what is a hundred fold better. Those who part with the things that are

reprovable, and do what Christ in his day performed, the good and acceptable will of God, the enjoyments that he has in Christ and the comfort, peace and tranquility he enjoys, is a hundred fold better and more delightful than all the pleasures of sin, and the pleasures and delights of shows, and fights and plays, and comedies, which vain men entertain themselves with in their carnal state. A carnal man cannot understand and discern the things of God, and the pleasures that are to be had in his holy ways; he only looks at the things that are seen, which are temporal, and not at the things that are not seen, which are eternal.

But, my friends, those things which are unseen, are not so unseen, but that when a man has an eye opened within him of the same nature with those things, he can see them. Blessed be God that we have an eye opened to see spiritual things, to see the heavenly treasure and enjoy it in these earthen vessels.

For all that have an ear to hear, it would be a profitable change to part with all that is evil in the sight of God, and put themselves under the yoke of Christ, and receive a principle of grace which he will communicate to them, that they may do the good and acceptable will of God, and so may enjoy a hundred fold, and have comfort, peace, and joy before they leave here and are no more seen. You to whom God has so graciously and mercifully appeared, that have an understanding and a taste and feeling of those things which are divine and spiritual, and which pertain to life and godliness; of all the people in the world, you are an engaged people to serve the Lord. Great obligations He places upon you, that you should abide and continue in what God has revealed and discovered to you; I mean grace. For you will never grow until you are under the government of the grace of God, that grace that appeared to you before you came to the knowledge of God and his ways, that has been with you in your travel from death to life and from darkness to light. Prize it as a heavenly jewel, as what contains in itself all those things that your soul stands in need of. If you have any strength to resist temptation, it is from the grace of God that you receive power to withstand

temptations. If you have any living openings in your hearts, it comes to you from that grace that is in Christ. When this, and that, and the other prophecy of the prophets of old is opened to you, prophesying and foretelling that state and condition which you are traveling towards, how the Lord will subdue your enemies under you, you are encouraged hereby to go on cheerfully in your way, to that rest which you are traveling to.

There are many of those who believe the truth, who have not come to *establishment*; and they will find the reason and cause in themselves. Do but ask and inquire how it comes to pass, that such and such are established, and not subject to fear, and horror, and perplexity, as I am? A little thing will turn me over, and shake and unsettle my mind; this has been the cause, lack of keeping close to the grace of God in your conduct in the world. When you and your children and servants are governed by the grace of God in all you undertake, then the devil will endeavor to bring you into darkness and bring discomfort upon your spirits. For the purpose of Christ Jesus, our Savior, is to settle you; and the purpose of the destroyer is to discomfort and unsettle you and to bond you to this and the other changing thing. If he can fix your hearts upon this and that object, then there is instability upon the soul; take away that thing, and it brings disturbance upon you. If you have any object that your mind is set upon, you will be much disturbed at the parting with it; but whose fault is that? The truth manifested unto you from the beginning of your conversion, did engage you to separate yourself from all visible, sensual things, so that God might have your heart and chief love. If he had been your God, nothing could disquiet you when separated from you. If you will have other Gods besides him, you will lose your Gods; and when they are taken from you, you will be like Alicah, and say, “you have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?” Judges 18:24. The reason of your discomposure, and anguish, and sorrow, was this: when you had some other Gods besides the Lord, and your hearts cleaved to some temporary thing, and the trial came that you had to part with it, you could not bear it.

If you would live a serene life and a life of tranquility, set your minds upon

nothing but upon the Lord; let him be the object of your soul's love; live in the light of his countenance, and you may always rejoice. Consider temporals as though you hold them for the Lord. God gives you this husband, that wife, that child, that estate; God has entrusted you with it? But do not think that he who has it must necessarily part with it and be bereaved of it when God pleases. Now, if you give up your hearts to God, here will be your establishment and settlement, and you will have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And would we seek to know and feel in which the communion of the saints stands; does it not stand in partaking together of the bread of life, which our Father gives us from Heaven? The Father spreads a table for us in the sight of our enemies, and we are satisfied. They that come to partake of this table of the Lord, find strength and refreshment; so do I, and also my brethren and sisters that sit at the same table. We are daily confirmed and strengthened by what we receive from God and enjoy there; here is our heavenly fellowship and society; and where there is this root of love, love cannot be lacking in the branches. There must be a departing from the bread of life, before there can be any jarring and contention among the members of the same body, for we receive life from the same head, from which all the body, by joints and hands, having nourishment ministered, are knit together, and increase with the increase of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, grows unto a Holy Temple in the Lord.

Now that you may be all preserved in Christ, this is the end of our labor, that so every one that has begun in the spirit, may go on in the spirit, and never look for perfection in the flesh. That you that have begun in humility, tenderness, and brokenness of heart, may in that meet together at times and seasons, and have daily the presence of God among you, and have the bread of life, which will nourish you to life everlasting, and that you may show forth to the world, the glory, brightness, and excellence of that holy life, which in Christ Jesus is manifested to you.

Sermon XII

Pure and Spiritual Worship

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire-house, on the 12th day of the 11th month, 1690

But the time comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth for the Father seeks such to worship him.

God is a Spirit, and those who worship him **must *worship him in spirit and in truth.***

John 4:23-24

In vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

Mark 7:7

The worship of God, of the great God, is pure; He is a Holy God, of purer eyes than to behold evil. Those who are resolved to worship God, whose souls are breathing to have a return of a testimony in his sight, must offer up pure worship, and it must come from what is pure. For that purpose the greatness of the love of God is made manifest in Christ Jesus. There is a diffusing of his grace and virtue in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men, by which he has laid a foundation for his own worship; because his worship must be pure. Therefore he has freely given to us, through his son, the knowledge of that pure principle of life and grace, from where and out of which, all true worship springs, and all true honor to God rises, and real obedience to his holy will springs forth out of what is from himself.

Therefore all, who wish to be worshippers of God correctly, must first know and be sensible of the ability and capacity in which it stands; what may

enable them to so great and so good a work. Some have imagined it as standing in their own will; and according to the workings of their own will, they have framed worships, religions, and observations, thinking that will please God. But you know the apostle in a few short words lays down a positive Christian doctrine, *without faith it is impossible to please God*.

Now this declares and signifies that there must be something upon which this faith must work, which must be the object and foundation of faith. Faith as it works in the creature, works upon something. It lays hold upon something in which there is a capacity of pleasing God. Now *if we are all by nature children of wrath*, and that no one of himself can please God, then there must be something that is supernatural that must be the object of that faith, by which men alone can please God. This something must be made manifest to the creature for its help; it must be its director and supporter in that work, which is too mighty for himself, too great a work for a man or woman, too deep, too profound for any man's abilities, power, wisdom, and acquirements, that he can attain to in this world, to worship God correctly. To worship God, that is, to perform a pure worship to a pure God; who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Now if we are all obliged to bring a clean worship, a pure worship to a pure and holy God, who has created us and all things; where shall we obtain it? *Not out of an unclean heart; not out of a defiled mind*. There is no bringing it forth from there, for that is the state and condition in which men have fallen into sin, in which their minds and consciences are defiled, their hearts are polluted, and their affections depraved and set upon wrong objects; and in this state none can serve God properly. What is pure and holy must be first made known, revealed, discovered and believed, before people can perform a proper worship to God.

Therefore it is in vain to go and compel people to this and that worship, and force people to this and that service and conformity, to supposedly worship of God. When they have done all, and it is not acceptable to God, *this is vain worship*; the poor creature has no return from the Lord, for God accepts no

service or worship, but only through his son. If this is true, men cannot pray and preach in the Spirit of his Son, and cannot present their complaints and supplications to God without the assistance and help of his blessed Spirit; there is no reason in religion why people should expect a return and answer from God of the prayers they make. For it is the general doctrine of Christendom, that Christ Jesus is appointed of God for a mediator between God and man, and all the acceptance we have, or desire to have, must be through him. Therefore if we pray without him, and perform this and the other duties without him, it is contrary to the doctrine of Christianity to think that we should ever have acceptance in God's sight.

[To truly worship, you must know God. Christianity worships what they do not know, and so their worship is gross error. From the word of the Lord within: "Christianity has no idea what I am or for what I stand. There are those who profess to know truth, only having knowledge of the Bible. It is no value to me to know truths and not know the Lord. Do you know him or just pretend to know him; to know him is to have met him and listened to him. Seek the meeting." According to early Quaker, kingdom-dwelling William Penn: **"the deity Christianity truly worships is the god of this world**, the great lord of lusts," who is Satan; and also according to early Quaker, kingdom-dwelling Isaac Penington: "in the apostasy, men have not known God or Satan, the light or the darkness; but have mistook, taking the one for the other, **worshipping the devil** instead of God.]

Therefore there is a necessity for every man and woman that desires to be religious, that has a religious mind, and is willing to worship God, and serve God aright, there is a necessity that they come to the knowledge of Christ, who tells us that he is the way to the Father. They that go any other way go a wrong way; but those who go to God by Christ, they receive from him power to draw near to God; and through him they receive from God all those blessings that their souls stand in need of.

So here would be an end of all religions the world is full of, of all the several worships that men have made. They have invented and found out several ways for people to worship and serve God. This and that other ceremony, this and that other observation and method of preaching and praying. If all this is without the assistance and divine help of the mediator, through whom alone we can justly expect acceptance at God's hands, it is all good for nothing. Therefore the first lesson of a Christian in point of worship is that he come to the knowledge of Christ, by whom, and through whom he may expect favor with God.

Now say some people: We have already come to the knowledge of Christ; we have read the relation in the gospel of his conception, birth, life and death, resurrection and ascension. Now whether this belief gives a man this kind of Christian knowledge that opens a door and way for him into the presence of God, this is a question that ought seriously to be considered, for if we err in this question, we err in all. This is like stumbling at the threshold, and never coming into the house. If we mistake in laying hold of Christ, we mistake in our worship, and in all matters that relate to life and salvation.

For if we must have another sort of knowledge of Christ than we can have from the reports of others; if I must have Christ revealed *in me* before I can have the Hope of glory; if I must have the Spirit of Christ *in me*, to help me to put up my requests and supplications before he can present them to the Father, then all read-about knowledge and faith cannot be of any advantage to men. But this is evident by the testimony of all the writers of the New Testament. Christ and his apostles did concurrently signify, that the hope of a Christian, that the power and strength of a Christian, it all lies in this: in that they had known the revelation of Christ and the powerful operation of the Spirit working in them; this was what was well pleasing to God. Many scriptures might be spoken of, but you know the scriptures and can read them and see in them the concurrent testimony of all Holy men to this day, that the knowledge they had of Christ was a divine knowledge, a spiritual

knowledge. It was knowing him after the Spirit, and it was a revelation of Christ *in* them that separated and distinguished them from reprobates, even the knowledge of God through Jesus Christ their Lord. Why should we not come to this knowledge as well as they? The Lord is the same, and his power is the same, and his arm is not shortened. We may see as much need of divine assistance and divine Love as any men ever did. We can perform no duty, either of prayer or preaching, without divine Assistance; not so much as a sigh or groan that may have acceptance with God without the help of his spirit, Rom 8:26, The Spirit helps our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. If we go about the duty of prayer without divine assistance, we see what sad work we make of it; if we pray not in the Spirit and understanding, how can we receive the thing we pray for? But if we pray in the Spirit and with the understanding also, then the Spirit helps our infirmities; the Spirit that came from God brings us the things we stand in need of.

So that a Christian has a foundation for his worship and Christian performance; what is that foundation? *Nothing* that is corrupt; if it is corrupt, it is good for nothing, for nothing that is corrupted and that defiles can be acceptable and pleasing to God. We are all polluted and defiled by nature, so how can carnal men worship a Spiritual God? Carnal men who are in death and darkness cannot worship God, who is Light, and dwells in Light that is unapproachable, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. Carnal men lack a foundation for their worship and will [continue to lack] until they come to that foundation that God has laid.

Now, that I may speak intelligibly what the Lord has laid upon my heart, I would say thus: there is a universal benefit and privilege distributed and given freely of God unto the sons and daughters of men in their natural state through his son Jesus Christ, in that he has caused his Light to shine and his grace to be extended to every man; for the grace of God which bring salvation (for it is not by works) has appeared unto *all* men, and brings

Light, by which every man may see how to worship God. God has enlightened every man, and this Light comes by Christ the mediator. This mediator is the way that men must walk in, if they will come back again to God for men have run out and departed from God. If men desire to draw near to God and take some footsteps towards the Kingdom of God, away from the kingdom of sin and Satan, they must mind the way; the way must be their director, and they must not go whatever way they like.

This is what was prophesied of Christ, said God by the prophet Isaiah, I will give him for a Leader. [A man says], "I would willingly return to God, and go out of the Kingdom of sin and Satan, to the Kingdom of God." God has given Christ to lead you. [A man says], "If I knew that way which he would lead me in, I would go that way." As soon as a man takes hold of Christ, his grace, and Spirit, and life, he will be ready to say, "I am corrupt, my senses are corrupt, my mind is depraved, my conscience defiled and polluted; but I have found out something that God has bestowed upon me, that is essential, holy and pure, that never consented to my corruption, but is a witness for God against it." Now when a Christian lays hold of Christ, the leader; which way will he lead him? If you lay hold of this guide, he will lead you out of evil, he will teach you to cease to do evil and speak evil. This Light will not lead you to anything that will dishonor God or defile your own soul. But this is not all, we must not only cease to do evil, but we must be doing something; there must be a breaking off from pride, foolish jesting, and evil communication. But this is not all that he will lead me to; let us learn that lesson, cease to do evil. This doctrine was preached before Christianity was preached, as it is now preached. The prophets of old preached this doctrine to the Jews who were under an outward administration, "Cease to do evil, and learn to do well, then I will plead with you, and discourse with you", said the Lord: "Come now let us reason together, said the Lord, though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

This is the first lesson that a true Christian learns in his turning to God, in

his change and translation: *to cease from what is evil*. Here is a cessation of rebellion, and here is some hopes of being reconciled to God. A man has been a rebel against his maker, but he has now received help to resist those temptations that prevail over him. But there is no worshipping yet. There is a forward mind in men to do something that is pleasing to God. But there are some that are not troubled at all for their evil ways and dread not God's anger, but make a mock of sin, which mocking draws others to it and make themselves merry in sin. But there is a sort so far touched with a divine sense of God's love to them, that they have also a sense of *His* anger and indignation because of their sin; and they would willingly be out of *His* anger; and who can blame them? When a man feels the anger of God burning like a fire in his bosom, who can blame that man if he desires peace with God? If he is under a sense of the displeasure and indignation of the Almighty, he must not depart too soon out of that condition he is brought into. For this is God's purpose, and this is the fruit of all his troubles and afflictions, *to take away sin*. God had no other end or design in the affliction that came upon man than to take away sin. When God has brought a people into a distressed and dejected state resulting from their sin, the fruit that God expects is the taking away of their sin; and he will take their pride from them and *humble them before Himself*. If this is the purpose of God, that he intends to purge and *purify his people*, then says the poor creature, "if God designs to purify me from sin, then I will pray to God to support me and bear me up under his indignation." That is the cry of the soul, that he may not be brought too soon from under the judgment of God, but he may be supported and hidden in the hollow of God's hand, until the *time of remission and refreshing* comes, that he may behold the Light of God's countenance.

Here is encouragement for everyone that is acquainted with this divine principle of grace, who desires to be led by it and follow it so far as to be led out of evil. *Then* they will be prepared to do something in the work of God. Every sigh and groan, in which you have had the assistance of the Spirit of God to help you, is part of worship. All your brokenness of heart is part of

worship. By this you acknowledge the great God, that he is able to help you on your way and to pardon your iniquity and blot out your transgression and give you all those heavenly blessings of which your soul stands in need. Then your soul will bow down to God in acts of holy worship, and say, with a humble confidence and expectation: "God will do all these things in me, and for me, that will promote my salvation." It is *nothing* in religion for people to go from praying and preaching to singing; for God must have a holy sacrifice, and that must come out of a pure heart. Now when a man is brought by the help of God, and by the divine assistance of the mediator, Jesus Christ, to break off from his sin, then he stands worthy of becoming a child of God, and to be a servant of God, and to do something for God *in his generation*, and to offer to God praise and thanksgiving, and to perform all other duties into which God shall lead him.

But some will say: What, must we do anything? I have deeply weighed that question, what a poor man or woman must do, that has come out of bondage? There is a propensity in people to be doing; they would willingly do something. They would be doing. They say: "What shall I do? If I do something that does not please God, I had better attempt to do nothing to please him; for I can do nothing acceptable to God without divine assistance." Such a person that sees his own impotence and inability, will cast his care upon God, and will say: "The Lord is able to lead me and guide me; I am ready to do your will, O God. Make it clear to me that this is your will, and that this is what you require. I am ready to do it, though it is a cross to my own will." He is ready to go on in God's way, in the way of Christianity. Such is a person that has the true knowledge of Christ. *If he speaks, the Spirit of Christ speaks in him; if he prays, it is through the assistance of the Spirit of Christ through whom God alone is appeased and reconciled, and through whom they may receive a blessing from God's hands. But for men to run out in their own wills and to do anything because they will to do it, they had better sit still; this doing in their own wills has filled the world with a sort of Christians that lack acceptance with God, which is to be had alone through the Lord Jesus Christ. And the lack of the*

guidance of God's Holy Spirit, is the misery and downfall of Christianity in our days.

Therefore it is our work and business to build upon that foundation which God has laid; no worship is pleasing to God, but that which rises from that spring that is pure and holy. If I cannot find what will keep me from all pollution and defilement, if I cannot find that, I must stay still until I can. For to begin a worship and a religion without what I know is acceptable to God is only worthless labor and time spent in vain.

Therefore, friends, let everyone that desires to be religious turn their mind *inward*, wait for the gift of God, which is essentially pure, that never did consent to evil, that never mixed with the corruption of nature, but bears witness to the Light, that will guide you and lead you, and conduct you, first out of sin, and then it will lead you into that worship and religion, and the performance of those things that are pleasing to God. Those, who have come to this worship, do not only know what the Lord requires of them, and when he requires it of them, but they are given up into the hands of God; they pray, preach, exhort and live according to the will of God.

It is hard for people in a carnal state to believe this; but you that are believers, that have come to know the gift of God in yourselves, and the necessity of being ruled by him; you will believe us, for no one else will believe us. Let us preach to as many people and nations as we will, none will receive us as true ministers, but those who have the truth in their own hearts. If there is any that despises the grace of God in his own heart, he hates what chides and reproves him. If there is such a man, he will hate me because I am a minister and a witness of the grace of God, and of that truth in the inward parts, which is the ground and foundation that man has of acceptance with God. A wicked carnal wretch will say, I hate such a person; I hate the Light, which checks me and witnesses against me. You are a person that bears witness against me; therefore I hate you. It is very true, it cannot be otherwise. Now our desire and labor is, that men may come to the love of

the truth in themselves.

You know there are a great many other ministers, whose labors are to persuade people to believe what they say; to lay down a doctrine, and prove it by scripture and reason, and set it home upon their minds by such testimony as the scripture affords; and by this they prevail upon the minds and judgments of people, to believe what they lay down.

It is easy to lay down a position and prove it, and convince people that it must be according to scripture; but when a person is convinced of a principle of truth, he is not regenerated and does not come to God. Therefore, although he cannot deny the doctrine of truth in words, yet he can deny it in works, and does not rightly come to love it. If people would believe what we say, and observe what argument we bring for proving a position, they may be convinced of the doctrine of truth, and come to a profession of it, and yet be strangers to it, until they come to love it in themselves. If it were not for this, we would leave preaching. If God had not given a measure and manifestation of the Spirit to every man to benefit all, [we would not be effective]. You have it in yourselves, we are only monitors to you, to put you in mind of it. You have so much business in the world, that you have not had leisure to take notice of it.

A man may have a rich jewel, and still be poor until he comes to know the value of it. A man has a rich and precious jewel, a pearl bestowed upon him who would make him rich in faith and love to God, and qualify him for the Kingdom of God, and make him an heir of it; but he knows not, nor understands the value of it, and esteems it not. Therefore God has raised up ministers to put you in mind of it, that you may be happy forever, and live in blessedness to all eternity. Whoever has an Ear to hear, let him hear; and when they hear what we say, let them take the benefit of it to their own souls. We do not bring truth to you, because God has bestowed it upon you. You will be rich indeed, if you do as a man that bought a field where the precious pearl was, and dug till he found it. Come to the foundation upon

which you should build all your hopes of happiness, and depend not upon your own works, or religious performances, for acceptance with God. For there is no acceptance with God, but only through Christ, we are only accepted of God through him. Those who will become Christians indeed, and worship God as he has ordained and appointed himself to be worshipped; they must come to the principle of Light and grace in their own hearts, which they have in, and through Christ, and they will find acceptance with God. *Amen.*

The topic of the above sermon is, *Pure and Spiritual Worship*. Isaac Penington gives us an excellent insight into true worship:

The true worship of God in the gospel is in the Spirit. "The hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeks such to worship him." John 4:23. The true worship is in the spirit, and in the truth, and the true worshippers worship there; and such worshippers the Father seeks, and such worship he accepts; but all other worship is false worship, and all other worshippers are false worshippers; such worshippers as God seeks not, nor can accept their worship. Did God refuse Cain's sacrifice formerly? Can he accept any sacrifice or worship now that is offered in that same nature? Why, he that worships out of the Spirit, he worships in Cain's nature; but he that worships correctly, must have his nature changed, and must worship in that thing in which he is changed, in that faith, in that life, in that nature, in that Spirit by which and to what he is changed. For without being in this [true faith], and keeping in this, it is impossible to please God in anything. He that is the true worshipper is a believer, and in his worship

he must keep to his rule, the law of faith, the law of the Spirit of Life in him, the law which he receives by faith fresh from the Spirit of Life continually. **He must hear and observe the voice of the living Word in all his worship, and worship in the presence and power and guidance of that, as that moves, and as that carries on, or God is not worshipped in the Spirit.** I shall instance only in prayer. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Eph 6:18. Mark: *all prayer and supplication must be in the Spirit*; yes, it must be *always* in the Spirit, which speaks in the heart to God, and makes the intercession, or it is no prayer. If a man speaks ever so much from his own spirit, with ever so much earnestness and affection, yet it is no prayer, no true prayer, but only so far as the Spirit moves to it, and so far as the Spirit leads and guides in it. If a man begins without the Spirit, or goes on without the Spirit, this is out of the worship; this is in his own will, and so will-worship; and according to his own understanding, and so fleshly worship; both which are to be crucified, and not to be followed in anything under the gospel. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit," (here are the true worshippers, "the circumcision;" and here is the true worship, "in the Spirit;" and they have no bounds and limits in the flesh, in which their strength and confidence are broken), "and have no confidence in the flesh." If a man address himself to any worship of God without his Spirit, does he not have confidence in the flesh? If he begins without the moving of his Spirit, does he not begin in the flesh? If he goes on, without the Spirit's carrying on, does he not proceed

in the strength and confidence of the flesh? But the worship of the Spirit is in its will, and in its time, and is carried on by its light and power, and keeps down the understanding and affectionate part of man, in which all the world worship, and offer up the unaccepted sacrifices, even *the lame* and *the blind*,* which God's soul hates.

*[In the Old Testament, God would not allow the lame and blind to approach the altar; the restriction is an allegory to God's repulsion of being worshipped by those who cannot see by his light and walk by his spirit.]

Now this worship, as it is out of man's will and time, and in what continues, so it is continual. There is a continual praying unto God [in the Spirit]. There is a continual blessing and praising of his name, in eating, or drinking, or whatever else is done. There is a continual bowing to the majesty of the Lord in every thought, in every word, in every action, though it be in worldly things and occasions; yet the Spirit of the Lord is seen there, and the tongue confesses him there, and the knee bows to him there. This is the true worship, and this is the rest or sabbath in which the true worshippers worship. When the creation of God is finished; when the child is formed in the light, and the life breathed into him; then God brings him forth into his holy land, where he keeps his sabbath. They who are in the faith, which is the substance of the things hoped for under the law, are come from all the shadows and types of the law, and from all the

heathenish observations of days and times in the spirit of this world, where the spirit of man is hard at work, into the true sabbath, into the true rest, where they have no more to work, but God works all in them in his own time, according to his own pleasure. "We who have believed do enter into rest." Heb 4:3. "And he that is entered into his rest, has ceased from his works, as God from his." verse 10. He that has the least taste of faith, knows a measure of rest, finding the life working in him, and his soul daily led further and further into life by the working of the life, and the heavy yoke of his own laboring after life taken off from his shoulders. Now here is the truth, here is the life, here is the sabbath, here is the worship of the soul, that is led into the truth, and preserved in the truth.

Penington in [Babylon is Here and Now](#) further shows us that any worship out of Spirit and Truth is idolatry:

Idolatry is the worshipping of God without his spirit, (that is the plain, naked truth of the thing). To invent things from the carnal mind, or to imitate things, which others, who had the spirit, did in the spirit, by the command of the spirit, for you to imitate and practice these without the spirit, is idolatry. An invented church, an invented ministry, an invented worship; an imitated church, an imitated ministry, an imitated worship, without the life, without the spirit, all these are the *work of men's hands*, and are *idols*, and all that is performed within is idolatry. Rev 9:20. This is a religion without life, a worship without life, a fabric for idolatry; and the whole course of worship

and service in it, is idolatry. For the living God, the Lord God of endless life and power, is alone worshipped by his spirit, and in the truth of that life which he begets in the heart;* and all other worship, though ever so seemingly spiritual, is idolatrous. Ah! believers, believers! If you knew how many idol prayers and services you have loaded the Lord with, and how you have been whoring from him, while you have seemed to be drawing near to him, you would hang down your heads and mourn! for whatever you have done in the worship of God, without the leading and presence of his spirit, it has been idolatry. For the worship of God, under the gospel, "is in the spirit and in the truth," and required of them who are in the spirit and in the truth, and not of others. [John 4:23](#). For them alone the Lord seeks to worship; and the Lord will admit of none to his worship, but such as he seeks. And if any else will thrust themselves into his worship, it is not accepted; nor do they worship the true God, but they "worship they know not what;" and their whole state and course here is a state and course of idolatry.

Edward Burrough wrote what gives us further insight into the true worship of God:

First, the worship of God is in itself this: It is a walking with God and a living with him in converse and fellowship, in Spirit and Truth; for he is only worshipped therein, and to do the Truth, and speak the Truth. This is the true worship of God, where the mind is guided with the Spirit of Truth, and the presence of the Lord felt at all times, and His fear felt

in the hearts of people, and his counsel stood in, and his covenant felt, which unites to the Lord in Spirit; this is the true worship of God; and it is without respect of times or things.

Now none upon earth can thus worship God, but who are changed and renewed in heart and mind, and born of the Spirit, and led thereby, where the body of sin and death is put off, such as are redeemed out of the world, and out of all its ways and nature; such only can worship God in the Spirit and in the Truth, and such is the Father seeking to worship him now in this present age. And there is never a one upon Earth, that can worship God as he requires, who remain unchanged, and are in the transgression, unrenewed and unconverted; such cannot worship the True and Living God, but **what they perform and practice as the pretence of his worship is idolatry and abomination, and the Lord has not required it at their hands**; for none can walk with God, nor have unity with him, but who are renewed and changed; nor none can do the truth, and speak the Truth in all things, but such who are led by the Spirit of Truth, and such are in the covenant of God, and true worshippers of Him; and all that is contrary, is not the worship of God, but idolatry, as I have said.

Now as concerning this worship practiced in England, in these steeplehouses, *so-called churches*: it is not the worship of the living God, but superstition and idolatry; for people have not learned it by the teachings of the Spirit, neither does the Spirit lead them therein; but it stands in form without power,

and in the inventions and traditions of the fathers, and there is not in it the manifest presence of God, neither do you worshippers meet with the Lord, nor enjoy his pure Life and presence in your practices; — and the substance of your worship, (as it is now practiced), is made up of inventions, some part of your own, and some part brought along from the church of Rome.

The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and **those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.** John 4:23-24. Unless your words of praise, prayer, or singing are supplied by the Spirit, your words are spoken from your carnal mind and evil imagination, both repugnant to the Lord. **Worship in Spirit and Truth is worship with words supplied by the Spirit of God to someone who is also *in the truth*,** (in Jesus, translated into the kingdom, in His presence); any other worship is idolatry and abomination, including all the so-called *sacraments*. From the word of the Lord within: "Sin in believers is intolerable. We need to get clean before we can truly worship. Christianity has no idea what I am or for what I stand. None of the churches reflect true Christianity. When they pray, they don't pray to God; they pray to their collective conscience." In vain does Christianity worship Jesus and God because they pray to an image they have created based on which scriptures they think are valid and their opinion of what those scriptures mean; thus creating an *imagined image of God* according to their collective conscience. They worship in vain and so take His name in vain.]

SERMON XIII

The Divine Life of Christ Jesus

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, March 16, 1691

THE blessed life of Christ is not of this world; and it ought to be your care in all your religious assemblies that you are gathered into the inward, feeling sense of this divine life; that you may feel your fellowship and communion in that life of Christ that is not of this world. And may all of you lay hold upon it for this is the nourishment and the heavenly bread, with which the children of the kingdom are fed and nourished from day to day. There are many that feed upon words that are not the children of the kingdom of God; but the begotten of God have come to know the virtue of the divine life, Christ Jesus. Their feeding and their nourishment is by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, and they grow up to life eternal by that divine and heavenly gift that God the Father has bestowed upon them through his Son Jesus Christ; and they enjoy the communion of saints through this divine Head of the Church that communicates of his life and virtue through every member, by which they are sanctified; and every day more and more prepared for that living and eternal inheritance laid up for the children of God.

And when there are a people that are thus gathered into the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are able to draw near to God; they feel the power of entrance because their sin is removed that formerly lay at the door. The way is opened and consecrated for them to draw near and partake of the table of the Lord, by which they grow stronger and stronger in his might and power; and they are thereby enabled to perform the whole will of God and that divine worship and religious service that God requires at their hands in their day.

For it is very certain, and we have found it by experience, that the words of

our Lord to his disciples of old are true; *without me*, (his prompting and direction to action, and faith to obey) *you can do nothing*. For though people may meet together, and may pretend and set up a form of worship, and of religion in their own wills, yet it all amounts to nothing with respect to acceptance with the Lord. There is no return in their souls, no addition of life, nor increase and growth of life; they are not nearer the kingdom than when they first believed, but many times further off by leaning upon a formality. They are not really entering into the work of God, nor traveling out of death into life; for there must be a path, and a traveling in it. The soul must have an exercise through the power and life of Jesus, for the overcoming of death that separated it from God, and a preparing for life, which life is what unites us to God again. And when people are in earnest in this travel, they are resigned up to the government, direction and leading of him who is gone before, that has made a way for us, and will further our progress towards the kingdom of God.

And, therefore, my friends, you know the way, and know how the power has reached to you, and has opened your understandings that you may be faithful to that power in your own souls; and that you may have the use and true improvement of this and all other such meetings as this for the gathering of your minds out of all visible and changeable objects, unto that life which God has revealed, that so in the exercise of it, you may hold your fellowship with God and with one another. Here is the bond of perfection, here is that in which God has created peace and rest and joy for his people. As far as every one is a *partaker of this innocent life*, and feels himself changed into it, they are gathered into the church, and they are gathered into fellowship with the head of it, and are comforted in their membership, in their partaking together.

Though I am only a little one, yet I partake of the same virtue which the Lord administered to the greatest saints while I am *waiting upon him*, and of the same divine consolation, and operation, and power that weans more and more from the world, and what is corruptible and raises up in me daily

more and more fervent desires after that bread that does not perish.

Now in this men and women have an evidence of that Christianity in themselves, *the Spirit of God bearing record and witness with their Spirits*, which all the loose professors of Christianity in the world are strangers to, their evidence in themselves, being against them; they seek to have evidence without them and to gather up some kind of marks and tokens, and sayings, and sentences, from without them, to make them believe that they are in covenant with God and that they are in a state of salvation by Christ; but he that truly believes, has an evidence of his Christianity, and of his reconciliation with God; and he has this evidence in himself, a divine, spiritual testimony that answers to his own spirit, that witnesses to him, that he is one of the children of God.

And my friends, to this you are called, whether you have come to it or not; it is this you are called to with a heavenly call, that you might no longer live in the rudiments of the world, to be seeking and looking here and there, for a ground of peace and of rest, a ground of hope; but you may know and feel the same thing, the same ground of eternal hope that the saints of old had.

Now what is that hope? What reason did they give and render of their hopes of eternal glory? The apostle tells you plainly the ground or reason of their hope of being glorified in the world to come, was *Christ in them the hope of glory*. They witnessed that Christ gave his life for the world. Take the glorious testimony that the apostle did bear in one of his epistles when he said, "*the life was manifested in me was not covered up or hidden, that people could not find it;*" God was pleased to bring it to light by the gospel; when a thing is brought to light, you may see it. This he affirmed in his day, and the same is affirmed in our day. The life is manifested; what life? Not the life of this world, but a life not defiled, not polluted, but *the life that is of God*, a heavenly life that is holy and pure; that life is manifested. We have seen it, and we exhort all to lay hold of it, to lay hold of eternal life. Some had a sight of it, that had not laid hold of it; they saw it in a vision, and they

might say possibly, oh that I could live such a life, that there were no sin in me, in my words, or thoughts, or actions, what a gracious life would that be! They had seen that life, they had tasted of it, but they did not lay hold of it, but let it go by them. Take heed of that when you have seen it with open eyes. "Blessed are your eyes, for they have seen, and your ears that have heard," said Christ to his disciples. They saw that life that was holy, harmless and undefiled. Lay hold on this life, especially when you are thus assembled together, in a solemn manner in the presence of the Lord, waiting to behold it, and see it more and more discovered to you, and labor to have that gathering power that will bring you to it, that you may know the strength that comes by it to the soul. There is none of you, but what you will meet with temptations in this world that will draw you into death and darkness, to things that are carnal, and sensual, and devilish sometimes. How shall I stand if I am not centered in that life that was before the world began and before the devil was? If I labor to feel the influence of that divine power that is able to keep me, my faith tells me so. I know that power is able to keep me if I keep in the exercise of it. The trust of a true believer is, that whatever temptations and trials they are exercised with, they know one already come, in whom they have trusted, who is both able and willing to deliver them. So by this means he is kept harmless, and innocent, and blameless in his life and conversation. Thus you might be kept, if you would regard, and have respect to the life that is manifested in you.

Whoever comes to know, and feel and witness in their souls the discovery and revelation of the life of Jesus, they know there is in it a certain dominion over what is contrary to it; and you have many of you had experience of the exercise of the power of God in your own hearts, that has enabled you to reign over those things, that have formerly ruled over you. That you can now subdue vain thoughts, and evil desires, that you can withstand temptations that come from without, and from within. Now if you could do this, and if ever you have done it, you did it by that power that God discovered and revealed in you from Jesus Christ. You had not such hold of this once, before you believed, but by believing, the word of God sent it unto you; it being

fixed by faith in the heart, *that faith which is of the operation of God*. You could then do what you could not do before, and forgo what you were led away by. These experiences that God has given you should encourage you to hold on in your labor and travail, and engage you to *grow in the grace of God, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Whatever is said by men in the profession of religion, this ought to be our design and end, in the discovery that is made to us of the life of Christ; that we may grow in it, and live in it; (indeed there is great talking of it), but we should labor to show forth the resurrection of that life in us.

Those who come to the one baptism, are baptized into the death of Christ; the apostle tells you, in that he died, he died unto sin. There are none baptized into Christ, and made partakers of the death of Christ, but those who died to sin, as he died. Though Christ had no sin, yet he died to sin. What use did he make of this, that Christ knew no sin, but yet took our sin upon him? He died to sin, that they who might partake of his death, would be partakers of his resurrection. He lives again, and after death, rises again.

Those who partake of this death to sin, are *crucified to this world*, and have taken up Christ's cross, and are dead to all the pleasures and delights of this world, which have withered away and come to nothing. What do they live to now? To righteousness, holiness, love, temperance; these are pleasant to them; these come to live to righteousness, through the power of him who loved them. This shows the glory and the power of the grace of God. It is the grace of God that works such a change in a man or woman. Those who delight in sin and wickedness, in what is corrupt and ungodly, they have no delight in this, no delight in sobriety, love, holiness, and purity of mind.

So, in whom such a change takes place? In all that are freely given up to it because where anyone is given up to that life, the grace of God has the praise of it. This is the exaltation and praise of the power of God; so that others may find by this, that they may by it come to believe, and by believing, to be saved.

Thus the gospel has gone forth, from one to many, and from these to many more, and is increasing more and more, for grace, mercy, and peace, are multiplied, by which the heritage of God, and so every man and woman that partake of this life, are gathered into fellowship.

So that your end in coming to these meetings, is not so much to hear what this, and that, and the other friend say; but what you have in yourselves to witness to; which is the divine operations of the power of God in your souls, bringing down something that is to be brought down, and raising up something that is to be raised. If you excuse sin by saying that you are more subject to temptation than others, because you have not come to their degree, but think you are better than you were when first convinced of the true way; if you say this and deceive others, cry to God, and pray earnestly that everything in you may be brought down that is contrary to his grace. If you say and profess this, to strengthen by excuse what is already known by the light of Christ, and against the truth of God, if at the same time there is a deceitful heart, how will this appear at the great day of God? The eye of God is upon your hypocrisy; he that never slumbers or sleeps, he beholds you, if there is any sin that you would keep and save alive. If you make it a profession, and notwithstanding say, this sin I will keep, the Lord pardon me in this thing; like Naaman, the servant of the king of Assyria, who said to the prophet, *your servant henceforth will neither offer burnt offering nor sacrifice to other Gods, but unto the Lord, In this the Lord pardon your servant, that when my masek goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon; when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon your servant in this thing.* He knew if he failed to bow, the king would take notice of the alteration of his gesture, therefore he would bow in the house of Rimmon. That sin he would save alive under a profession. That hypocrisy the Lord did abominate.

Be upright in the sight of God, and be faithful to your own souls; if so, then

every sin will be a burden, and you will long to be rid of it; if so, you know whose hand it is that has brought you so far; if you are really cordial, and give up yourselves to Jesus, that work, which he has begun in you, he will finish for you. He will finish it for you; withhold nothing from him; give up yourselves to him, and join not with his enemies; take heed of hearkening to them; take heed of every sin that will at last be a burden and oppression to your souls.

But if you live this heavenly life of Jesus, you will be set at liberty, to have dominion over sin, and to stand without guilt before the throne of God. Friends, let your hearts be deeply affected with the great mercies that God has bestowed upon you, and for his gift to you of that divine life that is acceptable in his sight.

Many things have been done upon the account of religion, and we could never be satisfied whether sins were acceptable to God; we could not be satisfied whether we did anything pleasing to God. We may say of them as the apostle Paul did of the Jewish sacrifices, *there remains a conscience of sin*, an accusing conscience, that tells us, that guilt is not removed, nor the sin taken away, until the Lord opens this divine mystery to us, that our justification must be by faith in Jesus; that nothing could reconcile us to God but the life of Jesus, and the merit of his death.

This life of Jesus was a holy, blameless, harmless, and innocent life, which life he gave for the world; *which life is the light of men*; and our souls being turned to this life, we see the glory and the excellence of it, and desires are kindled in our hearts after it. Many have pursued, and labored, and travailed, that they might come to the enjoyment of it. The very discovery of this life ought to be highly prized, and your souls affected with it; and when you have obtained it, you will say, O! What a blessed condition have I come into! That Christ has manifested his divine power in me, not only in reconciling me to God, but taking away the conscience of sin; by that alone the accuser is cast out, and I may now sing to God, songs of deliverance.

Now you taste of the mercies that God has bestowed upon you; this will affect your souls with a childlike submission and subjection to him, who has begun to save and deliver you, that so you may resign up yourselves to his will, and forsake the world, and the things of it.

Now when these come to such a meeting as this, their minds may be retired, and they may be sensible of the power of truth upon their hearts; but for lack of keeping their subjection to the divine power, that has opened their understandings, when they come into the world again, they are ensnared and entangled, and many times, for want of watchfulness, through a looseness of mind, and unruliness of tongue, they run into anger and passion, and this grieves the Holy Spirit of God. And how should you come to God through the Mediator, when you grieve his Spirit, and quench the motions of it.

These things have been hurtful to many, that in their time might have been pillars in the house of God. Take heed of this, and let the goodness of God dwell upon your minds, that you may feel and experience the inward ministrations of it; there are many that are much affected with the outward ministry, and are very desirous to hear the servants of God declare the things that God has wrought for them, and in them, and the wonderful things that God has opened to them; yet when you have heard all that man can say about it, if the divine ministry of the word of God does not make powerful impressions upon you, and sanctify and renew your souls, the outward ministry of the word will do you no good.

Now that you may be established in the truth that you have been taught, this testimony arises in me, to desire every one to heed and attend to the manifestation of this life of Jesus in yourselves. Whatever God has bestowed upon me or another, you may perish for all that, and I am not the better for what God has bestowed upon you, but may perish notwithstanding; but that God has manifested eternal life to my soul, let that be everyone's center. This will make you holy and blameless and preserve you in every state; and

in the hour of temptation, and in the midst of snares, this will be a bulwark to you; this will be as the walls of Zion, which is the salvation of the Lord. That so you may be preserved sensible of the goodness of the Lord. That grace, mercy, and peace may be multiplied in your bosoms; this will make you dear and affectionate one to another.

Though there may be an external fellowship among those who preach and profess the same doctrine, yet when they come off from that, when once men depart from the power of truth, they grow stubborn and rebellious; but when men come to be gathered into the inward fellowship that stands not in terms and words; but in the revelation of Christ, and in the participation of his virtue and goodness, the more you are united in this, the more you are knit one to another, and become useful and helpful one to another.

The Lord vouches to every one of you a taste of his goodness, and you will prefer it above all that the devil has, and his instruments can present; and if you retire more into this heavenly and divine life of Jesus, you will feel and enjoy more peace and satisfaction, and true consolation in your souls, than I, or any man in the world can tell you of.



Text in Light Blue or **Bold Light Blue** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

Sermon XIV

The Kingdom of God Within — All Must Come to Witness its Establishment Within

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace church Street meeting house on Oct. 26, 1691

YOU have read and heard much concerning the day of the Lord, as a great and notable day; many of you are now living witnesses that the great and notable day of the Lord is coming, in which the accomplishment of great and notable things, the mighty works of God, which have been prophesied of, may be lawfully expected. It is the work of every Christian to wait upon the Lord in the Light of this day, and to be acquainted with the works of the Lord, both inwardly and outwardly. For the day of the Lord is a day of power, and that power of God works wonderful things. If we were not kept in the Light of that day, the Lord might work great things, and we would not know it; we would be looked upon as careless and negligent witnesses of the works of the Lord, as those who do not regard them. If you would be faithful witnesses, you must have regard to the works of the Lord, and the operation of his hands. One who intends to be a faithful witness will take notice of what is said and done. You are called to be witnesses of the works of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of his doings. You must stand where you may hear, and see, and understand what the Lord is about to do at this time.

In your testimony and witness bearing, the greatest thing we have to expect

in this day of the Lord is that God will set up the Kingdom of his son Christ Jesus. To this all the prophets did bear witness in their time. Now it is our turn to bear witness of it by sensible and living experiences of the accomplishment of those things that they prophesied of, that the Lord will set up the Kingdom of Christ, and bring down and lay waste the kingdom of antichrist. This our savior taught his disciples to pray for, sixteen hundred years ago, that the Kingdom of God might come. All the true disciples of Christ ever since have prayed for the coming of this Kingdom, and many of them have seen the coming of it, and rejoiced; and others have died in the faith of it, and have been gathered into the Kingdom of Heaven.

But, my friends, what chiefly concerns us at this day, is to behold the Kingdom of Christ, the eternal Son of God, **within us**, to go forward and prosper; and the Kingdom of Antichrist suppressed and destroyed, and utterly laid waste; and this is wrought two ways, 1. Inwardly. 2. Outwardly.

First, *Inwardly*. There is a greater inclination in the minds of people, to look more at the operation of God's power in this great work outwardly, than to look at it inwardly, but unto that there must be a daily Cross taken up, and it is my business at this time to tell you in the name of the Lord, that your duty and mine is to turn our minds to the working of the power of God *in* ourselves, and to see that other Kingdom of the man of sin weakened and brought down *within us*. Then there is no fear but he will carry on his work outwardly, and we shall see as much of that work as belongs to our generation. But the great matter and chief concern of you and me is to see the Kingdom of God set up *within us*, which stands in holiness and righteousness. Our business is to walk until we see the righteousness of this Kingdom set up within us in our hearts and souls and to have a *real change* made.

We all know, and we must confess, that we have been subject to the man of sin, whatever we are now. We have seen the reign and government, the rage and tyranny of the wicked one that has led us into rebellion and

disobedience to the Lord our maker. How do we like that government to be ruled by the devil, and to be led captive, and to be made to do his will, and to rebel against God that gave us our life, and our breath, and our being? How do we like that government of Satan? I hope none of us like it. It was so with me. Those under the tyrannical government of Satan have many cries and wishes in their souls that they were freed and delivered from it, and brought under the Government and obedience of Christ Jesus. The wish they were able to serve God as they ought to do, that they might be translated from the Kingdom of sin and Satan, into the Kingdom of the blessed and dearly beloved Son of God.

This has been the cry of some ever since they have known the world; and I am persuaded it is the cry of many at this day. I have good news to bring you; *not* that the day of your redemption draws near, but that it *is come*. The day of redemption is now come, and there are a great many blessing and glorifying the name of God that they are redeemed, and delivered from the bondage of corruption, and have more joy and delight in the service of God, that made them, than ever they had in the service of the God of this world.

But may not some say: How shall this great work be wrought; for it is a great work, and we truly think that nothing but an Almighty power can effect it? For there are many in this assembly who have been trying with no result, and done what they could in their own strength, to deliver their own souls from death, and yet they find themselves in bondage still; no, they have called in the help and assistance of those who they thought to be stronger than themselves, and all have failed, and they are yet weak and entangled, and they cannot find themselves at liberty to serve the Lord as they ought to do.

I am of this mind, that nothing but the almighty power of God can do it; and when you come to my experience, to know this as I have done, then I hope you will seek after that, and you will see good reason for it; and you will then come to this profession: "If the Lord does not put forth his Almighty power,

then I will perish, for there is no other power that can deliver me." When you come to know this, what must you do? Why, you must wait for the revelation of that power that will take you off from all trust and confidence that you have ever had in anything else. A man that has nothing to trust to but the almighty power, and mercy, and goodness of God, he puts his whole trust and confidence in them, or else he knows he will perish.

When a man or woman comes to this point, that they have nothing to rely upon but the Lord, then they will meet together to wait upon the Lord. This was the first ground or motive of our setting up meetings; and I wish to God that this was the use that every one would make of them that come to them, then they would be justly and properly used according to the purpose of the institution of them at first. We should use them as poor, desolate, helpless people that have broken off from all their own confidence and trust, and have nothing to rely upon but the mercy and goodness of God. If he pleases to reveal his power among us, we know that he is able to save us; and we will have then met with the Revelation of God's power. When we have met together in simplicity of mind, the Lord was pleased to communicate his Spirit to us, and open a door for us, and discover and reveal to us that it was the day of his power. When we came to examine ourselves, whether we were willing in this day of God's power, (for the prophet gives us a note of distinction between the people of God, and other people; *your people shall be willing in the day of your power*, which is as much as to say, God discovers and reveals his power to them, such a people are *willing* to give themselves over to the government of it, when we found we were subject to it), we had joy in believing, before we attained the end of our hope. It was gladness to us that we found ourselves willing. I am persuaded that every one of you would be glad to find yourselves willing to part with what you cry out of.

What a cry is there of our bondage and corruption, and of our being led captive by our lusts? We may hear such a cry from one end of the kingdom to the other. People cry out of the bondage of corruption, and of their

subjection to sin and Satan. I wish they were sincere. There is not that earnestness and reality in men and women that God looks for, and so nothing results. There is no redemption, and no deliverance, the Lord does not hear them, *though they come into his presence*, to offer up their prayers. I wish all of you to be sincere; I wish well to you all. And it would be hard to say that you do not wish well to yourselves. Here lies your welfare, that you find yourselves *willing to be subject* to the power that made you. You have been subject doubtless to the power that destroyed you; that power that never gave you life and breath, has been instrumental of your destruction. The power of *the God of this world* never did men good, but destroyed them, deceived them, and deprived them of their lives.

Now if there was but a willingness in every one of us, freely to give up ourselves to that power that created us in order to obey his will, I am sure there is not a man or woman among us who would not shortly have the knowledge of it. If I am only willing to be subject to the law of him who made me, it will not be long before he shows it to me, and reveals his power in me in the glory and excellence of it; which power is more able to preserve me than all the power of men on Earth, or all the power of the devils in hell is able to destroy me. When the Lord shall show and reveal his power in you, you will be willing to be subject to it.

But I think the sound and noise of flesh and blood grows loud here. [I think I hear some say] I would like to be subject to God, but I would not have him cross my interest [my will], and deprive me of what I love and thirst after. I would not have him embitter my carnal delights and pleasures, and ruin my reputation in the world.

You may see where this comes, that you would make a bargain, and draw a contract with the God of your lives about these things. This is a nonsensical thing because *of all people in the world*, you are a people that have had a veneration for the holy scriptures, the scriptures of truth, and have been acquainted with them so familiarly as with any book in the world; wherein

you find articles drawn, long ago fixed and sealed. No new ones are to be drawn. If anyone will be my disciple, John or Thomas, James or Peter, or whoever he is, he must take up his *daily* cross, and deny himself, and follow me. Now here is a contract made, therefore turn aside from all kind of reasoning and consulting with flesh and blood.

If you will become spiritual, and partake of spiritual blessings and benefits, I would advise you to turn from all kind of reasonings that come from the pit of darkness, that has thus far deceived you, and will ruin you forever, if you hearken to them. For assure yourselves no man can make new gospel requirements. If any comes to preach a gospel with new requirements count him a deceiver. For there is *no* possibility of being a disciple of Christ, but by taking up a cross daily, and denying ourselves, and following him as our leader and guide. To him I must go, and go in no other way, speaking nothing, or doing nothing but what is holy and pure. *He* must conduct me in my walking, guide me in my way, and justify me in it. This is to be a true disciple of Christ.

As soon as he comes to adhere, and join to the power of God revealed in his soul, he sees the coming of the Kingdom of God; he sees it at a distance and says within himself, and makes this conclusion, I will follow my captain, I will become subject to the Kingdom of Christ. If I obey this divine principle of the grace of God, and the gospel of Christ, I shall be his disciple. I read in his blessed book that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the children of God. I am not to propose new requirements, but accept of the old requirements of the gospel of Christ. I see that the Kingdom of God is to be set up, and the Kingdom of the devil to be brought down *in me*. If I follow this divine principle, I should never follow the devil any more. If he would have me lie, I shall refuse, and say I cannot. If he would have me run into vain and corrupt communication [conversation], and foolish jesting, that will be a bridle to me, that I cannot do it.

I speak now to persons that live under the Light of the gospel of Christ, and

that are subdued by his grace. I would speak what all the logic in the world cannot overthrow, what the most cunning logician, with all his wit and quirks, cannot refute and prove erroneous. If a man is led by the Spirit of God, he cannot lie; this is a common cure for all men. If I am led by the Spirit of truth, and hearken to the Principle of truth in my own soul, this will cure and heal me of the wounds and maladies of my corrupt nature, and set me at liberty from my old master. I do not like his service.

I hope if any of you like the servitude and bondage of sin and Satan, you will desire liberty before you die. Why do you not desire it now? It may be you hope to enjoy a little liberty and reputation, and pleasure in sin for many years, for six or seven, nine or ten years, and then break off from it, and repent and turn to God. How do you know that you have ten days to live? It is of high concern to every one of us to wait for a discovery of gospel-liberty, and an ability and power in his soul, to enable him to break off from the servitude and bondage of sin and Satan, that he has so long lived under; and to wait upon God with patience for the setting his soul at liberty, and setting up the Kingdom of Christ within him, and pulling down the Kingdom of Satan. So that he may be brought into the Kingdom of Christ, that consists in peace and righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. These are the things that follow one another; when righteousness is set up in me, I shall not be disturbed, I shall have peace; and if I have peace I shall have joy, and this joy is in the Holy Ghost the apostle said the Kingdom of God consists in these things.

Now that every one might be persuaded that God has given a measure of his grace to them, as well as to others, let them consider and say within themselves, God has not shut me out of the number of his people. He has knocked at the door of my heart, to bring me to repentance; he has waited upon me so long, surely he has a mind to save me. Would he call upon me, unless he intends I should repent and turn to him?

But where is the power? You will say knocking at the door of the heart, and

checks of conscience, we understand them; but we do not understand where the power is, that allows us to conform to the Will of God.

People will never understand it while they are in the Kingdom of Satan, and under the power of the prince of darkness. The apostle tells us that the God of this world has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them. If men saw the beauty of the gospel, they would run after it, and embrace it; therefore the devil blinds their minds, that they should not see the beauty and amiableness of the gospel, and like the terms of it. He has the rule and government of the children of disobedience. So long as I live in subjection to that devilish, hellish power, which leads me forth into sin, I shall be a stranger to God's power that would enable me to break off from it.

[Without the power of God working **in** you, there is no victory, there is no overcoming. There are three sources to the power of God being released to purify you: 1) power in the belief and faith in the true hope and gospel, 2) power in bearing the inward cross of self denial, and 3) the power thinking on the name of Jesus. This **power of God works in us**, and keeps us through faith to salvation, which is to be delivered from sin. Christendom today is without the cross and without the true hope; and so without the power of God, left only as a form (hollow shell) of the original Christianity, without the new life of the new creature, without holiness, wallowing in sin, boasting of their imperfection, perishing, whose end is destruction. For without the power of God released to change a man, his heart remains full of sin and unacceptable to God, whatever his lips may say in the form of worship. The true hope is detailed in John 14 and John 17 with commentary and footnotes. With the true hope, carrying the inward cross of self-denial with obedience to his spoken and heard words, while meditating on the name of Jesus: the combination of all, to access the changing, infinite power of God

to work in you, cleansing you, purifying you, delivering you from all sin, and bringing you into union with God into his kingdom, while on earth and then forever.]

You never read in scripture of any that ever came to be saved by the power of God, but that there was faith mixed with it, that came to join with that power of God. Our Savior said to the impotent man, "Your faith has made you well;" your faith joining with that power of God. We shall be made strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and be able to withstand temptations.

As soon as the soul of man joins with the grace of God, he forsakes the service of his old master and governor. Sin shall no longer have dominion over him. Though he may meet with the same temptation, it shall not have the same power over him, but he will be enabled, by the grace of God to withstand it, and overcome it. If you ask such a man, how it is that he overcomes that temptation that formerly prevailed over him; he will tell you, I have now a helper; I am now joined to the grace of God in my soul, therefore I withstand temptations and have power over them. Thus the Kingdom of Christ comes to be set up in the soul, and this is what will fit and prepare us for the everlasting Kingdom of God: those who do wait upon God, shall see this work wrought inwardly in them, they know more by faith than they can see by sense.

I know and am certain, that the power the devil has in the world, shall be broken down, and righteousness shall be exalted, and justice and equity shall prevail in the nations. I shall not perhaps live to see it, but I may see it by faith. I have seen enough for my generation, and those who live in the next generation shall see it also. For the church of God is the same from one generation to another. Now unto us it is given to see the things that in former generations were prophesied of, God having (said the apostle) provided some better thing for us, that they without us, shall not be made perfect.

The church of God from one generation to another, has its measure and degree of service, and bears its proper testimony, and leaves the rest to succeeding generations. It concerns us in our generation to see a change made inwardly in our souls, and the Kingdom of Christ set up within us, and the kingdom of Satan brought down in ourselves. This does not concern my son or grandson only, but it concerns me, and when they grow up to mature age, in their time it will concern them. Therefore what is most profitable to us, is, that we have such a station, and stand in such a place in our time, where we may see the work of God carried on.

I have considered many a time, that there are many brave men and women in this age, that might have been eminent witnesses of God in this world, and borne their testimony to his truth, but their faith has been weak and ineffectual. They have discovered their unbelieving hearts and have joined with the common herd of the world because they thought such great things could never be done, that the kingdom of Satan could never be pulled down and destroyed, and the Kingdom of Christ set up within us. But I would hope better things for you, things that accompany salvation and that he that has begun a good work in you will carry it on to perfection; that living praises and joyful thanksgivings may be rendered to him who alone is worthy, who is God over all, blessed forever; to whom be glory and dominion forever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON XV

The Undeiled Way to Eternal Rest

**Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire House, July 29,
1691**

My friends,

THE Lord will be with all his people, who are undefiled in the way, and who are spiritual travelers walking in that undefiled way that leads to an undefiled rest. There are some that by this way have entered into rest, that rest which God has prepared for them. We cannot apply to ourselves that promise that is made to us of entering into rest, unless we are real and true travelers in the way that leads to it, for if we are not in the way, we deceive our own souls.

[What is the *rest* to which we must enter? The *rest* is to have ceased from our own thoughts, words, and deeds. The rest is to enter union with God, and sit down with Christ in the heavens, to become a part of Christ [in his body], to be energized by the power of God, to be supplied with thoughts from God, with words to speak from God, and be shown by God what to do; everything prompted to noble actions according to the will of God. The *rest* is to no longer be fighting our enemies: lust, pride, anger, sexual immorality, greed, covetousness; but to sit back in purity and power, watching the will of God unfold before our eyes and mind; the will of each moment in our life, supplied with the perfect, noble, pure, constructive, helpful thing to say and do. We cease to be an individual and become a part of Christ's body, with him, the head, instructing us what perfect thing to do next. We cease from our own dead works, to do works of life, serving the living God.]

Therefore you that have had a sight and vision of the way everlasting, that leads unto a holy rest, you are an engaged people to make strait steps therein, and to have it your daily care, and make it your continual business, to look that your goings and foot-steps are of the same nature and kind that the rest is that you desire to enter into. For it is an undefiled rest, that we all are, or ought to be traveling after; therefore every one of us must be undefiled in the way, and every foot-step must be of the same kind and nature, and separate from all what defiles it and pollutes it, that so it may

have a tendency to the bringing of the soul nearer to its rest.

This holy rest many travelers have attained by this holy travel, and many are still in hope to attain it.

But now those who are full of hope of attaining this rest, their foot-steps and goings are not of the same nature and kind; they are not holy and pure, they are not undefiled. These do not have their faces turned towards Zion, though the face of their profession may stand that way; but the Lord looks at the heart of every one, and he knows which way the heart stands. They who have their hearts truly turned to the Lord, they have the mark of holiness in their eye, and the mark of purity and righteousness in all their undertakings, because they know there is no attaining to that divine rest, but by a holy way and travel; therefore their trust and reliance is alone on the Lord, that is to keep them in all their way; for if they are ever so clearly convinced that holiness and righteousness is their duty, and is the way in which they may attain to the kingdom of God, though they are ever so fully convinced of it, yet there lies an impossibility of any walking therein without the divine assistance of the grace of God; for though they have been convinced by the appearance of his grace, and have had a light that opens to them a sight of these things, it is not this sight and vision that will enable them to run the race that is set before them.

For the manifold impurities and hindrances which are in our way, between our coming out of Egypt's land, the bondage of corruption, and our entering into the kingdom of God, are too mighty and too great for any man with his knowledge and strength to overcome. The children of Israel might as well have gone through the Red Sea, without the help of God, as the Christian traveler can go through the many difficulties, and the many impediments that he is to meet with in his way, without the assistance of God's Holy Spirit.

My friends, it has been a labor and travail at this time upon my mind, that

all whom God has so signally blessed with the knowledge of the truth, that you may see your way, and most clearly know and understand, that your way leads to life eternal; that all and every one of you in your particular meetings, are to have a dependence upon what can help you in your way.

For I have seen too many that have had a wrong dependence, after they were rightly convinced, and after they have had a true knowledge of their way in which they should walk; they have too much trusted to openings and sights that they have past received. They have thought their mountain so sure, and that their feet have been past sliding, that there has grown up a state of presumption, that they have thought they would never turn aside, and have not had due regard to the renewing of the Divine Power of God in their souls, that God's children always must have. They have (as I may so say) forgotten what our Lord said, *without me you can do nothing*. They have passed a sentence upon that doctrine in their minds, and they have thought they could do something; that they could withstand temptation; that they could do some work for God, and service to God, without the Divine Assistance of that power that begat them; and alas! the least they have sustained has been, that they have run into evil, and they have defiled their way, and run into temptations, though it has pleased the Lord, whose mercy is infinite, to pull them many times back again out of the snare into which they had fallen, and to take them again, and to wash them, and cleanse them, and purify them, and set their feet on a sure place. This was more than they deserved; but his mercy, and goodness, and tenderness, is over all his works.

This he has wrought for many a one; and not only once, but many times; it is hard venturing; it had been better if such a one had never fallen, or that their footsteps had never slid from the ways of the Lord, than after they are fallen, to be renewed again by repentance. It has caused sore judgment, and condemnation, and anxiety of spirit; and they have given their old enemy an advantage to whisper in their ears; you have lost your ground; your sins are gone over your head, and you shall never find repentance. These are the

words of the wicked one, who seeks occasion against us; and through our carelessness, and not being watchful, we put an advantage into his hands. Now seeing you know he is vigilant, and seeks occasion that he may turn you out of your way, before you attain to the end of it, you ought to be vigilant to keep occasions from him.

But some may say, how may I keep occasions and advantages from the enemy? I answer, the way has been often told you, and I dare say most of you have tried it, and found it to be true, that so long as you have remained in a watchful state and posture, and have had your minds exercised by the grace of God, by which you were convinced of your sin, and by which your duty was manifested to you, so long you gave the enemy of your souls no occasion; that the truth preserved you in which you trusted, and in which you hoped and waited for the virtue and power of it. Did you find lack of ability then? Did the enemy prevail then? He did not cease to tempt when you were in the most watchful state of a Christian; the devil did not then cease to tempt you, but you found in you a power that resisted him, and said, *get you behind me Satan*.

[Perhaps it would be helpful to focus on *obedience*. For by obedience we receive the grace to stand; by obedience to the commands and understandings that we have received from the Lord. Certainly, we must be vigilant, but we also must remember what we are obligated to deny and turn away from. Anything the Lord has commanded us, we are able to perform, for he gives us his power to perform his commands. Anything he commands us to deny, he gives us the power to deny them; but we must be willing to do our part in turning away. He does 90%, we do 10%; but we cannot expect him to do 100%. We are held responsible to what we have been ordered to deny; we are held responsible to observe his teachings; we are held responsible to keep his words; we are held responsible to review his commands periodically and keep repenting. If we do that, we will not fall to temptation, for

his power will change us. The same grace that charges us with sin, will remove the sin from our heart, providing we truly repent of that sin; and providing we continue repenting, eventually even the desire for that sin is removed from our hearts – by grace, mercy, kindness – the sin is purged from us. And if we stay vigilant, that sin stays out of our hearts.]

So long as you are upon your watch; so far as you keep your mind fixed upon the Divine Power, so long you are in a sure place; and whoever turns aside from this, they suffer great harm and prejudice, and if ever they are restored again, it is with loss and damage, and sore exercise; and if they are not restored, they are lost to all eternity. *Then it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.* And then they said within themselves, this must be the way.

Sirs, these things pertain to your everlasting welfare; I speak to you as a people whom God has abundantly loved; and it has been far beyond anything of defect. He has made known his ways to you; the Lord may say, concerning you of this city, as of old, *what could I have done more for my vineyard that I have not done?* So he may say concerning you, what could I have done more to make them a grown people, a holy people, an entire people, that *they may bear my name, and walk before me in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives?* What should have been done more for them?

But this is an exercise to us, whom God has blessed, and set as watchmen, to behold and see the state of his people, and to feel and bear the burdens that are to be borne; and this is a great burden, that after all that God has done, and that we do in the hands of God, all that is necessary for the welfare of the people, there are some that turn aside, and defile their way; and we testify in the name of the Lord, that whoever walks in a defiled way, shall never come to an undefiled rest; therefore that you do not attain to that

undefiled rest, it is because you have been defiled. Seeing the holy conduct of the people of God is the effect of the working of his own power and Spirit.

Here comes the rest, by and through a Mediator, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the Mediator between God and man, and the leader of all his people in the way of holiness and righteousness, which he has made manifest to those who believe and obey the power. And he has purchased eternal salvation for all that believe and obey the gospel. But the transgressors do not obey the gospel; the Spirit of Christ does not lead you to transgression; and the power and light that comes from Christ, does not lead you to pride, vanity, envy and bitterness. Wherever these things are led into, there is another spirit, and that other spirit has another tendency, it leads into the wrath of God.

And my friends, this is what my soul desires at your hands, and it is for your good and advantage; it is my duty to discharge my conscience, and to speak plainly as the Lord shall give me utterance, to warn you that you abide in the truth; for if you are not saved, but will turn aside after your own hearts' lusts, after your pride and the vanity of the world, and the lusts thereof, you may blame yourselves, and your iniquity will be your ruin. We who have given up ourselves to God for your sakes, and the churches' sake, we speak these things which we have learned of God, and we earnestly press you that are convinced, that you walk in the truth which you have believed. There is no great need of more knowledge, and of the vision of heavenly and divine things; for abundance of you have seen more of the things of God, than ever you have traveled and come up into. I would to God that every one of you that are convinced, would come up to the treasure of the knowledge you have received. O! that you would answer the Lord's power, in opening and discovering his mind and will concerning your travel, and the things that belong to his everlasting peace, that your foot-steps may be directed thereby. If you will walk in this undefiled way, you may lie down at night, and rise in the morning with peace, and in the favor of the Lord, and have the answer of a good conscience in his light.

The means that must help and conduct us in this way, must be that familiar converse that the soul must have with something greater than itself; the familiar converse that the soul must have with the Divine Power, with that manifestation of Divine Light and Grace, which, through Jesus Christ, God has given unto you. For if a man prize and esteem the truth ever so much, and suffer ever so much for it, and love the minister ever so much, if he keep not a familiar converse with the truth, notwithstanding all his profession of love to the truths of the gospel and the preachers of it, he will reproach it. Though he professes and says, I love you, I love you; though he has suffered much in the way, yet if he loves not the truth in his own heart, and desires not to feel the excellence and virtue of it, that man will certainly dishonor the truth, and grieve the Holy Spirit of God.

We warn you to take heed of your way, and to your feet in your Christian walk, that you may come to have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God. Pray to God that the work of regeneration may be wrought upon you, that you may be born into another seed, and partake of the divine nature. Then, though the devil assault you, he cannot overcome you; he will find nothing in you whereby to betray you into his hands; when that change is wrought, and when God has made an alteration, and has brought you out of the love of the world, and the love of earthly things, and set your affections above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Now you can say, there comes a temptation with this instrument, and the other instrument, and the devil lays things before me that he would have me to do, but I have no inclination to it, I have no mind to be sucking at the world's breasts; but my mind is set upon this, that I may reach acquaintance with God, who will be *a present help to me, and tread down Satan under my feet.*

There is need of your continual care and vigilance, and that you watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. It is not so easy a thing for a man or woman while they are in this world to do anything without sin; but God has called you to a holy profession; which is, that you should do all you

can do, to do every thing you do without sin. For whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, you should do all to the glory of God. This spirit we would have in you, and we would have all you that have received Christ Jesus, the Lord, to walk in him as you have received him. Then you shall be kept undefiled in the way, and delivered from temptation.

To this end you must be still, waiting upon the Lord, so that you may have acquaintance with him from day to day; you are *in* the world, but you should not be *of* the world. The prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, to his heavenly Father for his disciples, was not that he should take them out of the world, but keep them from the evil.

Merchants, tradesmen, and shop-keepers, have always something to do in the world, but they should pray earnestly that they may be kept from the evil of the world. There is nothing can be done in the world, but there is evil in it, which we shall be overcome by, if we do not keep our watch. In the government of a family, there are occasions and provocations given to be passionate and furious; many occasions are given to men and women; but we should not be transported and overcome. Our profession obliges us, that when a child or a servant gives a provocation, we are not to behave ourselves unseemly, and unbecoming our holy profession; for it is not in their power, nor in the devil's power either, to kindle your wrath and anger into a shame. If you are upon your watch, and wait upon the Lord, he will give you wisdom and strength to stand against all temptations whatsoever and to order your conduct according to the will of God, and as becomes the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In merchandise, buying and selling, there are snares, and there is evil we may run into; but this is our comfort and joy, there is no coercion, we cannot be forced to sin, the devil can only lay a temptation before me; if you will tell a lie, equivocate, dissemble, here is an advantage for you; but the devil with all his subtlety, power and allurements, cannot say, you will run into this sin, and be overcome by this temptation; for though of ourselves we can do

nothing, yet in the name and strength of our Lord Jesus Christ, we can do all things; we can do what is just, and stand over the temptation, and trample upon it, and *not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*. When we have bought and sold, we may look back upon what we have done with pure minds, and clean consciences in the sight of God, and we may come off victors, and *more than conquerors* (over temptations) *through Jesus Christ, who has loved us*.

The more a Christian keeps himself unspotted, and the more watchful he is in his walking, he may go on from day to day, and see the snares of the devil, that lies in this vanity, and this and the other vanity and temptation, and yet escape it.

I would I could say of some of you, that when the devil laid a snare for you, you did not run into it when you saw it. I have known some that have had understanding enough, that they need not be told where the snare of the devil lies; yet so has it been, the devil and their own hearts lusts have agreed together, and they have run into the snare. This is from the old confederacy that men have had with God's enemies; you are my friends, said Christ, if you do whatever I command you. If you are the friends of Christ, you will be his subjects, and yield obedience to him; when he shows them a snare, they will keep out of it. This is the proof of a true Christian — that he will be true in a time of trial, and will trust in that divine power that keeps him out of the snare.

One thing more I would say about the divine fellowship that you have with Christ Jesus: it consists in holiness of life and conduct, and the exercise of a good conscience towards God, and towards man. It is in vain to tell me that you will walk in unity with the truth, unless you have unity with the truth in your own hearts; you cannot receive the Lord, nor long deceive his people either. Here is the fellowship that you are to live in all your days — to live in fellowship with the people of God, and communion of saints. Can the saints have communion in anything but holiness? And holiness is a blessed, sacred

thing, it becomes the house of God forever; those who are saints, are sanctified and made holy; and he that sanctifies and those who are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause, he is not ashamed to call them both Heb 2:11. Those who are sanctified have become saints, they bring forth the fruits of holiness and sanctification, and they have come into fellowship in the spirit with God and one another. Every branch in a tree, said Christ:, that does not bear fruit, he takes away; but every branch that bears fruit, he purges it, that it may bring forth more fruit. That branch that does not bear fruit, is cast into the fire and burned.

There are some that bring forth fruit, but it is fruit to the flesh, and the wicked one; and I hope you are not of that number. These separate themselves from the life of the true vine; these have no fellowship or true membership with the church of Christ, while they walk as captives to the devil, and sin; these are of the world, and not of the church. If you would have fellowship with the church, do not think to have it by outward conformity. Do not think that this will maintain your fellowship with Christ, without a life of inward holiness and righteousness; for that day you break with the truth in yourselves, you break off your fellowship with the church of God, and break your peace with God, and can no way be restored again to the favor of God, except by an unfeigned repentance; for the mystery of faith is to be kept in a pure conscience. How is my conscience defiled, if I do not wrong this, or the other man or woman? Some can hold the mystery of faith; so far as it consists in a profession, they can profess it, and they preach it; but they have not held the mystery of faith in Christ, so as to receive life, and virtue, and comfort from him. You may have gotten knowledge of the history of words and doctrines; but as soon as you defile your conscience, by doing evil things, and depart from the principle of grace, you make shipwreck of faith.

But, my friends, as you have a mind to continue and abide in the faith, and in this travel and heavenly journey, I would give you this as a certainty, for it will do you good even when my head lies low. The way to continue in the

church of God, and communion of saints, and to retain your peace with God, is to keep a familiar converse* with the truth in your own souls, and it will keep you from falling, and lead and guide you in your way, in your travel and journey to Heaven. As the mother, when the child cries after her, but cannot go, takes it by the hand and leads it, so if you keep close to the truth, it can lead you through all difficulties, through great business as well as little, and deliver you from snares and temptations, and when you are assaulted, it can bring you off clear. As for communion with God, and communion with the saints and people of God, it stands in that peace, and purity, and keeping a holy frame of mind in your heavenly travel, in the undefiled way, which will at last brings you to the undefiled everlasting rest that remains to the people of God.

[*A *familiar converse with the truth*, is to wait on God, silently listen for his words, watch for his revelations, hear his words, obey whatever you are commanded, observe his teachings, and retain his words forever.]

SERMON XVI

The Dawning of the Day of Grace and Salvation

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, April 2, 1691

My Friends,

YOU cannot but know and be sensible, that a gospel-day, a day of grace and salvation, has dawned upon you, and that the light of it has broken through many clouds of darkness, which sometimes you could not see through. This is an inestimable and unspeakable mercy of God unto us, that the light of

the gospel of salvation shines upon a people, who without it must be miserable.

There has been a very dark and cloudy day upon our forefathers, and also upon us, in the days of our ignorance. We are apt to wander here and there, and to be turned aside with the wind of men's' doctrine, that we could not find a rest, a home or a settlement for our souls, in order to eternal life. And there are many who have cried unto God to please to reveal his way and to make it known unto them' and they have been likely to promise the Lord, that if they could once come to a certainty of the way, they would walk in it. Unto such as these the Lord has bowed his ear, and has answered them; and in his answering the cry of the soul, he has brought salvation near, and has revealed the power by which he would bring it to pass, in every particular soul that receives the gospel of his Son.

[Crisp speaks of the gospel being an individual experience of God showing his power and revealing the taste of what salvation feels like. That is why the gospel is a mystery, that can only be revealed by revelation from God. What has not been revealed is a mystery, until it is revealed: the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 2 Cor 4:4.]

But now friends, you that are sensible of this blessed and glorious visitation of his gospel-day, in which salvation is brought near, it is needful for every one to examine their own hearts, whether they have really received the gospel; whether they have received and embraced the great bounty, and unspeakable blessings of the gospel, with which the Lord God of life has visited us, or whether they have rejected it. For though it is our happiness to know the visitation of life, yet it does not follow that every one that is visited will be made an heir of it; for there are many that fall short through their unbelief. There are many that have received the gospel, who do disobey the gospel of Christ, and so have not eternal life by it.

When people come to this serious examination of themselves in this, then the light and grace, that comes from Christ unto every one of us, both to him who rejected it, as well as to him who receives it, that will make known to them their state and condition, with respect to the gospel of Christ. For there are a great many, that by an alienation of their minds from the light of Christ Jesus, are apt to be mistaken in their state, and to make a better judgment of themselves, and of **their state inwardly**, than really it will amount to in the day that the Lord searches and tries them. But those who make a judgment of themselves, by the openings and discoveries that they have through the light of Christ Jesus (for so we are to do in this weighty matter) they make a judgment of their state and condition, according to the evidence that the Spirit of God bears to their spirits, and this I hope you will all say is a most certain way. For if we go to compare ourselves one with another, and say, I am better than you and that man is better than I, here we are liable and subject to a great many errors, where there ought to be none. But if we come to measure and determine our present state and condition, by the evidence of the Spirit of God, bearing witness with our spirits, here we have a foundation to place an infallible and certain judgment upon. And those who are obedient to the gospel of Christ, are capable of giving a sound judgment of their state, because they are made partakers, through Christ, of that grace, and light, and truth, which they would be obedient to, and they are brought into a kind of knowledge and understanding of their duty, whether they do it or not. And this knowledge, and this understanding that God has given them, makes them capable to pass a right judgment upon their own state. They will not call it a good state, if it is an evil state; and they will not call it an evil state, if it is a good one. They know it is good by the principle of truth in their judgment.

Therefore since there are so many uncertainties in the world, and that men are so apt to take hold of an uncertain way of judging and determining, even in matters relating to their souls; there is a greater aptness in people to take hold of uncertainties, in judging about the matters of their souls, than in

those things that relates to their bodies. Since people are so liable to it, it can do none of us harm to exhort one another, and move and stir up one another, to make a calculation of our states, by something that will not deceive. There is an abundance of people deceived in this country, as well as other countries; we shall not need to go into foreign parts to find people deceived and deluded. It will not be amiss to say that the drunkard, the swearer, the liar, the oppressor, the proud, and the malicious, are deceived. If they were not deceived, they would never be overcome by the wicked one, the author of all evil he has deceived them, in that they should think to go on in these things, and cry peace, peace, to one another, and in their own souls. This is a great delusion; and the devil is the great deluder that they are deluded by. And it would be worth the while to find out what would make a man think himself in a happy state, and hope to enjoy eternal life, with God and Christ, and when he goes on in sin and iniquity; it would be worth the while to find out the delusion.

There is nothing so proper to turn every one to the grace of God, as to search their own hearts and try their ways. This is what will discover their thoughts, and make them known to themselves. This is God's grace and gift to men while they are yet sinners and disobedient; he does not withhold his grace, but gives his grace, and light and truth, even to the rebellious. He gives gifts to men, even to the rebellious, that he might have a place and dwelling among them, that they might know there is a God that searches the heart, and tries the reins, and judges all unrighteousness. If God has given you so much grace, that he might have a dwelling in your heart, should not that restrain you from sin, that the devil, by his temptations, might not defile you, and unfit you for the kingdom of God? When the Lord comes to search the heart, it is in order to the purging of it, and the taking away of iniquity and sin, that would make you unfit for his kingdom. This is a better way, and more excellent than living to the flesh, and fulfilling the lusts thereof. Let people live ever so much to their own corrupt wills, in pride, wantonness, looseness, and the vanity of their minds, they will not find so much true satisfaction and delight, as in living a holy life, living in the fear of God, and

avoiding sin, and keeping themselves from the temptations and snares of the devil.

This is a more excellent way; and it is our work and business to declare to people this more excellent way, which all, one time or other, will confess. This is irksome, some will say this will abate my pleasure and delights in the world, and spoil my secular interest. If it were not for this reason, they would grant it were better to live a holy life, and to live in the fear of God, than live in the service of the devil; and their carnal interest lies in the way, and weighs down the scale, but it is because you join with it, otherwise the devil, and all the powers of hell, could not weigh it down. If people would consider these things seriously, they would say, it is better to serve God, that made them, and gave them life, and breath, and being, than him who would destroy them; and then when they meet with the pleasures and delights of the world, that the devil lays before them, they would never weigh down the scale against a Divine Reason. If you will give your heart to it, and seriously consider it, it will weigh down the scale against all temptations to live in sin, and pleasure, and jollity. If you will but join with this Divine Reason, that tells you these carnal pleasures and enjoyments are **not** necessary for your soul, but it is necessary to live a holy, heavenly life, and to serve the Lord that gave you life, and breath, and all things; who has promised you manifold preservations. If that will but join with the Divine Reason, and hearken to that which opens the truth in your own heart, all the devil can do, cannot make you serve him; for the devil has no coercion, no power to force you to commit sin; he cannot make a man work wickedness against his will; he must cloud the understanding, and work upon the will, and allure and entice the affections by earthly things. So you cannot be forced by the devil against your will, to yield to his temptations, to commit any sin, but you may say, “I will do it.”

I confess, when the understanding is bribed, and the will allured and seduced by the devil's temptations, there is no withstanding them. But on the other hand, if men would give up themselves to the power of God, they

would have Divine Assistance; and joining with that power, they would be more than conquerors. Therefore we cannot but be encouraged to keep in the way of the Lord, and have acquaintance with the power of God, which will preserve you, and give you victory over all the temptations and assaults of the devil; and without this power you cannot overcome; but if you have the assistance of this power, nothing will be too hard for you. When you are in straits, and in a helpless condition, you sometimes are ready to cry out, “I shall not overcome my spiritual enemies; I shall never get victory over sin and the world, the flesh, and the devil; and I shall never be able to withstand his temptations, but they will prevail over me all my days.” No wonder you make this conclusion, when you have parted with your truth and dependence on that power that is able to overcome the devil, and baffle him in your thoughts, words and deeds.

You may be ready to say, “alas! of myself I can do nothing; I am not able of myself so much as to think a good thought; yet by Divine Assistance, I do many times think good thoughts. In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells nothing that is good. Not in my flesh abstractly; separate from the power of God, and the Divine Assistance promised unto me. In my flesh dwells nothing that is good. But if you take me as one who has faith in Christ the Mediator, this faith embraces the tender of the love of God in the Redeemer. And when I have this faith, a good thing dwells in me; and from this good thing that dwells in me, there flows forth good words and good actions.” Then you come to be acquainted with a power greater than your own; and if you trust in it, you will be able to withstand temptations. When you are tempted to any sin, you will not only be able to withstand the temptation, but to overcome it too, and to be more than conquerors in your spiritual warfare. This relying upon, and trusting in the power of God, is what we call faith; and this faith is the operation of God.

To speak in plain words, God will operate upon your mind, and make you know, that this is his power, light, truth and grace, by which he would save you. And after God has wrought and opened unto you in this manner, it is

your duty then to believe in it, to put your trust and confidence in it, to be delivered. But though faith he offered unto me, yet it is not forced upon me; God has offered faith to all men, but he does not force it upon any. All have an opportunity offered to them, if they will but join with it, they may have faith wrought in them, and be fitted and prepared for the kingdom of God.

There are many that are convinced of the truth of the doctrine that we preach to them, but they do not get into the power of the truth; they will hear us preach of the power of truth, and will hear what this man said, and what the other man said; and this will serve their turn, that they may talk of religion, and make a profession. But they do not seek after that power that should enable them to work out their own salvation. These persons grow in knowledge, but they do not grow in grace; they will embrace truth as far as doctrine and words will go. They have professed it, and they have suffered reproach for it, and yet they have not received the truth in the love of it; they cannot reach to the power of it. They glory in their knowledge and in their understanding, but they do not come to what sanctifies them. They are not able to resist the devil, and to stand against his temptations; when a temptation comes, they join with it, but they cannot withstand it. They come to the knowledge of truth in words, but they do not come to the knowledge of the power of it in their hearts and minds, so as to make them prepared vessels for God's honor. God is more dishonored by them than by those who never professed his name. They fall into the temptation of the devil, and never discern the operation of God's power in their own hearts.

Secondly. There is another error as great as this: there are a great many that when the Lord's power has wrought in their hearts, and they have had truth opened to them in the power of it, yet they have not believed in it; they have not had faith wrought in their hearts, they have not trusted in it, nor relied upon the power; so they are weak and feeble, they have little faith, which is next to none at all. However much knowledge they have, how easy can the devil tempt them to sin, if they have no faith; *this is the victory*, said the apostle, *that overcomes the world, even your faith*. This is not my victory,

that I see the subtleties and wiles of Satan, and know much; but what is my victory is my faith. My trust is in the power of God, and my reliance upon him who is God, mightier than all the finest of men and devils; that God who knows my heart. If I am faithful to him, and rely upon him by faith, I shall resist the devil, and withstanding his temptations, obtain victory over them.

[Faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of God, the word that is near you, in your heart and mouth, so **that you may obey it**; that is the word of faith we preach. You must be obedient to the commands you hear, for your faith to be anything but lip service. The father of faith was Abraham, who obeyed God's voice; his faith was strong enough that he obeyed God, to leave his homeland, to circumcise himself and all males in his family, and to sacrifice his son (which was retracted). Abraham didn't just say: "yes, God spoke to me, and I believe in God; the things he has told me to do are unrealistic for me to do, but I certainly know and believe there is a God." Hearing and obeying is your faith; such faith has power. Hearing without obedience is doubt, the lack of faith, therefore with no power of God released. Without obedience, there is no salvation; without obedience, there is no spiritual progress. With obedience there is power, salvation, righteousness, union, translation, purity, perfection, and holiness. Obedience to the commands you hear spoken to you is the key!]

This power you may have by the gospel; but then you must be true to the power of it in yourselves; for I do distinguish between the gospel, as it is a doctrine and word preached, and an invisible, divine power working upon men by the preaching of the gospel; you will all hear the gospel preached, though you may be ever so proud and high-minded, and you will say it is true; but you can never come to the saving knowledge of the gospel itself, until you find it **working inwardly** upon yourselves.

We do not pretend to any power of opening men's hearts, as God opened the heart of Lydia, except when people come to wait upon God with a serious and religious mind, you will find the power of the word working effectually upon you, and so *the gospel will become the power of God to your salvation*. This is, and shall be my prayer, for all religious assemblies, that the Lord will be pleaded to teach them, by his invisible word, and beget living desires in them towards himself, and bring them to an effect of holiness and righteousness, that they may adorn the gospel of Christ, by living gospel-lives; for lack of this, what dishonor have men brought to God, and what reproach upon the gospel. O! That people would come to hear the word preached, with desire to profit by it, and say, Lord, do me some good this day, give me a powerful refreshing visitation at this time; give me some living experience of your Almighty Power working upon my heart, that I may not be led by this man's word, or that man's opinion; for if they are mistaken, I shall be mistaken. But if I build my faith upon what God in his word reveals [mark! reveals by speaking to you or showing you in your heart as you wait for him] to me, I shall infallibly know what I am to believe and practice, and I shall receive from God some good thing, and I shall *know what is the good and acceptable will of God*. I shall find that there is power in the gospel *for building me up in the most holy faith*, and that *it is mighty through God, for the pulling down of the strongholds* of sin and Satan, and I shall see the salvation of God brought near to me.

When the gospel becomes the power of God, and works upon the hearts of men by the operation of the Divine Power, they may distinguish between that faith that is built upon the declarations of men, and what is wrought by the revelation and discovery of the mind of God in their souls; this is what we may bottom upon, and have an anchor sure and steadfast in our own souls; when I depend upon Christ, the rock of ages, both of this age, and all other ages, my faith must be placed upon him; and when I hear the word of a man, I must have an eye to God, that he will reveal his power in my heart; this will make me believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and receive that engrafted word which is able to save my soul. I shall not only hear the word,

but live in obedience to it. What signifies it to make a profession that I have the light within, if I do not give obedience to it? For without that, it is all hypocrisy; all pretence to holiness, or righteousness, all mortification, is but hypocrisy, any further than we find the power of truth making an impression upon our hearts and minds, bringing us to the obedience of faith.

Let them therefore that profess righteousness, live righteously, and those who hear the gospel, live in obedience to it; and those who profess to be Christians, let them live like Christians indeed. When every one comes to know within himself, so far as the gospel has shined upon him, that they have received the truth in the love of it, and love the truth as it is in Jesus, and are obedient to the gospel, they shall know the salvation of it. There is a discovery of God's power in the gospel, and there is a believing of it, and trusting in it; this is what belongs to a Christian, this is the beginning and the first step to a Christian life; we must believe in Christ; for *without faith it is impossible to please God*. He that believes, should be careful to walk in the truth that he has received, and then he shall have a testimony of the power and virtue of it in his own soul. This virtue and power, if he joins with it, has the government of his heart and life, and gives him victory over the world, and the temptations of Satan.

You know in the primitive times there were believers that not only held the faith, but lived by faith; and by that faith they got victory over all the allurements, and pleasures and vanities of the world. *I have fought a good fight, said the apostle, 2 Tim 4:7-8. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, therefore is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* I have got the victory, and there remains an eternal weight of glory for me.

My friends, this is our ambition, and all our labor among you, that you may be built up in the most holy faith; that you may be brought home to Christ,

in all your meetings and gatherings together. You should desire to be enriched with faith, and to have your own storehouse filled with all the fruits of the Spirit, and not only seek for the knowledge of the truth, but be subject and obedient to what you know, otherwise by your religion you will only hurt yourselves. And the apostle Peter, 2 Peter 2:20-21, speaks of knowing the truth, and of being established in it, and of some that *after they had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, and the latter end with them is worse than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* There is a power goes along with the preaching of the gospel, that will enable you to do what you know; the gospel is a powerful doctrine, whether you know it or not, or whether you submit to it or not, yet pray remember that *God's people are a willing people in the day of his power*; they are a certain sort of people that are devoted to God, and submit all their worldly honors, interests, profits and pleasures, to the pleasure of God, and desire no other pleasure or happiness, but to enjoy his presence and favor; they are satisfied with this, and they are a happy people, being made *a willing people in the day of God's power*; they are willing to deny themselves, to take up a daily cross and follow Christ, and have salvation upon his terms.

There are a great many professors [professed believers] that have notions, and outside appearances, but they lack that virtue, and life, and power, that should settle them in religion, and a love of the truth. The Lord that knows our hearts, knows that our labor and travail among you has been designed for your good, and *that our hearts desire is that you may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.* We would have people consider, and attend and hear what God speaks, and remember what he has taught you by the ministers of the gospel. We have all ears to hear, let us thank God for that; blessed be God that there is a power and an ability of hearing with an outward ear; but there are many that will not so much as give the hearing to what might be spoken to them from the Lord. *He that has ears to hear let him hear what*

the Spirit says to the churches; and what he says to his own soul. Hear what the Spirit says of your own state and condition; if it is good, bless God for it. Are you in so good a condition, that you have no trouble, no distress to lament, no needs to supply? Blessed are you that have none, but if you find that you have done amiss, and if the Lord should call you this night to give up your account, the Lord has a great deal against you, I am sure; and I tell you it is your duty to turn to the Lord with unfeigned repentance, that through Christ Jesus, you may receive pardon and remission of all your sins, and hear what the Spirit says to yourselves, and in yourselves.

Pray come and make it your work and business the rest of the time you have to live, to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, that when Christ comes, you may say, come Lord Jesus, come quickly, purify me and sanctify me, and prepare me to be presented to the Father without spot and blame; the day is coming that this will be the desire of every one of you.

[The Day of the Lord comes when one enters the kingdom. To those who never enter the kingdom, the day comes when they die. So everyone sees Jesus come to judge them.]

And it is the earnest breathing and desire of my soul, that every one of you may have an eye unto the Lord, and he will look down from Heaven, and have regard to the cry and the sighing of the needy soul. God will arise, and find out the people that breathe after him, and that desire to be reconciled to him, through the Mediator Jesus Christ; the Lord loves to find out such a people, and I am glad to preach to such a people the glad tidings of the gospel, and to teach as God has taught me; *good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach and guide you in the way which you should go. Walk humbly* with God; he will resist the proud, but he will give grace unto the humble. Walk uprightly before the Lord in this gospel-day that shines upon you; love the appearance of God, and prize it; though it has not been so glorious to you, as to some others, yet despise not the day of small things. Live in subjection to that grace that the Lord has given you, and the Lord

will give you more grace, and pour out his Spirit, and multiply his blessings upon you, the Lord *has begun a good work in you*, and he will *carry it on to the day of Christ*, and will promise to bring the glorious day of his visitation upon you.

To the Lord I leave you, to his favor and protection I commit you; remember that there is no salvation but by Jesus Christ, and none to be had by Christ, until you come to believe in him. To him who searches the heart, and tries the reins, that pardons iniquity, transgression and sin, for the sake of Christ Jesus, the Mediator, to him I do commit you, not doubting but that he that has begun a good work in you, will at last complete and finish it to his own praise and your salvation.

Sermon XVII

THE EXCELLENCE OF PEACE WITH GOD

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire House, on the 5th day of the 8th month, 1691

My Friends,

It is man's great happiness in this world to have acquaintance with God, with the Lord that made him, from whom he has life and breath here, and his eternal welfare hereafter. This doubtless every one will acknowledge one time or another, that peace with God is a great jewel, and the best estate and riches. It is the great desire of everyone, that they may attain to this one time or other; and there is a great neglect of happiness among the sons and daughters of men, in not seeking it, in not laboring to attain it while it is to be had. Oh! How many trifle away their time about fading and perishing objects, and know at the same instant that they are yet destitute of the favor

of God, and peace with Him. Oh, friends! The very thoughts and consideration of the worth of this jewel, and all the misery of being without it, and the uncertainty of our time while it is to be attained, might put everyone upon a serious, diligent inquiry, after the way and means by which they might attain it, so that they might have a resting place for their souls, and satisfaction to their inward man; that it shall go well with them, when time shall be no more.

And those who come to this consideration, and are resolved in their hearts and minds, that they will labor after this, and set their whole endeavor after it, they will in the *first* place seek The Kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof. These do need a daily encouragement in their way to heaven, and there is nothing on the Lord's part lacking for all such souls, but that they may attain their desire.

But, alas! This has been, and is still, the misery of thousands. They are seeking after peace with God, but they err in the way to it, they do not seek in that way, nor take hold of those methods, by and through which God has promised peace. You shall scarcely find anybody, who would not like to have eternal life, and peace with God; we shall not need to persuade people to wish for, and to desire to have peace with God, when they shall come to die, and lay down their heads in the dust. There is not a Balaam, but he desires to die the death of the righteous, and that his last end not be like his. There is not a Scribe, or a Pharisee, or any that profess religion, but those who are seeking eternal life. The Lord Jesus did witness concerning them, *that they were an envious, proud, persecuting people*, yet that they did seek after eternal life, and they fixed upon some methods and ways whereby they thought to get and enjoy it, and so are a great many people at this every day. They are in a state and condition in which they are not likely to enjoy it; the methods and ways that they have chosen to themselves, by which to find eternal life, and to obtain peace with God, *will never answer the end*.

And God has been pleased to discover in us the many byways that people

have chosen, and by which they seek peace with god, therefore we are willing at all times to show people their error, in these greatest matters, a highest concern to them. If they did err in their way of seeking to obtain some earthly good, and missed their end, they know the price of it, it is a loss of so much, which, if they had taken a right course, they might have attained; but it is *an unspeakable loss, an inestimable loss*, if they lose peace with God, and all the pains and labor they seek to obtain it.

I beseech you, friends, consider these things; they are of great weight, and your will say so one day or another. *For*, said our savior, what will it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Oh, how sad is it to consider, that a man has not made provision for his soul; that he has not a place of rest for his immortal soul, when his body can retain it no longer! If this be a man's state when he comes to die, it had been better for him who he had never been born. Men may live and gather riches, and enjoy a plentiful estate; but if they are destitute of the favor of God, lack peace with Him, what will they do with their perishing enjoyments? They cannot really satisfy themselves with these transitory, visible things; but if these persons mind only their bodies, and neglect their souls, do they not *live like the beasts that perish*? The beast seeks after his meat, and when he finds it, he eats it with delight and pleasure, and in a little while he lies down and dies; and so it is with careless souls, they have no regard for their future state; but say, *Let us eat and drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we shall die*.

Oh that every one of us here did apply our hearts seriously, to the consideration of the weight of these things which concern our eternal state. If persons did this, then they might come to an inquiry into their own souls, what method and way is most safe for the attaining of so blessed an end. For you know there are abundance of people, — if you look up and down in the world, you will see almost everybody hunting up and down, in some way of religion or other, and engaged in religious performances. What is the matter? What would you have? We would have peace with God here, and

everlasting rest in the kingdom of heaven in this life and the next. Thus have the nations been scattered and driven up and down in the pursuit of happiness and satisfaction.

There is a general belief among people, that there is a heaven, and a hell; and that they must have their part in one of them. There are none that desire a portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. These profane wretches that cry to God to damn them, they do not mean what they speak, they would be saved for all that; every one will cry at last, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" if he only has time to say so. Let us cry now: "Lord, have mercy upon me! Lord, bestow your favor upon me! Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon me! Lord, touch my hard heart and soften it, and break it by the power of your Spirit; open my eyes that I may see the wonderful things of your law; open my ears, that I may hear your voice!" It is good for people to make use of time while they have it. Whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, and God will pour out his wrath upon those who do not call upon his name. He that calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved; and God gives great encouragement to people to seek after him.

What do you mean by seeking after God? I have gone to church, and said my prayers; I have gone in that way in which my fathers have led me, and directed me; I hope I shall find mercy at last. I am a believer; I believe in Jesus Christ that died for my sins; and rose again for my justification; I hope, through the merits of Jesus Christ, I shall be saved. What do you mean by seeking after the Lord? Do not we all hear *of* Him, and pray to him every day?

Is there anything more common than this, that people speak to one another generally about. As for the general knowledge of God, you and I may see to our sorrow, that a great many cry, Lord! Lord! that are never likely to enter into the kingdom of God. If all that take the name of God in their mouths, should enter into the kingdom of heaven, it would be a very foul kingdom. If

all the drunkards and fornicators of England, and all the profane and ungodly person, that will take the name of God in their mouths, should enter into the kingdom of heaven, it would be a very unclean and impure kingdom. There is nothing enters therein that is unclean, that is abominable, that loves to make a lie. So that there must be some more peculiar people that shall have an abundant entrance into the kingdom of God; and there must be something that will entitle them to it. For you may remember our savior said, No man knows the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son shall reveal Him. So much as may be known of God by works, you and I may know, without the revelation of Christ; we need not wait for this knowledge; we can have it by books, we can have it without Christ's revelation. Nothing would serve some in our savior's time but eternal life; and our Lord Jesus tells them You search the scriptures, for in them, said he, you think to have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me. Yet, for all the profession they made, He tells them: No man has seen God at any time, neither seen his shape nor heard his voice. They were strangers to God, though they had a general knowledge of God.

So it is at this day; there is a general knowledge of God, and people hope to attain peace with God, and eternal life. Their parents and their tutors have instructed them in the principles of Christianity, and about the attributes of God; but all this will not bring them to a saving knowledge of God, and reconciliation with Him. For a man who is as wicked as the devil can make him, knows these things, and yet may be a servant of the devil, and do his work. He is not born again to become a child, with all his external knowledge. No he who desires to come to the true saving knowledge of God, our savior has told us, That none know the Father but the Son, and him to whom the Son will reveal Him. This is the sure way to come to the true knowledge of God the Father. Christ has the key of David, which opens and no man can shut; and shuts and no man can open. He can bring us to behold the glory of God in his own face. Without Him we are never likely to come to the saving knowledge of God.

Poor man is in a lapsed, fallen state! He is fallen into sin, and is in a state of alienation from God; and therefore he cannot come to Him but by a mediator: There is one mediator between God and man, the Man, Christ Jesus; and He must make peace for him, else he will never have it. How then shall we come to Christ, if He is the only means, and there is no other, by which we may come to the knowledge of God, as the Scripture speaks? Harken to it, how may we come to Christ? I answer, you will never come to Him, if he does not first come to you; you will never be able to do it. **It is not coming to Christ, when you say, you believe that Christ died and rose again, and ascended up into heaven and that He sits at the right hand of God, and lives forever to make intercession for his people;** and when you read those words and doctrines which He preached up and down, at meetings and solemn assemblies. But if you believe that He is the eternal Son of God, and the author of eternal salvation to all that **obey** Him, you must come to Him, and entirely give up yourselves to his glory and service. Without this, you cannot come to Him, nor will He bring you to the Father. Christ is come near to us; He stands at the door of our hearts, and He stands and knocks. *Behold!* that is the word that calls for attention, for people to take notice of, Behold, I stand at the door and knock. What do you knock for? Said Christ, That you may open the door of your heart; for if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me, and this grace that brings salvation has appeared to all men. This manifestation of the Spirit and light *within*, we have from Christ. These are the ways and methods which the Lord Christ has taken to approach near to us. Now your own reason will tell you, if this is the way and means that Christ takes to approach near to us, we cannot take another way to approach to Him. If Christ has taken I say, this way to approach us, by the light and manifestation of his own Spirit, which convinces us of sin; if this is Christ's way of coming to us, there can be not other way of our coming to Him, but by the same method of his grace.

He said: If you have the light, believe in the Light. I have the light; I am

enlightened; there is something that discovers your evil thoughts. Why must I believe in the light? That you may be the children of light as our savior speaks. They that are the children of the light shall have it for their inheritance; and those who are children of darkness, must have darkness for their inheritance. While we have the light, we must believe in it, and we shall be made children of the light. God has sent his Son, and the Son has sent his Spirit and his heavenly grace *into our hearts*, that we may draw near to Him, and be directed how to attain acquaintance with Him, and to do what pleases God, and come to be in union with Him, and do the works of God. This is what God requires of us, that we believe on Him whom He has sent; that we may embrace the light, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Pray what do you mean by believing? There is something within me checks and reproves me for sin, and calls me off from it, and tells me to turn over a new leaf. Must I hearken to this? Is this what you mean by believing? As to this degree of believing, those who neglect it now, shall believe it hereafter; for all the world at last, and the damned in hell, shall certainly confess, that there was grace, and light, and means afforded to them, and they might have gone further, and escaped that misery which they are fallen into.

But there is a more precious faith that I would have you partake of, a faith that works by Love. Since the Lord has been so gracious as to extend his mercy and love to me, I am so captivated with the love of God, that I will be obedient to Him. This faith that works by love, is the faith of God's elect; that by which we may obtain victory over our passions and lusts, and over Satan and the snares of the world. When we are come close with the grace of God, and to believe in Christ, this is well; but we must also yield obedience and subjection. Yet when faith has brought forth obedience, you cannot be justified by it, you cannot be saved by your obedience, without Christ: He is the Author and Finisher of our faith, and a mediator from first to last.

Now all who come close with the appearance of Christ in their own hearts, they have laid hold of the method appointed for their coming to him. It is

Christ they must hear. He come so near to men that they may hear his voice, and hear Him tell us our very thoughts. Why should I not hear Him when he checks me and reproves me for sin? He comes near, and tells me that I have done amiss. Lord, I have done iniquity, I will do so no more. Thus Christ converses with his people, and does not only check and reprove them, when they do what is evil; but persuades them and enables them to do good. He is a mediator, He is a middle person, and *has taken flesh upon Him*, that He might reconcile them to God, who believe in Him.

Now, when we come to have acquaintance with God, and have chosen Him to be our God, *he teaches us* what is good, and reproves us for what evil we have done. Who can choose a better guide, to lead him into acquaintance with God, than Christ that is conversant with us, piercing into our thoughts, and speaking to us? I may hear Him with the inward ear of my heart. When I do evil, He checks me for it, and tells me the thing I should seek is of inestimable value; and if, through my unbelief and carelessness, I miss of it, it had been better for me that I had never been born. Now we are in the way of coming to receive the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls, *let us not neglect so great salvation*. No man can save himself, nor save the soul of his brother, nor find a ransom, nor procure an offering for the expiating of his sin; therefore let every one that would have his sin expiated and pardoned, and cannot be satisfied and quieted till he has peace with God, let him come to Christ the mediator, and come with faith and *truth in the inward parts*, and submit to Him, and be willing to be ruled by Him; then Christ will save him, *and present him without spot or blemish* to his Father.

Consider that those who are the people of God, *are led by the Spirit of God*; and those who have missed their way to reconciliation with God, that love any other way, or think to come to God any other way than by Jesus, the mediator: their labor will be lost. Therefore I must exhort and persuade you who are out of the way, that you would take God's method, and come into God's way. The terms, I have told you, are made already; the bargain is not to make now,--I will give you so much to be at peace with God, or I will part

with this or the other thing that is dear to me. No, the agreement is made between God and Christ, and his Covenant is ordered in all things, and sure; and his covenant stands sure with none, but those who are in Christ Jesus. There was a covenant made with Abraham: In your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. The promise is made to the seed, that is, to those who are in Christ; the faithful are counted the seed. Now the faithful are those who are *obedient* to Christ, who is the seed of promise, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed. They must come to Christ the seed; they must not rebel against Him; they must come to Him, and believe in Him. Be there never so many nations and families in the world, the promise is not to them, but to as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Here is the way for people to lay hold of, for coming into acquaintance with God, which is of so great necessity before they die; they must come to Christ himself, by his Spirit in their own hearts. We need not go to this and the other learned man, and inquire of this and the other sort of people; but we must cry to God for help and direction, and come unto Him, and give up all the powers and faculties of our souls to Him, to be governed by Him. God will have servants that will be obedient to Him. If ever we come to obtain salvation, we must have another master: One is your master, even Christ. I must come under the government of Christ, and He must lead me, and rule me, if I will be a child of God.

When people come to see there is not an effectual way, except submitting to the grace of God* in their own hearts, and yielding themselves up to the dictates of the Spirit of Christ in their souls; when they come to this, there are many hazards and difficulties to be encountered. There is the appearance of the cross of Christ, and we must take up this cross if we will follow Christ, and be obedient in all things unto Him. This is what will kill all my pleasures, lay waste all my religion, and destroy all my hopes, I must be like a man that has built a house without a good foundation; I must pull it all down again, and I must come to build up again upon a new foundation.

[Submitting to the grace of God is **to obey** what the grace of God teaches you deny: for the grace of God that **brings salvation** has appeared to all men, **teaching us** to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and **how to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;** Tit 2:11-12]

Here many have turned aside; the cross of Christ has seemed to them so sharp, and hard, and intolerable, that they could not bear it; they would not be at the charge of such a religion. What! Must I part with all my delights, and my beloved lusts and pleasures, and all my interests in the world, for Christ? I cannot part with these; these things lie in my way, I must rather lose my soul than part with what is so pleasing to me, and join with the light of my own conscience, and the truth in my inward parts? What! Must I not have so much as liberty of thought? What! Must my thoughts be regulated by what is so cross and repugnant to my mind? Must I throw out all evil thoughts out of my heart, and allow none but the good thoughts to remain there? Who can stand here? Who can bear such strictness as this? Rather than endure this, I will choose to lose my soul. Many have lost the truth on this account; and many are in danger to lose their souls.

If there is in you any desire of peace with God, so that you may not go from here before you have attained it, take hold of the present opportunity. Hardness of heart is a desperate plague; it comes from a long obstinate continuance in sin. When we have withstood the day of God's patience and long-suffering, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God; then God gives us up to our own hearts' lusts, because we choose to follow the voice of the charmer, however *wise* he appears. When we stop our ears, and will not attend to the calls of God; when men will go on, and nothing can stop them, in the career of their lusts and pleasures, but they will retain their carnal delight and friendship with the world, this hardness of heart becomes a desperate plague. Take heed of it, that it does not overtake you, and bring ruin and destruction upon you. Consider the patience and long-suffering of God, and let his goodness lead you to repentance. Consider, God has waited to be

gracious to you, he has exercised much long-suffering and patience towards you; whereas He might have cut you off long ago, and given you your portion with the damned in hell: but He has hearkened to the voice of the mediator who has pleaded for you; He has extended his patience and long-suffering to *the* wicked and rebellious also; and for this reason, the apostle tells us, Christ is the savior of all men, especially of them that believe.

Now the patience and long suffering of God has been lengthened out to all, and we have not improved it. Conscience has been sensible of the inward strokes and rebukes of God for sin, and of the inward calls of his grace to bring us to repentance; but we have not regarded these calls, nor hearkened to the voice of God, so as to hear, that our souls might live. Oh let us not put off our repentance any longer! But today, while it is called today, let us hear his voice, and harden not our hearts; but be of tender heart; let our hearts be softened and tendered under the word of God, and under the strokes of his judgment. If ever the Lord brings you under a tender frame, you will receive the word of God with meekness, and mix it with faith. Then it will work effectually to the amendment of your lives; it will work faith in those who are unbelievers, and strengthen the faith of those who believe. Then we shall have come to bless the Lord, and praise and magnify his great name, for his patience, long-suffering, and mercy, which at this day he has lengthened out, and graciously extended to us.



Text in Light Blue or **Bold Light Blue** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

SERMON XVIII

True Christianity

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, April 10, 1692

THE institution of the Christian religion was for this purpose: that holiness and righteousness might be brought forth in the earth; that God, through his Son Jesus Christ, might take delight in the sons and daughters of men, that they might be reconciled to him; *for that which the law could not do, by reason of weakness, God has had a purpose to do by his Son, and to him he gave all power in Heaven and Earth*, that thereby he might be enabled to perform the great work of God, in establishing righteousness, and in bringing forth a holy people, to serve a holy God. This is the great blessing that is come to us, and to all mankind, through our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that came *to turn every one from the evil of their ways*. That is the way and method by which our Lord Jesus accomplished the end of his coming, and the will of his Heavenly Father. Moses and all his washings, offerings, and sacrifices, could not make clean and purge the conscience; and by all his offerings and sacrifices, he could not reconcile us to God. But Jesus, by his once offering himself, did forever perfect those who are sanctified; and by one offering, reconciled us to the Father, and so brings forth a holy generation unto God, through regeneration and the sanctification of the Spirit.

And seeing the Lord has been pleaded in the riches of his grace to open this new and living way, for man's returning again into unity and fellowship with his Maker, the question, my friends, that I would put to you on the behalf of God is for all of you to consider, whether it is not best for every one of us to lay hold of salvation, to lay hold of that blessing wherewith the Lord has blessed us, that so the principal institution of Christianity might not only be named and spoken of, but might come to be enjoyed and witnessed in every one of our own souls; and that all might wait with expectation on the Lord Jesus Christ, for fulfilling of this great work in themselves.

There is a general notion among people, that Heaven is a holy place, and that nothing that is unclean can enter into it, to have a habitation there, when time in this world shall be no more with us. The time that we have been given us is I am sure is given us by God as an opportunity of fitting and preparing us for his dwelling-place;* and every day and hour of it ought to be employed in that great work, so that we might draw nearer and nearer to that state and condition that suits and befits that holy dwelling where saints and angels, for evermore, praise the great and glorious God. So that I am persuaded you believe, that you and all of us, are to be accountable to God for all the time he has bestowed upon us, whether we use it to the purposes for which he has given it, or whether we spend our time upon those things that are not profitable to us; and upon these considerations, we had need all of us to take heed to our present state that we are come to, and are arrived at in the present time; as for the future time, that we all know we are not sure of; and the future fate that we may hope to come to, there is no certainty of it, unless there is an improvement of the present time, and the opportunities of our present state. Therefore every one should apply their hearts unto the seeking of wisdom and understanding, and unto God, that he may give us to understand our state, and our present fitness or unfitness for the kingdom of glory and happiness, and of that holy dwelling we hope to enjoy forever.

[Seeking God is the single purpose of life:

He [God] has made from one blood every nation of men

to dwell on all the face of the earth,
and has determined their allotted times and the boundaries of
their habitations;

**so that they should seek the Lord, and perhaps might
feel after him and find him,**

though he is not far from every one of us. For in him we live and
move and have our being, Acts 17:26-28;

one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and
in you all. Eph 4:6]

If I will but turn my mind inward, to the serious consideration of my present state and condition, I can tell whether I am fit or unfit to approach God's presence; and if I find I am unfit, I must have recourse to the divine working of that great power, which God has ordained and appointed for this purpose; I must come to him to work all my works in me, and for me, according to his good pleasure; and that he will never do, unless it is by crossing me in my carnal pleasures and corrupt inclinations; for that which pleases man, does not please God. And God will not revoke the holy scriptures, that tell us, that those *who live in pleasure, are dead while they live*; those who are indulgent to their own affections, and their own delights, and their own humors, they are not at all ready to please and glorify God; they are not fitted for it, therefore he never sanctifies, nor brings any into a true Christian state, but through a daily cross, so that if I am not already fitted and prepared to do what is pleasing to God, I may be fitted by taking up a daily cross, to glorify God here and enjoy him forever.

What those things are that you are to do, I need not tell you, or what you have done. I judge no man. There is one that judges, he will tell you if you ask him, what your state and condition is; he will tell the drunkard, if he asks him, whether he is fit for Heaven; and also the proud and haughty persons whether they are fit for Heaven. Let such as are guilty of these or any other sins, inquire of the oracle in their own bosoms, "am I not fit for Heaven, despite all this?" He will tell you no, there is no unclean thing shall

enter there; nothing that defiles, nothing that hurts or oppresses; the proud, peevish, malicious person, that is hurtful to others, that hurts his neighbor, is shut out. And in no way shall there enter into it [heaven] anything that is defiled. [Rev 21:27](#). For outside are dogs, and sorcerers,* and the impure, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever loves the deception of lies and cheating. [Rev 22:15](#). None shall enter into the holy city of God, but those who are purified and purged from all iniquity. Therefore God has sent his son Jesus, seeing none else could do it. Moses and the Prophets could not do it, therefore he sent Jesus to bless us, in turning every one of us from our iniquities, and from our evil ways. One man has this evil way, another that evil way. It is all one to him; his work is to turn every one of us from our evil ways.

[*dogs and sorcerers are the ministers of Christendom. As dogs, they lick the sores of their congregation; they feed on the sins of the people in their congregations, [telling them they are righteous](#), receiving their continual gratitude for giving them assurances of the favor of God and heaven to come; they are forgers of lies and [physicians of no value](#). As sorcerers, they practice witchcraft with rituals and ceremonies that supposedly make a man acceptable to God, while that man remains a slave to sin, thus serving Satan, not God.]

But why then, (you may say), are so few turned from their evil ways throughout Christendom, where Christ is believed in, professed, read and heard; that yet so few are converted and turned? For we see great numbers of liars, swearers, drunkards, and unclean persons among us, where Christ is cried up at a mighty rate, and yet people are not turned from the evil of their ways; surely there is something that is the reason.

I would have all of you consider what the reason of it is, that those who profess to be Christians, are not turned from the evil of their ways; for Christ has *all power in Heaven and Earth committed to him* and he is able to do it,

and he was sent from God on purpose to do it; but this is a certain truth, it is not done; and what is the reason of it? *He came to his own, and his own received him not*; what is the reason? He has caused his grace to appear to every man in the world, and yet they are not taught by it. Here is an object of faith *for all*, and God has offered faith to all men, since he raised up Jesus from the dead, yet men have it not. What is the reason that this nation, as well as other nations, have been puzzled about it, to find out things that are so plain in scripture, in relation to the love of God to mankind, and in relation to Christ Jesus the Savior, and so little of this work is wrought among us?

Some say there is never a man in the world turned from the evil of their ways; they live in sin, and they are under a fixed necessity of continuing in it, and lying under it all the days of their lives, despite all this belief of the love of God, and the power of Christ, and the profession of it. Some say there is never a Christian in the world who can live one day without sin, but will defile himself with one thing or another; that the devil will prevail over men, and sin mix itself with our prayers and alms, and all our holy duties, so that there is nothing clean; nothing pure that we can perform to God. There are others that are not so rash in their judgment, and not so inconsiderate, but they will believe some men and women may come to a power and ability to withstand Satan, and resist him in his temptations; and that there are those who have been turned from the evil of their ways, but they are not; what is the matter? You have spent time about this, what is the reason you are not turned from the evil of your ways? The devil has told the people in former days that the reason why men live in sin, is, because God has appointed it so to be. And that has stopped the mouth of many a plain-hearted tender Christian; they have cried unto God under the weight of their sin, and they see no deliverance after all their prayers and tears, because they have been told they cannot do it, and that God has appointed it should be so, and required them to do what they cannot do; and with some the habit of sin has taken away the guilt of sin, and they go to perdition in their security.

I hope, my friends, that God has opened your eyes, and that you have better thoughts of God, than that he has required you a work and a labor to do, and by his eternal power and decree, has ordained that you should never do it, but damn you after all. Consider, there are men and women in bondage and captivity, and God has sent his Son into the world to redeem them from all iniquity, and turn them from their evil ways; we are not turned, what is the reason of it? I beseech you in the love of God, be serious in this matter; serious you must be, one time or other; when you come to the tribunal of God, there must be a reason given, or if not, you must be speechless; therefore find it out here. What is the reason that I am not turned from my evil ways, since God has sent his Son Jesus to do it, and given him power to do it; why then is it not done?

Some persons upon inquiry, and after their search, have brought forth this reason. They have alleged the great power the devil has. The devil is so strong, and has such a power to darken their minds, and enchant their affections; he injects and brings things into their minds before they are aware of it. I confess this, and I will say a little to it. I will confess as much as the argument will bear, that the devil has great power, and a way of injecting things into the spirits and affections of people. He is God's enemy and ours too, and he lies in wait, and will do as much as he can against us, that no one shall get to Heaven; if we come there, it shall be against his will. I have heard some magnify the devil's power to such a degree, that he has such power over a man or woman, that he is able to keep them in sin all their life, though God has put forth the exceeding greatness of his power for their redemption. This is hard to believe, that the devil is stronger than Christ Jesus. Well, as great as his power is, we are in a capacity of knowing a greater power; the apostle did comfort the Christians, notwithstanding all the power the devil used with them to defile them, and keep them from inheriting the kingdom of God, 1 John 4:4. *You are of God, little children, and have overcome, because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* I would have you believe this; I do believe it heartily, the devil only rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience; and he who has the

Holy Ghost in him, has one greater than he that is in the world. If you believe this, then the question is thus far answered, that we have a Savior, a Deliverer, that is more able to redeem us, than the devil is to keep us in bondage. I hope we are reassured, now we know we have a keeper. We are assaulted with the devil's temptations, and they are powerful; how powerful? He has so much power, as he finds in us an inclination to yield and join with his temptations. If he comes with a temptation to a man or woman that has no inclination to that thing he tempts them; if they hate that thing, then there is an end of it. The devil's power lies in this, when he brings a temptation that I have an inclination to, then he has a party within me; if that is rooted out, what signifies his power, let him bring ever so many temptations?

There are many of you that understand what I say; if a temptation comes to a man to commit an act of uncleanness, if he is chaste man, there is no inclination in him to yield to it, or join to it; he hates it, it is an abomination in itself, and grievous and provoking to God if he does it; a man abhors it, then what powerful temptation is it? If it light upon a man of an unclean mind, that is defiled in his heart, he has not only the devil, but his own lust and corrupt inclination to contend with; but if a man believes in Christ, he relies upon him, and he will say, Lord, you see I am under temptation; here is a great and powerful temptation, I can never withstand it, but I trust in your name and power. Please arise and deliver me from it. Thus when God does arise, his enemies will be scattered; though the devil's power is great, yet there is a deliverer that is stronger than he. The reason of men's being overcome, does not lie in the greatness of the devil's power, but in the frailty of our nature.

Some will say, that our natures are so frail, weak and depraved, that we can do nothing as we ought to do. This is given for another reason, and there is truth in it, but that truth is but a delusion; they would excuse themselves when they have yielded to a temptation, I am weak and frail, I cannot resist the devil; though the devil is not stronger than Christ, yet he is stronger than

I; he works with all his might, power, and subtlety to deceive me, and ensnare me, and overcome me; I am a poor, frail creature, therefore I must yield to him. This is a carnal reason; as though I were to grapple with the devil in my own strength, and to deliver my soul, as if God has left me to myself. If you say, "Lord, you have set me to grapple with the devil, and to withstand his temptations. Lord I am not able to do it myself." God will answer you, *"I have laid help upon one that is mighty, that is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto me by him;"* so that you are not to overcome the devil, by your own power and ability. If any man reason thus, his reason is out of reality; for we are saved by Christ, therefore I cannot plead my own frailty, seeing God has provided a rock for my defense that is stronger and higher than I, that I may trust and rely upon.

So that you see the frailties of our nature is not a sufficient reason, we must seek further for it yet; and when we come to search narrowly, and to the bottom of our hearts, I will tell you here it rests, it has its center in the perverseness of the will that is in man, that is contrary to the will of God; it is the opposition of our will to the will of God. We may talk what we will of salvation and Christianity, that we have a mind to be saved, and go unto God when we die, and to enjoy the happiness of Heaven to eternity. We may talk thus; but as long as the perverseness of the will continues, I am the cause of my own ruin. If I grow in a profession, this perverse will, will grow up with me under that profession, and under any profession. Change your judgment and opinion as often as you wish, this will go along with you, the reason and the bottom of things will come to this, none can overcome the devil, nor be a *disciple of Christ, without a daily cross*. When people come to this, to see a necessity of taking up the cross of Christ, and denying themselves; when it comes to this, there are such shifts and evasions, and arts that men have to cover themselves, to make themselves and others believe, that such and such a thing is consistent with the will of God, and that they may do it, and save their own souls; but they boast of their own deceit, and are glad that they can make a pretense to deceive their own souls; so that there is no hopes of their ever being purged and cleansed, and of having any holy work

brought forth by them; but when a man comes to be sensible of his spiritual condition, and is sincere and honest, he will be ready to say unto God, “if I am deceived in anything, open my eyes, Lord; if I indulge myself in anything that is contrary to your holy will, Lord, I beseech you to show it to me.” Such a man will lay aside his own will, if it is contrary to God's will. Now here is one that is a very fit object for Christ to work upon; he will not be long before he is convinced of deliverance to come. When a man comes to the word, he is convinced of such an evil in his conscience, where nobody but God and himself were privy to it, or had any knowledge of it. It is discovered that he lives in such a practice that is contrary to the mind of God. God has convinced you, that you love it, and live in it, and if you will but break off that evil practice, that he has sent his Son Jesus Christ to *turn you from every evil way, and to redeem you from all iniquity.*

This truth has a savor in it; and if you are sincere and upright, there is nothing for you to say or do, but to set yourself against everything that is contrary to the mind of God, and you will have light from Heaven sent to guide you and direct you in your way there; if you will only receive that grace that is freely given of God unto you through Jesus Christ, *he will certainly purge you and cleanse you from your sin, and turn you from every evil way, notwithstanding the perverseness of your own will and the power of Satan; and he will work in your heart by his grace, until it has brought you off from your iniquity, and wrought iniquity out of you, and so bring forth a holy work to God.*

Without faith it is impossible to please God. We cannot please God without faith, nor with it either, unless the faith is authored by God and given to us as the gift of God. There is a great deal of faith [so-called], in this nation, and in this city; but do you believe all their ways are pleasing to God? We must distinguish between different kinds of faith here; when the apostle would give a description of saving faith, he tells you, that *it is the operation of God*; if I do not have that operation, and a regard to it, how can I have it be working? But since it is the dispensation of the gospel of Christ, and

design of Christ, to turn people to the operation of God in their own hearts, we would have them believe it.

If there is a drunkard or a profane person, if God works faith in that person's heart, he will be convinced and say, "what a stroke has the Lord given upon my conscience;" and he will see it is the Lord's work. Then believe, whoever you are, and lay hold of this, for this is the operation of God upon a believing soul, the stroke of God's hand and the power of God; and then you have the work of faith, by which faith you are enabled to keep yourself from that thing that God smote you for, and before he gives you over, the same hour you will find the same hand smiting you for another sin; this will be like fire in your bones, kindling up your zeal and hatred against your sin, and will kindle in you a high fire of love to God, that has not let you be in your misery, but minded your condition, and had compassion on you. This love God will shed abroad, which will run over your heart, he *has shed abroad his love, said the apostle, Rom 5:5, upon our hearts by the Holy Ghost* to constrain us to yield obedience; when you fall into the way of faith, which is, the operation of God, the devil comes and knocks and bounces on this side and that, but God will not fail to give you power to withstand temptation.

The Lord Jesus Christ works in people's hearts, to turn them from the evil of their ways, that so he may bring forth holiness and righteousness, and redeem a people from under the bondage of sin, and fit them for the kingdom of his Father, and to use the apostle's words, *present them before the throne of God, without spot and blameless; he will purify them, and sprinkle them from an evil conscience*, their bodies being washed with pure water, he will sanctify the creature; his word is near them, and in their hearts, he begins a work in many, and will carry it on in one, and in another.

Here lies the chief work; it is the good hand of God that must work all our works in us, and for us, according to the good pleasure of his will. He must work in you a willingness to bear the cross of Christ, and to deny yourselves; he will operate for you for this purpose, therefore you must commit

yourselves to him.

It is not our preaching which will convert men to God, but it is the work of God that is pure, which converts the soul to God, and that cleanses, fits, and prepares it for the kingdom of Heaven, Psalm 19:7. We must come to the word of God [in our hearts], that will convince us, reprove us, strengthen, encourage and illuminate us, and do in us and for us all that we stand in need of: To him be all the praise that works all in you, and prepares you to be a peculiar people to himself. The word of his grace I commit to you all, take heed of doing anything contrary to it; if you do, what would be your comfort, will be your condemnation.

His Prayer after Sermon

BLESSED God and Father of Life! You are glorious in holiness, infinite in power, the eternal God; your dominion is an everlasting dominion, your kingdom is without end.

O Lord! We bless and praise your glorious name, that you have made known yourself among the sons and daughters of men; you have revealed to us in your word the manner of your kingdom among us, in setting up righteousness and truth, and throwing down iniquity.

Powerful God of Life! Subject the minds and hearts of all your people to your divine power and pleasure, and let the dread of yourself rest upon our spirits, that every one of us may fear to sin against you, and to do despite to your Spirit, the Spirit of your grace, that we may every one of us turn from our iniquities, the evil of our hearts and ways, that we may praise you in the land of the living, and may become faithful witnesses of that salvation which you have wrought for us, and for all those who believe,

Powerful God of Life! The souls of your people which you have gathered out of the world, do praise and magnify your name for what they have seen, and

for what you have wrought; you have wonderfully appeared in your love, and brought salvation near, and gathered many into it, it is become a wall and a bulwark to them, that they are defended from the evil one, and from the evils of the world.

O Dearest God of Life! Raise up poor and needy souls out of the dust, that they may serve you, and obey you, and do your will, and show forth your power and strength in their weakness and infirmity, that they may trust in you, and rely upon you in the time of their distress.

Blessed Father of Life and Power! Give grace to the humble and meek, and teach them in your way. We have had experience, O Lord! of your fulfilling your promises; you are still fulfilling of them to all that truly wait upon you; you have begun a good work; carry it on to the praise and exaltation of your great name,

Blessed Father! Reveal your power more and more in the nations round about, that those who long after the life of the Living God, may come and find you, and behold your divine appearance through the Son of your Love, in their own spirits; that so they may receive your word, and your word may quicken them; that they may stand up from the dead, and live; for it is the living, the living, Lord! that praise you, that honor your name, that offer praise, and glorify you,

O Blessed Father of Life! Carry on your great work with power throughout all the earth; gather a remnant of your seed that are scattered, and bring them home into the kingdom of your dear Son, that we may praise you together, and rejoice in your name.

Dear Father! You have saved this nation, the land of our nativity, to this day, by a wonderful power, by your powerful arm; our souls are deeply sensible of the stretching forth of your Almighty Hand in our preservation at this day; so Living Father! If it is your heavenly pleasure, lengthen forth our

tranquility; and the enjoyments of your mercy and goodness to the inhabitants thereof, that they may learn to fear you, and turn to you with their whole hearts, and break off, by true repentance, from all those sins that grieve your Holy Spirit; that so, Living Father of Life! they may come to walk in love and in union with your heavenly power, and have concord one with another and show forth the power of your grace manifested to them, and magnify your love and power, and give you honor and renown for that great salvation that you have wrought for them; that so your great name may be exalted, and your will may be done on earth as it is in Heaven; that the souls of your people may be refreshed with your love, and the joys of your presence, and the revelation of your heavenly power. For this, we offer up to you living praises, and Christian thanksgivings, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ; for you are worthy of all praise, and glory, and dominion, forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XIX

The Mighty Work of Man's Redemption

**Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, Feb., 8,
1687**

My Friends,

WE are met upon the most weighty affair that can be to every one of us, **even to wait** that we may have a true knowledge of the beginning, carrying on and perfecting the mighty work of redemption, that people may know that redemption is wrought in their souls; for everyone's soul has been lost and captivated, and led away from the pure presence of God; all have been alienated by reason of sin, which has been an universal wall of partition and has excluded out unholy souls from the Holy God. All that have been defiled and polluted, they have been excluded from his dwelling place, they have

been driven out into the world, and the world has become a world of misery, and of distraction and confusion to the sons and daughters of men. There has been anguish, tribulation and wrath upon all their souls, and an insensibility has happened unto many, that they have not been apprehensive of the great depravation they have lain under, and they have not been sensible of the glory of that state and condition which they were to have enjoyed; and in that state of insensibility they have not sought after the Lord, but have been captivated and led away by many lusts and pleasures, by which they have wounded their own souls more and more.

And in such a state as this it is, that the Lord has found us; he has sought us out, and he has found us *cast out into the open field, and wallowing, as it were, in our own blood*. Yet this has been a time of love; and he has manifested his love to us in this respect, in that he has awakened us and brought us to a sense of our depraved and deplorable condition, and given unto a remnant to perceive, that there is a more excellent glory, a more excellent enjoyment to be had, than any this world can afford. But a great many of those whose eyes are so far opened, that they can see and discern *a more excellent glory*, yet they cannot receive it, for they are not in a capacity for the enjoyment of it. Many have the glimmerings, and some little sight of heavenly things, but they themselves are earthly. Many perceive there is a holy life, but it is not theirs for their own life is unholy; and yet they know there is a life that is holy and pure. Through this desires are instilled, by the word of life in the sons and daughters of men, through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator; by him desires are instilled in people that they might come to enjoy that life of holiness, that they might not only see a better state than what they do enjoy, but that they might come to enjoy it, and have it for theirs.

There is a universal desire in people that they might have eternal life, and they believe there is an eternal life to be enjoyed; but not everyone has it, and the reason is, because they are not fitted and prepared for the enjoyment of it; for it is a kind of treasure that is never put into an unclean

vessel, there must be a cleansing and purifying, that so earthen vessels may come to retain and hold this heavenly treasure; and when it comes to this, that people must be cleansed and purified, here the world turns out to many means and methods; some have gone to outward washings, outward cleansings and observations of, this and the other ordinance, and when all that has been done, themselves being judges, they were yet unclean; when they have done all that lies in their power and ability, towards their washing and cleansing, and towards preparing themselves, they have found some secret testimony in their own consciences that their hearts were still unclean, and that there was defilement still abiding and lodging in the secret of their souls, and this has left a great many puzzled as what they should do; when they have come to the end of all, they do not know what to do. Many have cried secretly, "what shall we do to be saved? For all that we can do, cannot save us. We have retained this, and the other doctrine, followed this and the other way, and made many observations; but all this does not cleanse our soul, nor *purge our consciences from dead works*, this will not bring us to the inheritance of that immortal life that will give us satisfaction. We hear many speak of satisfaction, and of joy *unspeakable and full of glory*; but here is a weight and burden that still lies upon our souls."

Therefore, my friends, that all such who are brought so far, as to be under such a burden and oppression, might be informed and come to understand where *the true rest is*, and where that power can be found, that is able to answer those tender desires that are begotten in them; for this cause has the Lord our God communicated and given the dispensation of the gospel of his son, unto a remnant whom he has sanctified, that they might *speak a word in season to the weary soul*. This is not a day to *make a mock of sin*, this is not a day to make a *covenant with death and hell*, and to resolve to go on in a wicked life, and to continue in it all their days.

But yet there are a kind of people that desire to have *a word spoken in season to them when they are weary*. How many are there in our age and generation, that one may count of this number, that are sinners, and

overcome by their lusts and corruptions, and by the temptation of Satan and his instruments. But they are weary of it, it is a burden to their souls, it costs them many a bitter tear, many a sigh, and many a sad and sorrowful thought in secret, that they should have a sight of *a more excellent glory*, and of a better life than that of their own, and yet they do not know how to get into it.

My friends, that same divine word of life, by which any of the people of the Lord, in any age, were ever restored, redeemed, and purchased again to the Lord; *that word of life must have been at work in their hearts*, and has been at work in them, or else you would never have been so far opened; there has been something that has unstopped your ears, that you might hear; and the reason of your continuance in your bonds is, after your knowing something that might have freed you, is, because you have not heartily embraced that which has begun the work, which God, by his redeeming power, has effected in the hearts of those who believe in Christ, and thereby an inclination is raised in people to seek after the Lord.

You know what the apostle said, *it is not of us so much as to think a good thought*. But this all people will grant is a good thought, when a sinner thinks of turning to God, and leaving his evil ways, if he had power and ability, and cries out, "if I knew how to stand against temptation, I would never sin against the Lord more;" this must be a good thought in your mind. How did it come to be there? Who is the author of this thought, you will say? This ought to be attributed to the love of God in Christ, that he has convinced and persuaded us; and that though there is sin and pollution, yet he has not so forsaken us, as utterly to cast us off, he has sent forth his quickening Spirit, that is, the Lord from Heaven, that he might stir up and quicken people to consider their condition, and bring them to a sense of their present state, that they may come into a better state than they are in at present.

If this may be granted, that the Spirit of God, and the grace of God, is the author of these desires, then it will be granted at the same time, that every

one of you ought to be sensible, that such spiritual desires stirring you, are from the motion and operation of the Spirit of God that has raised them in your souls; and then I hope you will grant, that if you had but joined with that Spirit, and with the assistance of that Spirit, all things would have been possible through it.

[For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men,

Teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and how to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

as we receive the blessed fulfillment of our hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for us, that he might **redeem us from all iniquity [lawless deeds, sin]**, and **purify for himself a people who are his very own**, zealous for good works. Tit 2:11-

14

Grace shows us what to turn away from in this life and teaches how to live righteously in this life. It shows us our sins and then removes them — more than forgiveness, grace releases us from the bondage of sin, from even the desire to sin. We get immediate strength to forgo the sin, but the removal of the desire is then over time.]

So that here is the first thing that I would have every one satisfied about in their understandings, whether they are totally exempted from any such touches and operations of God or not; for it is said by some ignorantly, that a great part of mankind have never had any such divine workings of the Spirit of God upon them, in order to their conversion; therefore it is not in vain for you to consider your state and condition; for if you, or I, or any here, be under such circumstances, that they never had, nor are ever like to have any such divine operations or touches of the spirit of life, in order to

conversion, then I am sure you and I had better never have been told.

If you will consider with yourselves and lay aside the disputes of doctors [of divinity] and learned men, you may know the things pertaining to yourselves. Things relating to others, I may let disputes alone about them; but as for things relating to my salvation, I must have a certain knowledge of them. It concerns you, my friends, to know within yourselves, by an infallible evidence of the Spirit of God, whether you have had such divine touches, workings and operations upon your hearts, as have inclined you to seek the Lord. I hope I may believe there are none here but who have in their hearts an answer: I have had such touches and operations in me. This is great love from God, more than any tongue can set forth. You will be ready to say, “I have not deserved this; I have not so behaved myself towards my Maker as to deserve that he should wait upon me, and call upon me.”

When will you turn, and amend your life, and hearken to him who made you? When will you then leave serving God's enemy, and serve him who is your rightful Lord?

So that now this is a great aggravation of our sin to continue in it, and yet to have a belief that God is still waiting upon us, and that he has such a kindness for us, as now and then to touch our hearts by the inward operation of his spirit and grace, in order to conversion.

Now when this is agreed, and men settle themselves in the belief of this, you know what the consequence will be. When I consider with myself, that have been under these workings, have been rebellious, wicked and disobedient to God, yet the Lord is not so angry as utterly to cast me out, but is still waiting to be gracious, by the operation of his spirit, to gather me to himself, in order to sanctify me, and heal my backsliding, to cure my weakness and infirmities, and at the last to save me, and make me an heir of his eternal kingdom; what is the consequence of this love? Why, the next resolve must be this: I will either rebel against his grace, or resist his power, or I will submit to him, which submission is the best way, the safest way!

Are there not a great many in this age, that are as sensible of the workings of God's grace for their conversion, as ever you and I were; that are as sensible that God has called them to holiness and righteousness, as any of us can be, and yet they have resisted the grace of God? They have said in their hearts: "We will not submit to this power, that will make us so holy, and so watchful, and so careful, diligent and obedient, for this very reason; because it will cross my interest, it will cross my pleasure, it will hinder my preferences in the world, and my reputation among men; and for this reason I will not bear this yoke." I would be glad to hope there are none such here, who have made such a covenant with death and hell, yielding themselves up to the devil to serve him all their days.

Let us, who are at this time, and at this meeting, under the operation of God's grace, and feel the Lord calling us by his grace, and working upon us by his spirit; let us enter together into a holy, solemn resolution, that we will obey this good Spirit, and take him for our leader, and submit, though it would be to a cross. Thus people will think, they will come to this resolution, when the work of redemption is begun in their souls, and when they are convinced of their sin, and their eyes are opened to see the way of holiness; and though they never make a resolution to walk in it, yet every one shall be convinced, and see there was a better way than their own, and be convinced by the grace of God one time or other,* that in respect of God's working of it, it is beginning; but in respect of men that should join with the operation of God, it is not beginning, for he has no desire to those things which he does not know; he still depends upon himself; but when the soul comes to be satisfied, that it is the visitation of God, and joins himself to him in a holy resignation of his own will, and faith, this is the Lord, he is come to work upon me, he is come to change and alter the frame of my mind. It is the Lord, let him do what he will; here is a mind brought to submit to the grace of God, God is able to do that for him which he cannot do for himself.

[*This *one time or the other* that everyone will be convinced,

either happens in this life, or in the next life, with a person taking *his part in the lake of fire*. See [Is There Hope for All](#), for more.]

When people come to the right object of their faith, and act their faith upon that object:, they every day find a progress, a going forward in the work of grace, according to the work of grace in their souls; and there is a power that inclines them to believe; it is not for such to cry, if they had power, they would do more; he that has the spirit of grace, the Spirit of Christ, that had all power in Heaven and Earth given to him, to put it forth on purpose for the bringing back of men and women home to God; he that has this object of faith before him, he will not look for power in his own will and affections to redeem him, he expects a power to be daily ministered and dispensed to him, as he has need of it, through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is present with him, in all his trials and temptations. He cries, “here is a temptation that will carry me away, O Lord help me, stretch forth the arm of your power and save me; plant your fear in my heart and deliver me;” *their eyes shall see their Savior*, said the prophet.

Thus when a man comes to be joined to the right object of faith, and exercises to put forth lively acts of faith upon Christ, his eyes shall see his Savior; the light that shines into his heart, discovers to him the temptation, and it also shows him a redeemer at hand; his Savior is near him, and he trusts in him, and relies upon him, and says, *this word of God is in my heart*, and I do really believe, that although the temptation that assaults me is strong, yet it shall not prevail; whether it is the profits, the pleasures, or the honors of the world. If I put my trust in this power, I cannot go near the evil. I am a Christian. I have entered into a covenant in Christianity, that I will join with nothing but what God approves of. Now when I have represented to my mind the temptation of the devil, and that evil which he sets before me, and I know it is contrary to the mind of God, how can I go into that evil, and break my covenant God, after I have entered into covenant with him, to love him, serve him, and obey him? The power of grace upon such souls, the operation of grace, is so powerful, that the temptation comes and goes, and

they are saved and delivered out of it, because God helps them; but if they comply with the temptation, then tribulation, wrath and anguish, pursues all such as are rebellious and disobedient to the will of God.

Now this redemption is carried on gradually from day to day of the truth that you believe operates by degrees; you are delivered, first from one evil practice, and then from another evil work. But there is a great deal more; you rejoice and are glad, that you are delivered from one sin; but you would be gladder to be delivered from them all. I speak to those who are serious for their immortal souls; when they see themselves delivered out of one evil, that they were ready to run into, they would be glad if they were redeemed out of every evil; that their crossness and peevishness, their forwardness, and wantonness were removed. They should be glad to be delivered from all their sins.

What do you think, say some, that a man, while he lives here, may come to see all sin, all evil and corruption brought under, and nothing but holiness, righteousness and truth remain in him; and that there shall be nothing but simplicity and innocence? Do you think that such a thing can be?

Why should not I think so? You will grant me, that the power of grace is able to get such power and victory over sin and corruption, that you may come to hate it as much as ever you have loved it; if you grant me that, the consequence will follow, he that gave me victory over sin, can give me power over all sin. All Christians believe that God's power is infinite; the scripture testifies, *all things are possible to God, with whom we have to do*. If all things are possible to God, sure this is possible; there is nothing so contrary to God as sin; and God will not suffer the devil always to rule his masterpiece, man. Mankind is God's masterpiece, the most eminent creature in this lower world, made after God's likeness; and though the devil has brought men into his own likeness now, yet nothing can be more contrary to the mind of God, than that the devil should have the rule of us, for God would have the government of us himself.

When we consider the infiniteness of God's power, for destroying what is contrary to him, who can believe that the devil must ever stand and prevail? I believe it is inconsistent and disagreeable with the true faith, for people to be Christians, and yet to believe that Christ, the eternal Son of God, to whom all power in Heaven and Earth is given, will allow sin and the devil to have dominion over them; *there is no other name under Heaven by which I can be saved*, therefore I have put my confidence in him. If the devil must have the rule of me here, then I cannot be subject to Christ in all things; I may go to meetings, but can never master the devil and his temptations; this is as inconsistent with the faith of a Christian, as light with darkness, and Christ with Belial. If Christians think themselves true believers, then let them see how far their faith will reach, whether it is like that faith, *which was once delivered to the saints*, for by that faith their hearts were cleansed, and they became free from sin, Rom 6:22. But now being made free from sin, and the servants of God, said the apostle, you have your fruit unto holiness, and the end, everlasting life; you were servants to sin, but now you are free from sin; so that this faith is but one, and if men have gotten another, it will do them no good. Take heed you are not mistaken about your faith.

I have heard some learned men say, that a believer is a servant of sin, and he is likely to always be so; but he is not at the same time free from righteousness, for he has the righteousness of Christ imputed to him, and God looks upon him as righteous in his righteousness; there cannot be a more anti-apostolic doctrine than someone to believe that the may be a servant of sin, and yet have the imputation of Christ 's righteousness. "I may be a servant of sin," say they, "yet Christ is righteous, he is the righteousness of God, and he has fulfilled the will of God, and has purchased salvation for me, and he is the object by which I am made righteous."

Consider this: the imputation of Christ's righteousness will never do me good, until I come to partake of his righteousness, until his righteousness is made my righteousness, in me and for me. Christ is made to us of God,

wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption; so that if a sinner, one who was a sinner the other day, comes through faith in Christ to have his heart cleansed and purged, and true righteousness planted in him, where sin was planted; there sin, through the blood of Christ, is cleansed and purged away.

So that Christ is made righteousness to me, and not his righteousness barely imputed and reckoned to me; Christ is my wisdom, I am a fool without him; Christ is made righteousness to me; for my good deeds and holy living cannot be acceptable to God until they are done in him, and commended to God by him. The proper work of faith is to fix the soul on him who works all things in us and for us, who works in us both to will and to do, *according to his good pleasure*; and it is the good pleasure of God that we should live in all righteousness.

Those who come to receive this faith at first, have to receive it from an inward feelings they have the operation of the word of God in them; so the apostle reckons faith, not because such a man hears, and such a man believes what such a man preaches, but faith is the operation of God; **you may hear me, and a thousand preach, and you may die unbelievers for all that, except you come to this: to know the operation of God, and the work of faith in you.** How does my heart close with this? How does my soul join with this? What virtue and power do I feel in myself? It may be others who preach, feel the power, but do I feel it? If not, I come but to a noise and sound. If people feel not their hearts joining with the word preached, there comes no advantage to them; you read in scripture, that the *word preached did not profit because it was not mixed with faith in those who heard it*. This is your case, you come to meeting, and you love to hear the doctrine of truth preached; but I tell you, and I will speak plainly to you, unless you come to feel the operation of the word of truth in your hearts, you may hear the gospel, and the word of life preached to you, but it will not profit you much.

How is it possible for a man to have a testimony against drunkenness, and yet be drunk? A testimony against uncleanness, and yet be unclean? How can a man hear such a testimony and believe it, and yet commit the sin? He heard it, but did not feel the virtue of it within himself, and so he did not mortify the sin that he was inclinable to; but those who come to join with truth, and with meekness receive the engrafted word, they find the power and ability of it, they find how able it is to save their souls, they find how it works, not only just when they hear it, but it goes along with them, and dwells with them, and they find the virtue of it overshadowing their souls, with the dread and terror of the Lord, not with the words that a man speaks; I do not trust to them, but here is the power and the fear of the Lord, which will preserve my soul, and keep me in safety; this is what will keep my mind fixed upon him, and keep my mind inward, that I do not gaze about me; so that every one may have an infallible testimony of what they have heard and known.

I have known the doctrine of several sects that have been among us, and the main thing that many have gone from one people to another about, is this: that they might know what such a man holds forth more than such other one, and they think the truth is more perspicuous among such a people than other people; if you examine the matter, it is this, who preached and proved his doctrine best. Alas! if they did all concur together, and did preach as certain and infallible doctrine as ever Christ and his apostles preached, this will all do you and me no good, unless we know the power. You know there were thousands that heard Christ preach, as you now hear me, and there were some so taken with him, that they went away, and said, *never man spoke like this man*. But were they all Christians? Did they partake of life by him? No, some of them were ready to stone him.

Now bring this home and consider with yourselves, whether you are not some of you in the same state; when you hear truth preached, there is an assent and agreement with it in your minds; but when a command comes to be obeyed, and a cross to be taken up, and self-denial to be shown, or some

increase of trade lies in the way, let truth go where it will, you must follow your interest; there is lacking something to hold onto the principle of truth, which is able to sanctify you and perfect you, that you may be reconciled to God through Christ.

Those who are resigned and given up to truth, it is possible for them that they may be satisfied; they have an infallible testimony of the spirit of truth witnessing with their spirits that such a thing is bad, and if the whole world might be doing it, they will not. What is profit and pleasure to me? My pleasure is at God's right hand, and my profit is to get grace, and to have an abundant entrance into God's everlasting kingdom. Those who have the true knowledge of Christ, they have profit and advantage, pleasure and delight enough, which is hidden from the world, and always will be. They are for profit and pleasure, which they may have with a good conscience. Those things which God affords them as blessings in this world, they despise them not, but take them with thanksgiving, and use them for his glory. But if they cannot have profit or pleasure without sinning against the Lord and their own consciences, let those who will, take such profit and pleasure.

Those who come thus to close with truth, they have an infallible evidence within them; they do not conceive it is thus and thus, because such a man said it was so; but they have an infallible evidence in themselves. This is the mind of the Lord; God has signified it by his Spirit, and sealed it upon my spirit, and I cannot but know it.

What, do you profess infallibility? Yes, else I would hold my tongue; if I did not know what I assert infallibly, I would never preach more. Truth may be many times concealed. A man may have wronged and cheated his neighbor, and he not know of it; this man goes away, and his neighbor does not reproach him; but when he comes to be down in his bed, he has a sting and a reproach in his conscience, thinking that I know I have done him harm. Is not this infallible? Let me consult some learned men, that I may know whether I have told a lie. I need not go to learned men and philosophers, to

know whether it was a lie. I am infallible in this, I know certainly it was not a lie; I have a certain evidence, and if a thousand men tell me to the contrary, I will not believe them. If there is infallibility here, is there not then infallibility in the word of truth? Shall I question it, or doubt it, if I have an infallible testimony of it?

Though men have ever so little proficiency, if they have it upon sure terms, and lasting foundations, let a thousand men come with all their logical skill and philosophy, yet they can never remove a man from the witness in himself. The remnant that God has brought to this foundation has a certainty and infallibility in their obedience that they pay to the will of God, and in the comfort they have to the obedience of the law of God, which he has written in their hearts. Let come what may, they can never be removed for this exceeds all the precepts and doctrines of men; it is the precept and doctrine of Christ and his apostles. Let people read them, and endeavor to practice them. But here comes the testimony, the divine power by which the precept was given forth to them, and is now given forth again to you and me, with the same liveliness and power. Let us perform them as the primitive Christians did.

Here now, comfort comes to flow forth from a settled foundation that shall never be moved. The winds have come and blown upon religion; let what wind will blow, that can blow, God has built his church upon a rock, and it will remain immoveable against all opposition; blessed are those who are founded upon it. Has God fixed and established us in our society with one another, and with our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the foundation that God has placed it upon, we desire that all men may come to the same stability and settlement, and never more to be tossed with the winds of doctrine, but be built upon Christ Jesus, the Rock of Ages, the rock of our ages, the rock of us and our children. That God will carry us on in this society, is the desire of our souls, for ourselves, and all our friends and countrymen. The way for you to be blessed, and to have an advantage for your immortal souls, by the testimony that has been raised up, is to have regard to the working of the

same power, that you may come to partake of the benefit of those gifts and graces which God has bestowed upon his church.

His Prayer after Sermon

Most blessed and glorious God and Father of Life! How wonderful are you in your appearances to your people in the day of your power, in which you have stretched forth your arm, and have gathered a remnant of those who were scattered, and are yet gathering and bringing to yourself those who have been driven away; and you have made known your power and goodness in the hearts of the sons and daughters of men, that they might love you. That you might beget love to yourself, you have made known your love to their hearts; if you had not loved us first, we had never loved you. But you have been shedding abroad your love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost to constrain us to love you. Your love is manifested to all that are breathing after you, and none do breathe after you, but through the life that you give them; and those who were dead in sins and trespasses, have you quickened, and we would send forth your praises and thanksgivings for the great things you have done for us in Jesus Christ. All your works praise you, and your saints bless you.

Holy Father of Life! Increase and multiply those graces and holy desires which you have begun to work in us, and pluck up every plant that your right hand has not planted. Let spiritual Sodom be burnt up, and all that are corrupt; let those things that you have planted spring up to the praise of your name, and the salvation of the souls which you have gathered.

O powerful God of Life! Let your blessed presence and living fear be among us, that all your children may offer praises, and the sacrifices of humble thanksgivings upon your holy altar.

Arise, O Lord! More and more in the greatness of your power, and dispel the clouds of darkness that have been upon the sons and daughters of men, and

raise up in every one of us more and more holy desires and breathings after that life that is eternal. Those who have been scattered, let them be now gathered; and let those who have been driven away in a cloudy and dark night, be brought to a glorious and blessed day, in which they may enjoy the gospel that brings light to dark souls, that praises and thanksgivings may be offered up in your house for your holy presence with us, that we may be fed there when we are assembled together in your name, according to your promise. Continue to be in the midst of us, that living praises and thanksgivings may be offered up to you, through Jesus Christ; for you alone are worthy, who are God over all, blessed for evermore. Amen.

SERMON XX

The Word of God, a Christian's Life

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, March 4, 1687

IT was the doctrine of the great master of the Christian religion, the Lord Jesus Christ, while he was preaching and publishing, and making known the way of salvation among the sons and daughters of men; he then preached and declared, that it was *not bread only by which a man lived, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*. Now the way and means of man's preservation in life, in a living state, the method and course that the God of Heaven opens to keep the sons and daughters of men alive, is by this word. Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, has a ministration of life in it;* and, therefore, all that are desirous of the enjoyment of the immortal life, and of the preserving and increasing of it, they are diligently to wait to be made partakers of this divine ministration. Outward bread is for outward preservation, but man is made inward as well as outward, he has a soul as well as a body. Now Christ, to signify to us, what the inward man is nourished and fed by, tells us, that man lives not by bread alone, but

by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

[The words we hear spoken to us impart the life of God, John 6:63; if we obey, practice, and keep the commands and teachings we hear.]

So now in this our day, as well as in former days, it has pleased God to give unto a remnant an experiential knowledge of the truth of this, that they have been quickened and made alive by the word of God; that is, they *have heard and felt, and tasted of the word of life that was with the Father before the world began*, that has been divinely ministered to them, by the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ; many *that were dead in trespasses and sins, he has said unto them, live*. He has given unto many an inward sense of their state, who previously had no sense of it; he has brought many a one to feel sin to be a burden and an oppressing load, who sometimes before have taken pleasure and delight in the sin. This is a great change that is wrought in a man's mind, that he should come to be laden with that, burdened and oppressed by what was previously his pleasure and delight; yet this great change has been wrought in many a soul, by the operation of the word of God, of *that inward word, that inward voice*, when the Lord has taken men in hand himself.

There are many who have taken sinners in hand, and have gone about to convince them and convert them, but they were not able to do it; but when the Lord has taken men in hand himself, when his Creator has undertaken to deal with a man himself, then the man cries out, "I am a worm, and no man;" then he cries out under the sense of the judgment of God, then he cries out under the indignation of the Lord, which he has kindled by his sins, he cries out for mercy, then he prays for remission, then he wishes that he had never provoked the Lord; for the word that goes out of the mouth of God, has a mighty force and power upon the spirit of a man, so that he is converted and changed by it; as the prophet said of old, *the word of God is pure, converting the soul*.

Now where any come to an experiential knowledge of the word of the Lord, of this inward voice by which God speaks to the sons and daughters of men, they have received thereby an infallible seeing of their own state and condition; this is the first lesson learned by it. They come to have a certain, infallible knowledge of their own state, and they are sure that they cannot be deceived; for it brings an evidence with it in their consciences, so that whatever this Word of life signifies to a man, he has the knowledge of the same thing evidencing it in his own conscience, as the apostle said, *if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things*. Now here is a way found out for men to obtain divine knowledge by a divine means; for the Lord speaks by his Spirit, and if men come to hearken to that voice, unto that speaking, they perceive readily what it says to them. The Lord tells people as well now as in former ages, what he has against them; and this every one in the closet of their own hearts,* come to understand. We read in the book of Revelation, what our Lord Jesus Christ appointed John to write to the seven churches in Asia, that he had few things against some, and many things against others.

*Notice! Crisp, who dwelt in the kingdom as he spoke this, has identified the *closet* or *inner room* of Matthew 6:6 as within our hearts.

Now what is the design of our meeting when we are assembled together, is, that we may know what the mind and judgment of God is, concerning ourselves. How shall we know that, unless we ask him, and come to wait upon him, and inquire at the oracle of counsel, that God has appointed in the bosom of every man? For he signifies his mind unto the children of men, by that light and grace which Jesus Christ has planted in them, he has enlightened every man that comes into the world, with an undeceiving light, and he has ministered of his truth and grace to every man; though the man is bad and untrue, and in the dark, and there is darkness in him, yet the light shines in darkness. The man may be a false man, yet there is true knowledge

in him if this man hearkens to the voice of truth, when the God of truth signifies what his mind and judgment is concerning him, and his present state.

So that there is an opportunity offered, and if a man believes the word of truth, which is administered to his own mind, he cannot say such a man has deceived him, for it is truth itself which is signified to him what he believes. For the truth is the object of his faith, and he believes it to have come from himself; he believes that while he remains wicked in his unrenewed state, he is out of the covenant of God, and in the high road to destruction if he does not get out of it, return to God, and mind his duty. He believes this, and he believes the truth. It has been so with many, it has been so with us all; this is the first kind of faith and belief that we ever receive; for when truth signifies to us our fallen state, our alienated state, when truth signifies and discovers to us the partition of sin and iniquity which we have built up, by which the glory and favor of God has been hidden from the soul, we believed this to be true. We would have been looked upon as heirs of God's kingdom, yet when we have come to listen to truth, we find that we are children of the devil and do his works; shall a man believe this after he has been forty years a professor of Christianity? If a man believes truth, there is no danger in believing it, though it is his own destruction that is threatened.

Now the great thing that I would have ushered into the hearts of men, is, that they may believe the truth for truth's sake. If men will believe the truth, they must believe many things against themselves, which they are not [readily] willing to believe; but said Christ, no man can be my scholar or my disciple unless he denies himself. I must deny myself, my pretensions to Christianity, my supposed sainthood, and title to the kingdom of God. Now if I would be convinced that I am a wicked man, a profane man, one who does not live as becomes the gospel, I must believe truth, the voice of truth being of infallible certainty; it is signified divinely, by the immortal word that cannot deceive us. This ought to be the reason why people should believe the testimony of it, though it is against themselves. Those who do so,

presently come to find the effects of it, for they were in their sins and trespasses before, and so still are. They were before in a kind of liberty, in a kind of ease and indulgence of themselves, and still their sin remains in them, and they remain in it; but they are now under a sense of sorrow, under a weight, under a burden, under an oppression, which signifies they are alive, and quickened for (if you make an outward comparison) they do not remain senseless and dead; now whatever load you will upon a dead man, he will neither groan, nor grumble at it; but if he comes again to life, he cries take off the burden, the weight and oppression, that lies heavy upon me.

This is the difference between being dead in sins and trespasses, and being brought to life and sense again; this word of life that comes from the mouth of God, begets a sense in everyone that receives it; it is of great service and use, so all people to be acquainted with it, who desire to be heirs of life eternal, who desire to be inheritors of the kingdom of God. But how should they come by it? They think by this and the other duty, and temporary performance, to obtain it; no, but if they will have life, they must have it from the God of life that created them; he must create them again to good works. They can have it but by one way; all must be brought to it that way. It cannot be done by hearing a man preach, unless the spirit supplies the words preached with the word of God; there is no possibility of being quickened, and necessity binds me to hearken and have regard to that one means. *Now I say to you*, said Christ, speaking of people's way of living to eternity, *man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God*; now when we come to understand this text, as spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ, we did conclude there was a possibility of understanding and hearing that inward voice and word of truth in our own hearts, that God did speak to us by his Son, Jesus Christ, who enlightened us. Hereupon meetings were appointed at first, that the word should Minister life in them, and life to those who attend them; and to this day our meetings are appointed for this purpose, that we may have the manifestation of life and virtue, from Christ, the fountain of life and virtue,

by whom we were to be quickened and strengthened, and by whom *those who are dead in sins and trespasses were quickened*.

Therefore I would have everyone always to have a reverence to the word of life, that speaks in themselves; for, if we speak as we are *moved by the Spirit of God*, and utter those things by verbal testimony, which God has made known to us; if you have not an oracle in your bosoms, if you do not at the same time perceive an echo of truth in your own souls, this will do you no good, but be an empty sound which will pass away again; but the mind that is serious and settled, in *waiting upon God* with an earnest desire, that it may receive benefit in going to this and the other meeting; such a one will say, "I pray God bless this opportunity to me, that so I may receive benefit to my soul." Where people meet in this manner, they have not only an administration of doctrine from without, from this and the other instrument, but they have a ministration of the word of God in themselves, by which a man lives.

Let us not be led and hurried away with the grand error of the times, the great error of this age, and of the ages past, that there is no possibility for people to understand and *hear this voice of God, this inward voice*. There are, they say, no direct from God teachings now days, no inspirations now days; they might as well say that there are no conversions now days. I will prove it from the holy scriptures, that there is no man in this age, who is likely to be converted to God, or redeemed from his iniquity, and brought to the knowledge of his Maker, unless he has it by *the inward working of the eternal God*. Not by man's preaching and instruction, nor by reading all the good sermons that ever were preached, without the co-operation of the holy sanctifying Spirit, which begets life in those who believe; and if these men say none can be converted, then we must all go headlong to hell, even they and all.

[In the 21st Century, we hear many sects claim that prophecy and revelation have ceased and that the Bible is the sole way to learn

of God; and they say this without a shred of scripture to back up their claim. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever; there was revelation yesterday, there is revelation today, and there will be revelation forever. The scripture says that what is to be known of God is revealed within man, as God has shown them. Rom 1:19. Scripture says the Son, and God, are revealed by the son. Scripture says there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Mat 10:26. The ministers who deny revelation and prophecy are spiritually deaf and spiritually blind, in captivity, because they have led others into captivity. They want to convince you that you must limit yourself to scripture, and particularly to the limited subset of scriptures they consider true; that way they can control you. For if you start listening to God, they lose their control; you will quickly see **they are the false prophets** that Jesus said would come, whom the apostles saw had gone out from them as antichrists into the world, and who now the whole world follows, as the Book of Revelation predicted.

Jesus said: learn of me; all men will be taught of God; the Holy Spirit will teach you all things; the Spirit of Truth will lead you into all truth. Jesus did not lie and he still teaches.]

[The blind guides can say] Those Quakers may say what they will, [but] there is no immediate teaching now days, no man can know the mind of God, nor understand the scriptures; none can open them to you.

But, blessed be God, this darkness is removed; this veil is gone over and taken away, the brightness of the glory of the gospel has expelled this darkness, and thousands now days do not only hear the minister reprove them, but they hear a voice within that reproves them for iniquity, and they find and feel a judgment and tribunal within themselves, and that God has an direct way of counseling and instructing them if they will listen to him.

You who are under any sense of this, who have come to such an inward sense of the operation of the word of God, if you have heard it reprove you, exhort you, judge you and condemn you, consider that this word proceeded out of the mouth of God, and not out of the mouth of any man. You hear the sentence of God upon you in your own consciences. From where does it come? This is out of the mouth of God. Every word that comes out of the mouth of God, administers life, sense and conviction; and you feel it and receive it, and you may have a more familiar acquaintance with it. There is not a day or hour that passes over your heads nor mine, but if we attend to this inward voice, we may know what it speaks to us, by its counsels, doctrines, reproofs, convictions and illuminations; for *the Spirit speaks expressly*, with an express message to the spirit of man. If a man is under a temptation to tell a lie, and he comes to a little pause or question, whether he shall tell it or not; if he listens to this inward word, he will not pause long about it because such a sentence will arise in him, as that did in Joseph, saying *how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?* How can I speak a lie, tell a lie, when in so doing I sin against God? Here is a sentence of truth; will you receive it or not? “No,” you say, “I will venture to tell a lie;” then you shall come into the rank of those who do *despite to the Spirit of grace and trample under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing*. What sentence such shall have at the latter end, you may read at large in the holy scriptures.

Now there is a great necessity that everyone be persuaded to *hearken to this voice*, not only at a meeting, but on all occasions they have in the world. I hope I speak to many serious and religious persons who are inquiring about their immortal souls as to what may be best for their souls, whether it is better to go on in wickedness, or stop; and who resolve and say, “I would be glad to leave my sins as well as you, if I had power, and to live a holy life.” As for the lack of power, (that you do not have power), I am not surprised. For until you come to an exercise of faith, in what has empowered the people of God, in all ages, I do not wonder that you have no power. You say, “I am so

weak that I am overcome before I am aware; the devil is so subtle and cunning with his temptations, that I am surprised and snatched into temptations, and overcome with evil before I am aware." He is like *a roaring lion, going about continually, seeking whom he may devour*. But whom can he devour? Can he devour those who hearken and submit to the word of God? If he could, then none could escape him; if the devil could pluck out of God's hands, then nobody would go to Heaven, nor never shall, if he [the devil] has power.

Where the devil finds any in their own hands, as suppose a religious person of this and the other religion, who never experienced anything of this power of God, but trusts to his duties and performances, this man is in his own hand; now the tempter has power over a person like this. He can make him cheat his neighbor, and lead him into drunkenness and uncleanness sometimes, and into the greatest abominations; but if a man comes into the exercise of faith and dependence upon God, and has left trusting in himself and has faith, he will say: "I see I cannot preserve myself from sin. I see a necessity of putting my trust in the Lord, and of waiting upon God's power to keep me." If the tempter comes to such a one, he cannot prevail, all the devils in hell cannot stir him one jot; the devil may tempt him, but he stands in the power of faith; he knows his name, and says, *get you behind me Satan*; when the devil comes before him, and lays a temptation before him, he casts it behind him; if the devil rises up against him, he can chain him down, he can say in the name of the Lord, *get you behind me Satan*.

This is the reason why many are tempted, and not overtaken, and why many are tempted to sin and not overcome; how it happens that we do not do everything that we are tempted to do.

There is something that keeps us; the devil is not so bad to tempt, but we are as bad in our own inclinations to yield to him; *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?* There is more wickedness in it, than can be uttered. If people are tempted and not

overcome, something must preserve them; if there is something that preserves a man from any evil, it can preserve him from all evil.

The reason why some people are led into temptation sometimes, and resist it, is because sometimes the temptation does not suit their inclination; sometimes the reputation lies in the way, sometimes one thing, sometimes another. But when a thing they are tempted to, suits their profit and pleasure, then away with the fear of God, and nothing shall hinder them; I will have my pleasure.

But those who understand the keeper of Israel, and come to know his power lying in their hearts, these always bring their deeds and attitudes before him, and they come to him for a verdict and judgment, and they ask, does this tend to the honor or dishonor of God? Is it good or evil? The oracle of God in your heart says, "do not do it, it is evil, you will kindle the indignation of the Lord against you; what will it profit you to gain the whole world and lose your own soul? Or what will you give in exchange for your soul?" Here is one at hand that can give counsel to all of us at all times; this is he that we must advance; our labor and work upon the stage of this world, among the sons and daughters of men, is to advance the virtue and great authority of the mighty Counselor, Christ Jesus; we do say and affirm, in the name of God, that the same light by which God has brought us out of darkness into his marvelous light, and from the power of the devil into the kingdom of his dear Son; the same power is extended to you, that you may be sanctified and saved from your sins.

One sect will say, my tenets are so and so, and our ordinances are so and so, will you come over to us? You shall be a member of our church.

Our duty is to come over to the grace of God that shines in our hearts, now we are witnesses for God, that *he does not desire the death of those who die, but rather that they would turn and live*, for his word is gone forth, and his light shines, and his glory is risen upon the nations, that those who inhabit

the earth may fear him. *Fear God, and give glory to his name, for the hour of his judgment is come.* Do you know that to be true? That you may not be deluded, you shall certainly know that the hour of God's judgment has come.

Thus when any one allows himself to be led away with the evil one, when he feels after that a remorse upon his own heart, he finds a secret judgment and tribunal let up in his own bosom, against whoredom, lying, drunkenness, fraud and other sins; he knows he has done amiss. He cannot go to a confessor who will take off and remove the guilt from his conscience. He has offended the majesty of the great God, and God has signified it to him; has not judgment come, and has not God set it up in his own heart? If through custom in sin you lose the sense of his judgment, it is not because God has determined to take advantage against you, but because you acted against yourself, and came to be past feeling. You were once under a sense of these things, and you were not past feeling. If you at any time told your parents a lie, you had remorse; but now you can tell a lie, and not feel it. You are past feeling; whose fault is this? The Lord would have brought you to love the truth, but you chose lying; if you perish, your blood will be upon your own head, the Lord is clear from it.

Those who receive the word of God have life. For man lives not by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. You are sensible of God's speaking this word to you. I exhort you all in the love of God, that you would prize this manner of speaking, and look upon it as the greatest mercy that you have ever enjoyed, that God has not given up speaking to you, and that your conscience has not up speaking to you, and that the Spirit of the Lord does still *strive with you; he will not always strive*; you may be of that sort of fools before you die, that *make a mock of sin* and be *as trees twice dead, and plucked up by the roots*. You that are sensible of *this inward voice*, prize it above all your mercies; health and wealth, and all other mercies, are not worthy to be compared to this voice of God speaking in you. Those who prize this will never complain for lack of power; they will find power in it; all the power in Heaven and Earth is

contained in this truth that shines to you. Those who come to be exercised in this word, receive power from God, for God gives it to them; he gives them power by degrees, (from being sons of Belial, sons of the devil) power *to become sons of God, even to as many as believe in his name*. Those who receive this truth, grow sensitive to a lie or a vain word; they find themselves grown tender, feeling, and sensitive. Here is a token that the God of life is quickening them; I am now tender of speaking a lie to my neighbor; I *will not do that thing to another, that I would not have another do to me*. When you come to a tender state, which is far better than a hard-hearted state, you will have an evidence in yourselves, that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

Blessed are those who God has brought into acquaintance with his word; of all nations and people upon the earth, they are a blessed people. Although there are manifold blessings that reach indifferently to all, *the sun shines, and the rain falls on the evil and the good and on the just and unjust*. Yet this is a blessing that can only make the soul happy, that a discourse between it and its Maker is open; that there is an open discourse for the Lord to hear a man cry, and he to receive his word. All those whom God has brought into covenant with himself by Christ, have been made sensible of this discourse and way of God's speaking to his people, which he spoke to them by in former days. Take heed that this way is not stopped up; you know by what it was opened, and what will stop it up again; when you were in much trouble and grief, you cried to the Lord, and he delivered you. But if I regard iniquity in my heart, *said David, the Lord will not hear me*. You cried to the Lord again, it may be, and he did not answer you; and the Lord cried to you and you did not answer him, but hearkened to your lusts.

Yet the Lord by his long-suffering and patience has won upon a remnant, and has brought them over to believe and trust in his power, to remove out of the way what hindered the relationship between God and their souls. What a great stir was there in removing out of the way the pride, corruption, enmity, looseness, wantonness, and an abundance more of evil things that

made the soul like a wilderness? What hacking and burning up was there? God's word, like a hammer, and like a fire, did break up and burn up these things; and the same word of God, like a sword, did cut down those sins and lusts which prevailed over you before. By this means God has opened a way for you, to have access to him, and for his word to have access to you. When you come to the Lord in this way, you know you live by this word, and if you hear the word of the Lord spoken immediately to you, your joy and consolation increases, and you have sweet communion and fellowship with God and Christ, and with one another, by this covenant of life. How did you come into it? It was by removing a great deal of rubbish out of the way. If you should let this rubbish grow up again, which kept you from the joy of the Holy Ghost, will it not do it again? If your pride, corruption, enmity, prejudice, looseness and wantonness, if these are allowed to grow up in any of you, they will do as they did before, they will separate you from the Lord and from one another. As the truth brought you to God and this heavenly fellowship with him, so if a wrathful mind and wanton spirit get up again, it will separate you from God, and scatter you from one another, then you will live in the outward life, and die to the inward one and perish. Remember you were told so.

* [From the Word of the Lord within:

- "When the light shows you something to do, every act of disobedience has to be carried away by an act of obedience."
- "Whatever you overcome and go back into is far harder the second time to overcome."]

Everyone that goes from this living word, and allows anything to arise of the old nature, so much as that rises, so much will your way of relation with God be stopped; sometimes men cry to God, but they have a bar in their way; and they come for comfort to the throne of grace, but they cannot receive those ministrations of joy and peace, which they desire; their foolish hearts are darkened, and their minds blinded, and they will go on in darkness, and are

left out of the holy covenant which God has called his people to.

You whom God has engaged to be his, by the operation of his power, O live in a holy fear and watchfulness; and know this, that set your understandings and gifts be what they will, you have nothing but what is given you, and what God has given you, he can take away. You have decked yourself with my flax, and my wool, and with my silver and gold, and other ornaments, and followed your lovers; therefore will I take them away from you and strip you of all that you glory in. Those who forget God, of whom they had these things, that forget their brokenness of heart, and the subjection of their spirits to God; if they forget this, let them know, that let their parts be what they will, they will certainly wither, and their inward life will fail. You who have regard to your own souls, and desire heartily, at this time, to be quickened, and find that the Lord has removed your deadness, and quickened and raised you to such a degree and measure of life, that you can say, "I find communion with God, and fellowship with my friends and brethren in that one eternal life;"* I pray God you may continue in it long, and lay down your heads in this blessed, heavenly life. Now that you may so do, keep yourselves low and humble, and in the fear of God, and keep your ears always open to his word, and live as becomes those who are born again and begotten of God, and are brought to partake of the divine life. Let temptations surround you, that life will preserve you; he who never sinned is with you, to keep you from sin; and he that never deceived any, will keep you from being deceived. To his counsel and conduct, and to his divine care and protection, I now commit you.

* [The early Quakers assembled to wait in humble silence for the Lord, and in that fleshly silence those mature enough in Spirit worshiped God with his Spirit leading their silent words and praise. The only audible words spoken were those commanded by the Lord; the only audible singing was commanded by the Lord. **The only interaction of the members was not in fleshly, audible words, but was in the Spirit, where the**

members came to know one another without words; instead through silent, unspoken communication in the Spirit. These meetings were often attended with the visible presence of the Lord, (seen and heard with the eyes and ears of the heart), ministering to them all; and that presence left the members greatly refreshed.

George Fox spoke further of the true fellowship in the below excerpt from Letter 149, a fellowship *in the Spirit and light* that John also referenced: That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you may also have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ....But **if we *walk in the light as he is in the light*, we have fellowship with one another**, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. ¹ John 1:7. (From the Word of the Lord within: "Walking in the light is to be guided through life by God; walking in darkness is making your own decisions as to what to do and say.")

All Friends everywhere,

Meet together, and in the measure of God's spirit wait,

that with it all your minds may be guided up to God, to receive wisdom from God.

That you may all come to know how you may walk up to him in his wisdom.

That it may be justified of you, and you in it preserved up to God, and be glorified.

And Friends meet together, and know one another in that which is eternal, which was before the world was.

For knowing one another only in the letter

and flesh,
differs you little from the beasts of the field;
for what they know they know naturally.
But all knowing one another in the light which
was before the world was,
this differs you from the beasts of the field,
and from the world's knowledge,
and brings you to know one another in the
elect seed which was before the world was.

In a letter to newly convinced believers, Francis Howgill gives us
a little more understanding of *fellowship in the spirit* vs.
fellowship in the flesh:

And wait for discerning, to have salt in yourselves, to
know and savor one another in the spirit, and
operation, and working of it; that being sensible, and
feeling one another's conditions in the spirit, you may
speak to the informing of one another, to the building
up on one another, in the precious faith. But be slow
to speak, and swift to hear; and **do not feed each
other's sensual wisdom, which is the serpent's
seat. For words without knowledge darken
counsel, and betray simplicity.**

Some people want human companionship. Few seek God only,
treasuring His words, teachings, love, convictions, and
encouragements, however scant the bread from heaven may be
when compared with Babylon's boundless TV, books, radio,
music, and meetings. Until you are specifically told to meet with
others, keep to yourselves.]



Text in Light Blue or **Bold Light Blue** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

Sermon XXI

The Necessity of a Holy life and Conduct

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at St. Martin's-Le-Grand, March 26, 1687

Here Crisp explains to a Quaker assembly that too many of them had not progressed spiritually to the baptism of fire and death, with the resurrection of Christ within them following. He cries that they are too content with an outward expression of their belief, too content in going to meetings, too complacent with having heard the Voice of the Lord — thus without possessing the kingdom and fear of their ultimate destiny. He rather urges them to take up the pain and reproach of the inward cross of self-denial that leads to the everlasting peace and confidence of true righteousness and holiness.

And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called *The way of holiness*.

The unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for the redeemed.

Isa 35:8

But as he who has called you is holy, so you be holy in all manner of conduct;

1 Pet 1:15

**Therefore having these promises, dearly beloved,
let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and
spirit,
perfecting holiness in the fear of God.**

2 Cor 7:1

For God has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness.

1 Thes 4:7

**Pursue peace and holiness [consecration, sanctification],
without which no one will see the Lord.**

Heb 12:14

Oh how happy are those who have bread in their own houses! And who can draw water out of their own wells! These have a blessed glorious dwelling-place, these are the children for which their Father provides. All the divine treasures and the riches of heavenly things are laid up for them. Oh that all could see this blessed state, and were possessors of it! That their minds might not wander any more; that people might not be scattered in their thoughts; that when they meet together, they might have their expectations entirely from that God whom they profess to worship. Lord you have said that you will teach your people yourself. Here a cry goes up to the Lord, and their expectations through faith pitched upon God. They never meet in vain, but a well springs up, and the water of life comes to them, by which they meet with divine refreshments. For, you know, the promise that our Lord made to his disciples, He that drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst again. Why will one drinking serve? Because I have *tasted* of the living water that the Lord Christ gives me; will that serve? No, but instead of a taste, he gives me a substantial river; that is the reason why I shall thirst no more, it shall be in me a well of living water, springing up to everlasting life. Blessed are the witnesses of it. These are those who are satisfied concerning religion and doctrine; they are satisfied concerning worship;

they are looking after no new things. When they meet together, they meet in the name of the Lord, and they have their eyes to him, who is a fountain, and they discern a brightness and a glory that is unspeakable.* The glory that is describable, that appears many times through interim experiences, will not satisfy them. There is something beyond that, which must satisfy; this will never do it; people will never be satisfied with hearing, nor never satisfied with seeing, till they come to hear and see what is unutterable, and then they are satisfied. Christ had preached many sermons in the hearing of his disciples, and there were a great many who said, that there was never a man who spoke like him, preached like him. Yet one of those who was nearest to him, and most acquainted and intimate with him, after some years of meeting and hearing of his sermons, cries out, "show us the Father, and it will satisfy us."

*[*Unspeakable* and *unutterable* are not only forbidden disclosures, but also are incapable of description through words. Words cannot describe the dimension of God, for our vocabulary is limited to the experiences of earth's lower dimension.]

My friends, this comes near to many of your states. Many of you have heard long, and have heard the spoken voice of the Lord, what could be uttered, what could be spoken forth, by the demonstration of the Holy Ghost, by those who have received of the Father. This you have heard long, and yet there are many of you, who if you come to a serious search, you will find a lack; you will find still that you have not that satisfaction that puts you beyond doubt, beyond fear. There is something that stands in the way, that hinders your enjoyment of the unspeakable glory of the unspeakable living word; and this will never be removed, but by your innocent submission to the work of the power of God in your own hearts, so that you may not only be believers, but come to be really baptized, [by fire with the baptism of death] and then all is out of doubt; for our Lord said, he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. He does not say, he *may* be saved, but, *he shall be saved*.

[Crisp speaks of the **one baptism**; the baptism of the Holy Spirit with unquenchable fire that burns up the chaff (sin) after purging the floor (cleansing your heart), and the wheat (the newly created man) has been gathered in the garner. This is the baptism that destroys the residual spirit of Satan that still lives in you, though at that time, greatly diminished in power by the Lord's grace already; he destroys the man of sin with the brightness of his coming, with the spirit (sword) of his mouth, and bruises the head of Satan under **your** feet.]

Woeful experience has told us in our days, that a great many have believed the truth, and yet they are never likely to be saved. They have made shipwreck of their faith; but if they had been baptized [with fire], if they would have endured the baptism, if they would have been buried with Christ in baptism, they should have been saved every one of them. And now there are a great many who remain in the belief of the truth, and yet they are not baptized. They are not dead, not buried, despite the fact that they have received like precious faith with us; that faith which is of the operation of God, and that is like precious in its nature to all who receive it, and would work the same effect in all too, if it were not obstructed. But despite the fact that they have received faith towards the saving of their souls, yet their souls are captives; their souls are subject to lusts, and pleasures, and vanities, and to empty and foolish things, and to passions and corruptions, after they have received faith.

For if you take one who is a believer of truth and is overtaken with his lust, and passions, and corruptions, he will commonly own that he believes the contrary; he believes that these things should not be, that it ought to be otherwise. This is the sign of truth against untruth. If it should be otherwise, why is it thus then? Why does he find a life to spring up in what is corruptible that is always contrary to the life of God and at enmity with it? What shall I do? I believe the truth. I know truth is a holy thing, and that it

leads all who submit to it to a holy life; but there is this and that unholy thing, this and that corrupt thing that remains, what shall I do?

It is an evident demonstration that you lack the baptism of him in whom you believe. You have believed in Christ Jesus that comes after John, and was before him; and now having believed in him, you lack being baptized by him. For the lack of the baptism of fire, the pollution and corruption that had grown up in your nature in the time of your alienation still prevails upon you, contrary to your faith. There is no coming to obtain this baptism, but by sinking down into what will slay you, what will kill you. But there is such a shifting to save one's life, there are so many twistings and twinings of people to save their lives, that at last they lose them. But no one can ever find life that is eternal, but those who are willing to be given up to the dead, and submit to this baptism — that is, by the Holy Ghost and by fire. Only such come to life; they come to the resurrection. For you never knew any that died this death but that they rose again; it is as impossible for death to hold any one down that is buried in this baptism, as it was impossible to hold Christ down, when he was in the grave. The same power that brought again our Lord Christ from the dead, the same power it is that quickens us, while we remain in these mortal bodies, after we have sustained this death and crucifixion.

But who can believe this saying? For this is a hard saying, who can hear it? Is it not enough that I am a believer, which makes me a friend, and entitles me to a community among you, and as long as I hold the truth, and profess the truth, I am looked upon as one of your society? This is very true, this does entitle people unto the outward privileges of the church of Christ; but there is another inner court, that lies under the angel's reed, the measuring-reed, that is to be measured, the temple is measured, and every worshipper in the temple is measured; there was an outward court, that was for representing the church of God in general, from the particular; the outward court was not measured, that the gentiles might come in; the un-baptized people, who were never regenerated, might come as far as the outward

court, but this did not entitle them to the privileges of the house of God, nor to any worship or sacrifice that was accepted upon God's altar.

[All people who don't find holiness in this life "shall be punished with **everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power**;" 2 The 1:9 Notice he does **not** say destruction of life or torture forever, just forever from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. The heavenly worshipers in the temple are in the inner court, that has been measured, along with every worshiper in it, having been measured, (a finite number). These have been purified in their earthly life, crucified on the inward cross of self-denial, to have a circumcised heart and therefore be spiritual Jews. Those who were not purified on earth, the uncircumcised-in-heart, spiritual gentiles are in the outer court, without measure, (infinite). But, they must pass through the lake of fire (Hell) before arriving in the outer court. (See [Is There Hope for All](#), for more detail). You either pass through the purifying, circumcising, unquenchable fire of baptism while on earth, or pass through the purifying, unquenchable lake of fire in the next life. And after they arrive in the outer court, they will have a forever regret they did not seize the opportunity of their life on earth to attain the rewards of purity, union, and the Kingdom of Heaven; those living in the temple are cell-to-cell joined with Christ, worshiping God and beholding the glory of God and his power, with all the undefined pleasures and privileges alluded to in the Bible.]

It concerns you and me (my friends) to be serious about matters of this moment and importance, and not spend your days, and, as it were spoken by rote, under an airy profession, (though of truth itself), without considering what progress you have made, what benefit you have obtained, and whether you have come not only to the shadow of good things to come, but to the very substance of the heavenly things. For the comers to the

outward worship could never with those sacrifices they offered be made perfect; the comers thereunto were not made perfect as to the things pertaining to the conscience, speaking there of the outward worship, Heb 10:1. But coming to the heavenly things, of which the other were but a shadow; they made people perfect, as to the conscience, and brought them to salvation. The apostle alludes to this baptism, for he speaks in a figure of the eight persons that were saved in Noah's ark. Then he brings down the allegory to Christian baptism, not only the baptism of John, the forerunner of Christ, that preached of Christ, but to the Christian baptism itself. By the like figure of which baptism now saves us, said the apostle, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience. What does he mean by baptism saving us? He means, the answer of a good conscience towards God, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead. So that Christian baptism did bring along with it the cleansing and putting away of all sin out of the conscience, that might bring them under doubts and scruples; and then there is an arising of Jesus, the Savior in the conscience, the mediator that brought them to answer for them in the sight of God. If people are conscious of sin and do restrain sin, this does not yet cleanse the conscience; for there still remains a conscience of sin. It is not restraining our sin that makes our atonement with God, or that expiates our guilt, or does away the guilt of the sins that we have committed. No, there must be a forsaking and an avoidance of sin by the virtue and power of the Spirit, by which we are enabled, not only to avoid sin, but are guided and directed to the mediator, whose blood alone reconciles us to God, and cleanses us from all sin. If I should never commit a sin for the rest of my life, this alone will not give me the answer of a good conscience in the sight of God. For there remains the guilt of sin committed in the days of unbelief, which is a bar and hindrance that none can approach the Holy God but in the atonement and salvation that comes by Jesus Christ. For all that believe and obey the gospel are accepted in Christ, and upon the account of Christ's precious blood, that cleanses us from all sin and unrighteousness. Whom does it cleanse? Only those who forsake their sins, and by his power are brought to a holy life. They by the virtue of his power, and the cleansing of his blood, come to have

their former sins removed from them, as far as the east is from the west.

But what is this to them that remain in their sins? What is this to them that are not baptized? For the dead that have not put off the old man, nor put on the new man, but have only put on the name and profession of Christ, and put on the outside of him, his garment, but have not put him on. They are not created again in Christ Jesus unto good works, that they might walk in them? No wonder there remains a conscience of sin in them, there is a bar that hinders them from the sight of the glory of God, and from real and true satisfaction, concerning their atonement and reconciliation with God, and this hinders them from the enjoyment of that peace that passes understanding. This is no surprise because they have not come to this baptism that brings the answer of a good conscience in the sight of God; they have not risen with Christ; how should they? for they were not buried with him, Rom 6:3. Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? so as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life; here is a change figured out between them that had partaken of the spiritual baptism, and were come again to the participation of life in the resurrection of Jesus Christ and those who were not baptized.

So it is now with every one that comes to believe the truth, and make a profession of it. There is a way cast up, and there is a door opened for salvation; but the grand question that everyone ought to inquire about and put to themselves is: What progress they have made this way? Whether they are baptized yet or not? Whether they have put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man and the new man's deeds, which are righteousness and holiness? Those who find that, though they are believers, they are short of this. They also find that their shortcoming is their hindrance, their shortcoming in not coming up to the pattern that has been shown to them. This is their hindrance, so that they do not enjoy the things spoken here of the being under this sense, and really sitting under this sense in a meeting. Even though there should be no man speaking to them

outwardly, yet having come to this faith, and made partakers of this baptism, people would find *in their own bosoms* the hidden word of life ministering to their condition. They would have enough; there would not be a famine of the word unto them, nor would they need to be in expectation of going out to this or the other instrument. They would be satisfied when they are met together with the presence of the Lord, that the Lord is in the midst of them, ministering them the word of life, in his operating and working, speaking in a tongue that every one can understand , speaking with a kind of voice and language, that every one may understand his own state and condition. This is the way that God brought up people from the beginning, to the knowledge of heavenly things, and opening of the mysteries of salvation. We had it not from men, but from Jesus our Lord. He was our great minister; we waited upon him, and trusted in him, and he taught us himself. He has ministered to us at our silent and quiet waiting upon him those things that were convenient for us. We might well say, He gave us our food in due Season. He has not only given strong meat unto men, but has ministered of the sincere milk of his word unto babes, that lived in sincerity and self-denial, loving God above all things; and he taught and conducted us in our way, this way of simplicity, until our understandings came to be opened, until our souls came to be prepared to receive the mysteries of his kingdom.

In those days there were some that started up in knowledge, and that built their nests on high, and took flax and wool, and silver and gold, and decked themselves with them; but the Lord found them out, and brought them down, and took the crown from their head, and clothed them with dishonor. So God does from age to age, his judgment will begin at his own house. If you wish to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, then grow in humility and self-denial, and keep a constant watch upon your hearts. Examine your hearts, and commune with yourselves upon your beds, and be still. Take heed lest you sin against the Lord, and provoke him. There were some that provoked the Lord of old, and they committed two great evils. What are they? They have gone away and

forsaken the fountain of living water; as much as to say, they do not have the dependence upon an invisible power, as they ought to have. For I am a living fountain, and it is by an invisible power that I am able to counsel and teach, direct, and purify and open their understanding; but they have forsaken me, that is one great evil; and the other is, they would not be without some small thing. They have forsaken the Lord, and they would have some small thing instead of God. They have dug to themselves broken cisterns, that will hold no water. And how many in this age have committed these two great evils?

My friends, examine yourselves; are there not many that have been guilty of these two great evils? They do not keep their close dependence, trust and reliance upon the invisible power of God, as they profess they ought to do, but are hurried away from it; some by the love of the world, some by lusts and pleasures, some by passions, and others by worldly interests, are drawn away from the power, to do and say what the power is against. Is not this a forsaking of the Lord, the living fountain? What do they do then? Are they not for this and that, and the other man? For hearing this and the other man's word, and digging to themselves broken cisterns? Have they not put their trust and confidence in going to meetings, in commending this and the other way? Have they not put their trust in their outward profession, when it ministers nothing to their souls, so that they secretly wither for all this? If you had all the men and angels that were ever sent of God, appointed to preach to you, that could not minister life to you, unless there is that faith that stands in the power of God. The faith that stands in any man's words, that will not overcome your lusts; but the faith that stands in the power purifies the heart, it will not allow any unclean thing there. As for preaching, let a man preach against this and the other lust and corruption. There it will remain for all his preaching, unless men know God's power and life in which there is righteousness; for words and knowledge, and sight and speculation, will never give people victory over their sins.

Therefore you know, everyone who is settled must be settled where the foundation of religion is. It is not coming to meetings, and owning this and

the other doctrine which is the foundation of our religion. God has revealed his power to every one of us. God has not given his Spirit to preachers and prophets only, for then there would be a famine of the word, as was in *Israel, The priest's lips preserved knowledge*. If you took away the priest, you took away their knowledge. The prophets had the word of God, and they only spoke the word of God. If the prophet was taken away, then the word of God was taken away. The Lord threatened to send a famine among them, they grieved and vexed, and killed and destroyed the priests and prophets; therefore said the Lord, I will send a famine among you, not of bread, but of the word, and they shall go from city to city, and inquire for the word of the Lord.

Thus it was in the Jewish church; if there was a prophet they would go 30, 40, or 100 miles to him who had the word of the Lord. They shall go from city to city to inquire for the word of the Lord. But blessed be God, we have come to another day; for **now the word of the Lord is manifested in the hearts of all that believe**. They know the word. I do not say all that believe do preach the word, or ought to preach, but the word preaches to them; they are not as broken cisterns that can hold no water. When they find the word and hear it, they speak it presently what is ministered to their own condition, that they tell to other people. When people come to the blessing of this dispensation that God's word reveals in their hearts, they then know what the significance of it is, they understand the doctrine of it; the doctrine preaches holiness to them, not that they should preach holiness and yet remain unholy; not that they should preach humility, and yet remain proud. It preaches holiness, humility and singleness of heart to a remnant, that like good scholars and disciples learn the lessons and doctrine of the word of God.

Now when you have learned them well, and have come to see the effect of the word, and bring forth the deeds and works which are the fruits of holiness, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and with humility known and witnessed in Christ Jesus, and are not only meek in show, but meek and

low in heart. When people come to be meek and lowly, and of a clear conscience, purged from all dead works to serve the living God; then if the Lord gives them a word of exhortation, of doctrine or counsel it is very welcome, and it has a savor through the blessing of God, and by it they come to be built up in their most holy faith. This word is brought forth in holiness and righteousness in their lives, and shows itself in a life of holiness. Then you will shine in your conduct with everyone, so that they may see you are such a man or woman as has been with Jesus, and learned of Jesus, and receives a word engrafted. When you receive the word into your heart, there is the engrafting of it. If it has no root there, then, said Christ, my word does not abide in you. If you feel something of this invisible word in your hearts, it brings you to a resolution to serve God, and to keep yourselves from sin, and to answer the profession which you make of God. This is the effect of the word of God, if it does abide in you. Does it abide? You shall know in a little while or tomorrow, so soon as a temptation comes to stir you up to pride or passion, to fraud or deceit, then you will see whether the word abides: If it abides, you sin not.

This is scripture, a certain foundation doctrine, that may be as safely preached as any doctrine. If the word abides in you, you sin not. What of that? Let the word go, and you will sin, whenever you are tempted to it. I write to you young men, because you have overcome the wicked one, you are strong and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one. We shall see as soon as temptation meets with you, whether the word abides in you. If it abides, you will not sin, but resist the tempter. Set your foot upon the temptation, and go over it, and you will have the dominion; and this will make you a free man or woman, and you will stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made you free. The apostle supposes them free, and that they have gotten dominion; then stand fast, said he, in the liberty with which Christ has made you free. It is a liberty not of lust and sin, but a liberty of the soul; the soul now is not at the devil's will and call.

For it is a shame to the doctrine of Christianity, that we profess things, and

yet deny them in practice. We profess that there is a power in Christ to keep and preserve us out of sin, and we profess to believe that this power is communicated to them who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for their preservation; that is, he will not withhold it from them. We profess these things in the face of the whole world; and yet when the devil calls one man to covetousness, and another to defraud his neighbor, and another to defile himself, he is drawn away by it. What hypocrisy is here, to profess this, and act the contrary? I do not wonder that those who profess they cannot live a day without sin, that they should fall; but those who profess to believe there is power enough in Christ, and that it is offered to them; for them to live in sin and yield to temptation, this is horrid wickedness. Those who are of an upright single mind, would die before they would sin, knowing that God is Almighty and gracious, and willing to bestow his power and wisdom, and grace upon them that ask it; they would die rather than sin against God presumptuously. Let it cost me my goods, my estate, my liberty, or my life, how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? They love God above all; you never heard them complain that they lacked power, for the Lord is at their right hand, and they shall not be moved. They cannot fall; though they are tempted, they will not fall into temptation. They have power when they see the devil before them, to put him behind them; the nobility of their extract, of their new birth and regeneration puts such a temper and disposition into their souls, that they scorn to be at the devil's command, as if they were his children.

Oh! it is a noble and honorable thing to be a child of God, a very high dignity to be in such an honorable relation to God, and to have a right to the heavenly mansions, to sit down in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. I wish to God you were all ready for it, that you had the wedding garment on, that you might not be bound hand and foot, and cast into utter darkness. What is the reason that you do not sit down in this heavenly frame and temper, and draw the waters of salvation out of your own souls? Could the Lord do anything more than he has done, and could his servants do any more than they have done for your help? Are their labors not demonstrations of it? We

have been as epistles of Christ written in your consciences. We have been testifying that there is something lacking in too many: the lack of resigning up themselves to the baptism of the cross. People are willing to be counted friends; but friends of God are those who do whatsoever he commands them; that is the Christian lesson, not to say I will be a friend to you, and a friend to the Church, and to such a sort of people; but I will be a friend to God, and do whatever he commands me; whatever command God lays upon you, either to take up a cross, or to deny yourselves and follow him.

Learn this lesson, and you will be disciples indeed, and members of the Church too; not members of a Church privileged outwardly only, but members of a Church of the first-born, and you will have your names written in heaven. When one comes to have his name written in heaven, he comes to know his name, it is a white stone, not a speckled one; those who have it, they know it, they are not ignorant of one another's names that are written in this book. They have a fellowship that nobody can declare. Their communion is in that bread and that cup. This is a cup of blessing indeed, and this has blessed us, and will bless us. God will preserve a people in this fellowship. You that are at a distance now, you must come nearer to him. God will choose a people by whom his name shall be magnified. Because the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, we cannot but desire this for all, especially for the household of faith; we cannot but desire their perfection, their growing up in the grace of God, that they might come to be partakers of heaven. And in the next place, our love is to all people, everywhere. We would be happy *that all were saved*. They that despise us when we are speaking of heavenly things, speaking like a child, like a stammering child, speaking of the glorious excellencies of God, of the loving kindness of God, speaking of those things which God has spoken to our souls, those who despise these things, we would be glad that they might be saved. If they were partakers of these things, they would be glad as well as we, and they would be more really happy in respect to this world, for the time that they are to live here; they would live a happier life, even in this world, and they would have everlasting life in the world to come.

The Love of Christ constrains men thus to judge, that every one that has received like precious faith, ought to answer that grace and faith which God has ministered to them in an holy life and conduct, and every one who is a stranger to this thing, ought to be of an inquiring mind and an open heart to wait for the day when God will visit them with the same grace. When you give up yourselves to a daily Cross, as Christ's disciples, you will not be running after anyone to teach you to know the Lord, for you will all know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. I that have been but a little convinced, shall I know the Lord? You shall know the Lord, you that are dead in your sins and trespasses, you that have not known the blood of cleansing, you shall know *the Lord* to be your judge, and your lawgiver, to teach you how you must live, walk, and act; and is this not good knowledge? This is the way they depended on in old time. It is a notable expression, *The Lord is our judge*; there is the beginning, he began there. Judgment began at the house of God; those he brings into his house, he brings them under the discipline of his house. The Lord is our judge, he is our King and lawgiver, and he will save us. This same exercise of discipline under judgment brought to them the faith and experience of his being their lawgiver, and this brought them to a faith of the last sentence, *we shall be saved*; and the Lord answers such a people, that he will bring salvation to them, *salvation shall be for walls and bulwarks*. If only the people of this nation knew salvation was brought near to them, and that it was their bulwark, there would not be a crying up of this and the other rotten thing for a bulwark.

We talk of a bulwark as well as others; we have a bulwark, blessed be the God of heaven, made of better stuff than theirs. For it is the salvation of God which has kept us from the pollution of sin, and from a running into all excess and riot that others have run into. It has kept us from the evil, it has kept evils out of us, and we have found that certainly true, that all things work together for good, to them that love God, and fear God; that all the providences of God together, they have all wrought for our good; and this is

the bulwark that we have trusted in, and it has served up till now, and it will serve us and our posterity to the end of the world. This is a bulwark that will never be stormed, that will never be thrown down nor laid waste. Though all the powers on earth, and all the rulers in this world should agree together, they shall not prevail against it. We have salvation for walls and bulwarks. If I am within these walls, salvation is round about me. If I have gotten into this eternal bulwark, I am safe from the devil and his instruments. Here is a bulwark to be relied upon.

Many wonder why we differ with them in some opinions. We have that confidence in this bulwark, that we desire not another. God will last and abide for ever, so will this bulwark. All the care that I take, and all the care that you should take, is to keep within these walls. Do not venture out. If you go out, the devil is watching, and seeking continually whom he may devour; he will catch stragglers. If people go out for profit, or for pleasure, or interest, the devil will catch them. What, even when such people talk of salvation for walls and bulwarks? The devil has got them in his snare, and they are caught in drunkenness, uncleanness and other sins. The reason is, they have gone out of their bulwark; they have ventured out of their walls, for the devil could never have fetched them out.

O take Heed, says the apostle, lest there spring up in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. As if he had said: You are Christians now, you are a people come to a good estate in Christ; but consider you have no strength to stand but in him, no power to keep yourselves but in him. Take heed at all times that there spring not up in you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. Take heed lest there spring up in you such a thought as this: I may take this pleasure, and the other profit. Consider that you die and wither if you depart from the living God. Take heed of taking liberty above the fear of God. It is not our talk of salvation for walls and bulwarks that will do us good but our keeping within these walls.

I remember a notable saying of the apostle, which has a great emphasis in it, and a great deal of doctrine, he writes to the Church after they had become a people of professing Christians [believers]: Take heed lest you come to be beguiled by the serpent, as he beguiled Eve. He did not speak of Jezebel, a wicked woman; but he spoke of Eve, a good woman created after the image of God, in righteousness and holiness. They had come to a life of sanctification, to a life that was hidden from ages and generations. You must look to yourselves, and look upon yourselves as in the state of your mother Eve, a woman brought forth in righteousness and holiness, that might have stood in that primitive state, notwithstanding all the subtlety of all the serpents in the world. But letting her ear listen to this old serpent, she was beguiled; there grew up a consultation in her reasoning part. It may be so as he said, I will try.

So I say to you that have come to a state of sanctification, and in some measure to know the cleansing power of God, and that you have not believed in it in vain, but it has effectually created some change and alteration in you, and is still carrying on the work of your salvation; many temptations will attend you, and many snares will be laid in your way, but God has preserved you to this day. I know the devil's wiles and temptations are manifold; they are suited to every one's inclinations, fitted to every opportunity, and to every occasion in this world. Men are tried every way by the tempter, to see which way he may ensnare them. He tries every way to ensnare and entangle the simple, that he may turn them to the right hand or to the left, that their souls may be destroyed and perish.

I cannot speak to you by a more emphatic word, by a more familiar exhortation than this: Take heed you be not beguiled as Eve was. Many will be tempted as she was; but I would not have you do as she did, and yield to the temptation. Take heed that you do not defile yourselves, but keep your garments white. You that have been washed and cleansed, labor to keep yourselves unspotted from the world. This is pure religion and undefiled, what has enlightened many a nation, and shall enlighten many of those

whose religion is to be undefiled, and to keep themselves unspotted from the world. I pray that God will increase the number of them, so that the blessed work of sanctification, that has begun in this way, may be carried on to his praise, and the salvation of our souls, to the spreading forth of his glory, and the exalting of his name; that the strangers which are scattered and desolate, may be brought into his holy way, and walk in it; that we all, in a fellowship together, walking in that holy way, may through the eternal Spirit, offer praise and thanksgiving to God, who is worthy to receive glory and honor, power and dominion, forever and ever. *Amen.*

SERMON XXII

Baptism and the Lord's Supper Asserted

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, April 15, 1688

If any man does not have the Spirit of Christ [to rule him as King, doing His will], he is none of his.

IF I should say no more, there is something in every one's conscience that will testify; if he who does not have the Spirit of Christ, is none of his, you may say, whose is he then? If those who do not have his Spirit, are not Christ's, then whose are they? They all belong to the Spirit that rules them; every one of us belongs to him whose Spirit rules over us, unto whose power we are subjected. You know this distinguishes people in the world; one king knows his subjects from another king's subjects; they are under the obedience of this, that, and the other king or prince, his law is over them, they are subject to it; so here is a decision of all the people in the world, whom they belong to.

We, all of us, I hope, do expect there will be a decision at the day of

judgment, and believe the things we read concerning it, that there will be a decision, and some will be placed on the right hand, and some on the left; some will have the sentence of, *come you blessed*, and others the sentence of, *go you cursed*; but now there is a way of finding out the decision of the matter before we go out of the world, before the day of judgment, when there will be no remedy, what then is, must be and stay so. Now there is no need it should continue so; if it is amiss, it may be mended; if I do not belong to the right prince, if I am not under the right power and spirit, I may be, for now it is a day of grace, a day of mercy; I have been a rebel to the right prince, I may be pardoned and taken into favor; it is far better for people to know their state now, than to know it then, because then there will be no remedy.

The apostle, in laying down fundamental, apostolic doctrines, which were to be believed and taken notice of, and are in our age, so that we may say, *things written of old time, were written for our learning*; he makes this affirmation and position of doctrine, *he that has not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his*, he does not belong to him; though he is called a Christian, he is not a Christian. If he does not have the Spirit of Christ, it is only a name he has gotten; he does not have what makes him essentially so, for nothing can make a Christian, but having the Spirit of Christ. Therefore when they would vindicate their being Christians, they prove it thus; for he, (speaking of God), has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, and we know the mind of Christ; we know him who is true, or we are in him who is true. These things, if they were right, if they were true, were evident demonstrations that they were a sort of men who depended more upon the Spirit and spiritual teachings, and spiritual guidance, than upon all the rules and methods of teaching that were in the world.

I speak of this, friends, because you know as well as I, how adverse this age of ours has been, to have anything spoken of spiritual dispensations, or about spiritual teachings; though a man has been counted formerly a wise man, a learned man, or a man of parts, if once he come to smatter out a little

about inward teaching, it is enough to spot him, and make him ridiculed of his acquaintance, as if there were no such thing in the world. We have a book, called the bible, it is from one end to the other full of such expressions, of being led by the Spirit, you have an anointing which teaches you all things. The whole tenor of the New Testament is about spiritual teachings and divine operations, and of faith being the operation of God; and the Old Testament has abundance of expressions by way of prophecy, that in the New Testament days, if people would look for the law of God, they must look for it in their hearts; and if they would know God, they must look to the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. The New Testament also directs us that way, Christians should be the most spiritual people in the world; that is the guide, the rule.

But, they say, the scripture is the foundation of faith and manners, belief and practice; this is too often but dissimulation, and I am afraid it is to be found in some; what, is the scripture the rule of faith? And may people believe what they find in scripture? Yes, but say some, it is best to be aware for fear of error. What is in the scripture is serious, sound and orthodox; do you think that Quakers never found in scripture that people were to wait for the Spirit, and pray in the Spirit, and serve God in the Spirit, and that all religion that is not in power, is not available; did they not find it in scripture? And you that are not Quakers, did you ever read the New Testament? How could it be that you never found these texts? But some people read and read the New Testament twenty times over, and mock and deride, and persecute a man that shall speak of the Spirit's teaching.

I have admired at it, how intelligent men, to whom God has given a competent understanding, should be so blinded; they have learned to read English, and they have read the New Testament over several times, and the Old Testament too, and they have read those sentences of Christ's doctrine, that do so currently and unanimously speak of divine teachings and spiritual operations, spiritual worship and spiritual religion, that must have some motion and stirring of the Holy Ghost to be the originator of it, and that all

others are **not** acceptable to God; doubtless they have read these things, but I have often desired and do still desire that they would read it again once more, and try and see what God will do; he has oftentimes made use of the holy scripture as a means to awaken people and to open their understandings, and let them see the mind of the spirit by which the scripture is written, and the next time if they can find scripture text and apostolic doctrine, to teach people to wait upon the Spirit, I hope they will leave scoffing and mocking.

It has been previously looked upon as an invention, to speak of the teaching of the Spirit, and waiting on the Spirit, and being moved by the Spirit. This apostolic doctrine, prayer, and worship, has been looked upon as an invention that we have brought in. To look for the Holy Ghost in that way that was never known to our fathers, is a fantastic conceit of the Quakers, say they. To tell people they must be led by the Spirit in divine things, as in prayer and worship, and the like, that in these things they must wait for the Spirit; was there ever any man that was counted good for anything that ever preached so, before the Quakers came. Do we read any such kind of thing in scripture?

O! the blindness that has happened to this nation! I have considered, not without admiration, how the devil, (he is a Spirit too, and a wicked one), how he should have power to prevent our acknowledging the belief, sense and feeling of the Spirit of God now days; there are thousands in this nation that have formerly believed that it was as impossible for a man to believe the divine motions and struggles of the Spirit of God in this life, as to raise their fathers and mothers out of their graves; some of their learned teachers have told us it is a whimsy and fancy, and that there was no inspiration of the Spirit now days, but that it was a foolish fancy in us to wait for such a thing, it is needless; they say there was an immediate teaching in the apostles days, and they had the sense of the Spirit of Christ working in them, to teach them to write letters and epistles to the church, which letters and epistles were written by the moving of the Holy Ghost, but we have no need of it now for

the Holy Ghost has brought order and government into the church. We have it now in black and white printed in our books, therefore say they, there is no need of the Spirit, and people need not be acquainted with the operation of the Spirit now days, in regard they have it in their books what manner of worship they must perform.

[The ministers that promote this myth that the Spirit no longer speaks, are the blind guides that Jesus warned us about. What did Jesus say made a guide blind? If he is an unperfected disciple, he is a blind guide. The men promoting these myths also deny perfection is possible — so they obviously are unperfected and blind. And they will stay blind and deaf because they are teaching a false salvation; they are working against Christ's gospel and salvation to the maximum. So, of course the Spirit of God is not going to reveal anything to the ministers of Satan, transformed to appear as ministers of righteousness.]

I grant them their due, that they have the direction of the scripture. I am able to understand that people are to worship God, and pray to him, and are to meet together and to observe this and the other doctrinal precepts there laid down; I confess I can make shift with scripture to frame out a form of religion, and if I do not mistake in the opening and explanation of the doctrine, I could make a right form too, but I am liable to mistake, another man that understands Greek better than I, saying that the Greek word ought to be translated so, and the form ought to differ in such a respect. Some say the only way of government is by bishops, and the word bears it in the original; and another faith he has stretched the word, for the word means presbyter; another faith presbyter signifies no more than choice of church elders and deacons, and such like; and this is all out of one book, the settlement of bishops, presbyters, and elders.

Here a number of form-makers all fall out about the meaning of the word; what remedy can any mortal man provide for this? We must not be killing

and slaying one another about words. If I am an Episcopal man and say the word signifies bishops, I may be a wicked man still; and if another say it must be presbyter, he may be a wicked man too; and if another say it should be pastor, elders, and deacons, he may be a wicked man notwithstanding.

Thus they have rent and torn one another about church government; what remedy shall we have so that these quarrels and contentions about terms and words may come to an end? Could a man prescribe a more certain remedy for all these mistakes than this, if they had a measure of this Spirit which did work in the apostles when they wrote down these words, which the apostles had in writing them; then I say they could tell you what the Spirit meant, for the Spirit is the same and not changed, and the words are the same to a small matter. So that if a man had the Spirit, he might end all the controversy; but where shall we have a man that has this Spirit to end the controversy? There is none now days say the Protestants, and say the Papists there is none but one that has this infallibility; and many will not support that either, for some of them say, that one man is as infallible as another man. There is a great dispute whether any one man is infallible, or a great many men together are infallible about doctrine and worship. This might be cured all at once if we could come to this conclusion. Papists, Protestants, and Quakers, here is an end of all outside worship, **he that has not the Spirit of Christ is none of his**. If there is not Spirit in it, it is not Christ's religion and worship.

So that those who bicker, bark, and bite, **are without, among dogs and sorcerers,*** who are strangers to the Spirit of Christ; there is a spirit in those who deny the Spirit of Christ; there is a Spirit that rules in those who are without the Spirit, for nobody that I know of, adds things without a spirit, and without being moved. What, are good and bad all moved by the Spirit, and yet are there no motions? I have sometimes turned the question upon people, and asked them if there were no motions of the evil spirit, has it no such kind of influence that it can move upon our spirits, that we can sensibly feel ourselves thrust forth to such an action? I never met any man that

would deny it, they are so generally favorable to the wicked spirit; no man will deny but the devil has a way of moving and stirring upon the spirit of a man, and to suggest to him such an evil thing. As I have sometimes said, it is such a generally accepted opinion, that when the criminal comes to be arraigned at the bar for some grievous crime, they lay the foundation of the indictment to read: "on such a day he was moved and instigated by the devil to do such a thing." Here is a settled motion for the devil, for him to influence peoples spirits, but they admit no way for the good Spirit of God to influence men's spirits. Which leaves us nothing except bad instigation; and to know inward motions to good things, it is not to be expected now days.

[*dogs and sorcerers are the ministers of Christendom. In the Old Testament, dogs licked the blood of dead men. Dogs were preachers who fed themselves, never getting enough. Dogs were blind, dumb, ignorant, watchmen (preachers) unable to sound a warning, lying down, loving to slumber. In the New Testament Paul referred to Judiazers dogs who preached circumcision, whose confidence was in works of the flesh. Dogs tear the lambs; they are fleshly men, (still in their sinful natures), who persecute those born of the spirit. Dogs were those who preached the outward form and observations of religion, trying to preserve and justify the man of sin continuing in his selfish, sinful, fleshly nature. So today, dogs would be the preachers and teachers of Christendom. They also could be proponents of Hare Krishna, or Hinduism, or Buddhism. If you tell them your holy understandings, it is a waste of time, because all they want to do is convert you to their way of thinking. So you keep your peace. You don't try to educate the wise or correct those who think they can see, but can't.

As sorcerers, they practice witchcraft with rituals and ceremonies, (infant baptism, bread/wine, water baptism, sinner's prayer), that supposedly make a man acceptable to God, while

that man remains a slave to sin, thus serving Satan, not God.]

How should ever the cunning serpent, that would have power over the best of us all, be said to winnow us? Christ signified to Peter, a bold and resolute disciple, *Satan desires to have you, and sift you as wheat*; if the devil had power over every one, to make them his servants and slaves, what remedy have we except we must all perish and go headlong to hell with him, unless there is some way of resisting him? That is true, say people, the devil must be resisted; we find it in the New Testament, resist the devil; this is a good exercise; but tell me one thing, when I go about to resist the devil, must I resist him in my own power? If I were to say you might do so, you would say I was an erroneous preacher, and well you might. This is an old free-will doctrine, that a man may resist the devil by his own power, and escape his snares, and do the will of God. This has been cried down by the doctors of the Church of England, and by most of all sorts of Christians; and for our parts, since the Lord has opened our mouths, we never did speak a word in favor of it, as if we went about to resist the devil in our own strength; if we did, the devil would make fools of us. He that goes about to resist the devil in his own strength, will be entrapped and ensnared by him, in that men have a propensity to sin, and by his cunning and subtlety, may be led into a snare before they are aware.

Thus it is agreed on all hands, that our power, as men, is too weak to resist Satan's temptation, so that you see we must have the assistance of the divine power, or all go to hell; there is no medium between those two extremes, some extraordinary power must assist me, or else the devil will have me. If you will not admit of a supernatural power to come in to help me and you, we must all go to hell, there is no remedy. I will say my prayers, says one; do so, yet in the best of your prayers there will be sin; and if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me. I will go and hear sermons, say you; the very man that preaches will tell you, that hearing of sermons will do you no good at all, unless there are motions of the Spirit of God, so that you will be wrapped from one thing to another, and have diversity of doctrines, and

come to no fixedness; and while you concern yourselves about doctrines, all the while the devil prevails upon you. As for the tongue, he has the rule of that, and as for the hands, he has the rule of them, and makes you do those things that by his perpetual suggestions he moves you to; so that your going to church and saying your prayers signify nothing to bring you from under the wrath of God, and from the captivity of the devil. Has not the devil those in captivity that go to church, and say their prayers, and give alms? These are things that you can do by your own power, the saying of your prayers, and fasting, and giving of alms, these things you may do, the devil will not hinder you, for he knows that these will not bring you out of his clutches, nor out of his chains and fetters.

There is but one way and means by which the devil may be effectually resisted, that is by taking to our help one stronger than he. I have gone for help to many stronger than I, in my young days, that I thought to be stronger Christians, and many of them did afford their help in the work, by counsel, by persuasion, by exhortation and by doctrine, but all this did not do; and the reason was this, because the devil was too strong for me, and so he was for them. As long as you go for help to this and the other place, until you find one stronger than the devil, expect no deliverance or help from anything in the world, but lay aside *all confidence in the flesh*, in any man on earth, or in all the doctors' [of divinity] words and best preaching you shall hear. Lay aside your confidence in them; they will never do you any good in this respect for they will never break off your chains. Many themselves are loaded with chains, but some, I hope, are *weary and heavy laden*, and feel the weight of sin, (which I pray God to increase the number); though it is a state of sorrow, it is better than the state of fools, *that make a mock of sin*. I would have you weary and heavy laden with your sins, and brought into this state, to see yourselves captivated by the strong power of darkness, and to see you are unable to deliver yourselves out of it by your own power.

For me to fall into the hands of a tyrant that is stronger than I, and no man

to deliver me, how sad that would be. If I could find a man stronger than this tyrant, and that would kill him, I would be his servant and have a better master. No man can kill this tyrant, who has led me captive and made me a slave; if this tyrant says, be drunk, I must be drunk; if he tells me swear, I must swear. This is the slavery that the devil has gotten his servants into, that whatever he says, that they must do, if he tells them do it: O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? I cannot deliver myself, and no man can deliver me; I would be acquainted with all Christians, if they could help me; I would try all religions that are this day in the world, to see if there is help for me. Many are oppressed with sin, and they go to and fro, to see what help can be given them, to free them from the bondage that the devil has them in. This sort of people are to be pitied, and the souls of all good people will pity them, for such as these *seek the living among the dead*, they seek to redeem what cannot redeem them. We have fought, they say, for power and strength from those who had not enough for themselves, they were captivated as us, and all this because we did not come to him who is stronger than the devil. You will take the same course, and remain on it until gray hairs come, and you go down to the grave with sorrow, unless you come to one stronger than the devil, and then trust in him, believe in him, and expect deliverance by him. The reason why people do not expect deliverance is because these two things are shut out of their belief:

I. They do not believe that a sinful life will carry them to destruction.

II. They think there is not any possibility in this world to live any other than a sinful life.

The devil has brought men to this pass, that they live as easily in a sinful life, as a fish in the stream. "We are in *the way*," say they; "when we were baptized; we were initiated into the Christian church; we were baptized with the sign of the cross; that shows we are soldiers of Christ and bear his badge and banner upon us." As the man said at that time, "I was made a child of

God and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven. If this is not true, then I am cheated and deceived, for I am to believe this to be true; the church has affirmed that these things are to be believed; and to question the veracity of the church, is to question everything."

I would question whether thousands find the truth of it. When you were baptized, there was a kind of covenant and bargain made for this child of God and heir of eternal life, that he should forsake the devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and the sinful lusts of the flesh. And there is promise given that this child shall never serve the devil and sinful lusts, and never be proud, but serve God and keep his commandments. Now this promise being taken, then they suppose that this child will certainly be an heir of the kingdom of God. It is very true, stand to your church; if this promise that is taken for a child is but kept, then there is no doubt of being a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven. But if this promise fails, is the church to blame if men's hopes to eternal life fail? Was it not my condition, that you would forsake the devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities wicked world, and the sinful lusts of the flesh, and if you break the bargain, and your part of the covenant, and fail to inherit eternal life, who is to blame? Look to the promise, that you would forsake the devil and all his works, and the pomps and vanities of the world. But you may rather say, "I have enjoyed as many of them as I could;" and for the lusts of the flesh, "I have enjoyed as much of them as I can." And what, do you believe yourself to be a child of God and an heir of the kingdom of Heaven, despite that?

If I promise to deliver a man any particular kind of goods, upon the payment of so much money, if I fail in delivering the goods, he will not deliver the money; a man must forsake the devil and all his works, and never lust after the pomps and vanities of this world, to be as a child of God. Let us see him grow up, and if he goes on to be faithful in this covenant until he dies, in which case I do not at all question but he will be an heir of eternal life; but when all this is broken, and the promise signifies nothing, and the man is

given up to serve the devil, breaks all God's holy laws, errs and strays from the way of God's commandments like a lost sheep, and grasps at the pomps and vanities of the world, as much as he can, and thinks he gets no more than comes to his share; and when he shall indulge the lusts of his flesh, this is a child of the devil. He is a child of the Spirit that was a liar from the beginning. Never talk of being a child and an heir of God's kingdom, such a man is in fetters, he is to go along with the devil and his angels, and there is a kingdom prepared for them, and a kingdom of darkness, and he must have his portion with them in everlasting misery. *Tophet is prepared of old for all the workers of iniquity,*

What for those who are baptized? Yes, but do not you deny baptism?

No, not I, I would have men and women baptized with a baptism that will do them some good. Some have seen the vanity and weakness of this kind of baptism that is called infant baptism; and therefore would go and be baptized and plunged in the water over head and ears, but they came up again with the same heart and mind, and the same polluted soul. John baptized in Jordan, and all Jerusalem and Judea came to be baptized by him. They were a sort that included persons then that crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, who never did them harm in his life, but much good.

This baptism [water baptism] had never an apostolic patron, but there was another baptism that is so infallible a baptism, that if a man was surely baptized with it, he was sure of Heaven, he would never need any other assurance of Heaven than to be baptized with the baptism of Jesus Christ. The lip of truth speaks of him: *he that believes and is baptized, shall be saved*. He shall be saved in spite of the devil and all his temptations, in spite of persecutions and the stumbling blocks laid before him. Here is a baptism worth a man's while, worth all his labor, if he could obtain it. *He that comes after me, said John the Baptist, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire*; here is a baptism that belongs to Christians, an ordinance ordained. Far be it from us to deny baptism; but we would identify the right

one, since there are so many sorts. This baptism is so right and certain that it assures a man of his salvation, but it is done by *the Holy Ghost and with fire*. If it is by the Holy Ghost, then it is far enough from us because there is no Holy Ghost in our days, say some, so this baptism is ceased, the consequence cannot follow: you and I cannot be baptized because there is no working of the Holy Ghost in our days; some say, this baptism is with the Holy Ghost and with fire; with fire to burn up our corruptions, and purifying our hearts. But the Holy Ghost has quit working on men, they say; why then, there is an end to this baptism. A man is hungry, and when his time comes to eat, he had no food, yet he sits him down as if he is to eat; will this feed and nourish him? So men now days, they have a baptism wherewith they are baptized; but baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire, is the right baptism; therefore do not baptize until you find the Holy Ghost, this will be far better. This is the baptism that they which come to know it, are sure of salvation by it; for by this baptism, they are borne up and tintured in their souls with the Divine Spirit of Christ Jesus, proceeding from the Father in the Son, until they receive his likeness and so die unto sin. *As many as were baptized, were baptized into Christ's death. The apostle opened it, in that he died, he died unto sin once, but that he lives, he lives unto God; so that they were baptized, were baptized into Christ's death; and you that are dead to sin, how could you live any longer in it.*

These that were baptized lived without sin; can that be true, when no one lived without sin but Christ only. Yes, said the apostle, *you that were free from sin, are alive to righteousness*. Their life stood before in sin, and now that life is taken away by baptism and they are alive to Christ, and he that lives, he lives to God. He that comes to be partaker of the first resurrection, he lives ten, twenty, forty, or a hundred years, he lives no more in the pomps and vanities of the world, and the sinful lusts of the flesh, but lives unto God. This baptism, whoever comes to be baptized with it, shall be saved; so that we do not deny baptism.

But we hear said, that you deny the Lord's supper.

We have never had such a thought, God knows; there is nothing that our souls long after more; but people have been making a kind of work of their own [the invented sacrament of communion]; they have lost a reality, and make shadows, as children do, who when they see things made in the house for service, they will make the likeness in sand and clay. People do not see what a great thing it is to attend the supper of the Lord; as things come into an evangelical opening, we spoke then more lively and freshly of things. Behold I stand as the door and knock, if any man opens to me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me. Rev 3:20. For understanding of this text, go and search all the commentators you can find, and see what the learned men say of it; see if they do not apply this to the inward call of the Spirit and grace of Christ, to let him into our hearts; would one think that those who wrote those things should be against the spiritual dispensation of things. They say that this knocking at the door of the heart signifies the call of God's Spirit at the door of the heart. There are two sorts of sinners that God knocks at the door of their hearts. One is a man who is weary of his sin; for his part he wishes that he might never sin more. As soon as he perceives the knock, and is called upon to let in the grace of God, to help him against temptation, he freely opens his heart to receive it, and says, with all my heart I will entertain and welcome the grace of God; I am glad that God has had so much patience towards me; and since God offers his grace, I will embrace this grace of God above all pleasures, and I will take it into my heart. The grace of Christ is the greatest jewel that I know. Honest Paul, took this course, and prayed, Lord take away this tempter; here is a temptation that troubles me, and I am not willing to yield, for all the devil follows me with it; he cried unto the Lord, and besought him three times, earnestly, to take away the temptation. What the Lord answers him is: my grace is sufficient for you. What does it matter if the tempter buffets you and troubles you? Have you not received my grace into your heart? You are a believer, and your trust is in me, and my grace is sufficient for you. Let the tempter do his worst, keep to the grace of God, and you shall withstand and overcome the temptation when it comes.

If a man opens his heart and receives Christ when he comes, then you shall find such an alteration in that man, that go and try him with the same temptation which prevailed over him in the last week, it will not do so now; though he is as weak as water, and as prone to corruption and iniquity as before, yet now having a faith begotten in him, that the grace of God will defend him, he keeps out of the devil's snares. Now this man trusting in this grace until his sin and iniquity is purged out, now is the time to spread the table; there is a clean heart, and the heavenly guest has now come, and the dainties of the kingdom are brought to him for his nourishment. *Now, says Christ, I will come in and sup with him, and my Father will also come, and we will sup with him and he with us.* **This never happens to anybody so long as the table and heart is foul; for the table must be clean, and the devil and sin thrown out,** and then will the Lord confirm and ratify, and seal the covenant; so that here is a seal with a witness. When a man has this testimony of the love of God, that God is reconciled to him in Christ, then Christ will come in, and he will bring his Father, and they will sup with him; and this is what will give complete satisfaction to such a soul.

All the tongues of men and angels are too short to speak of these things, as they are in themselves, but they are all manifested by the Spirit. All the mysteries of the kingdom of God, are manifested by the Spirit of God; now to say there is no Spirit to be regarded now days, that is as much as to say, we must never regard the kingdom of God, for *no man can discern the things of God but the Spirit of God*, no man can tell what they are; as *no man can know the things of a man but the spirit of a man*.

[Some incorrectly say], But I must look to this and the other form, and mark, and methodize them, for men can know nothing of the things of God themselves.

I hope you are all of another judgment, and believe that this is a trick and cheat of the wicked one; people do find the Spirit and will feel it, if they will

wait upon the motions of it. I do not only mean when you are here together, but when you are separated one from another; when you feel the motions of this good Spirit, embrace them, and make them yours. This Spirit is a gift that is given; so may a coin or a piece of bread is held forth to a poor creature, but if he does not receive it, he may perish for all that; it is not his, though I have appointed it to be his, and have separated it from my other substance to be his. If he does not receive what I offer and would give him, he may perish for all that.

Here is *grace and truth comes by Jesus Christ*, and God has offered it to all men, in that he has raised up Christ from the dead; *the grace of God which brings salvation, has appeared unto all men*; but all men have not received it, therefore all men do not have it; and those who do not have not the grace of Christ, and the Spirit of Christ are not of his; but it does not follow that they never will be none of his. When they have received the gift by Christ, and say, I will be his sheep or lamb, they will come into his favor by that gift, and shall partake of the good things of his Father's kingdom; but until they have received this gift, they are not the better for it; they have not any benefit by the death of Christ; they have no help, no benefit by it, except in the patience and long-suffering of God, who for Christ's sake bears with their weakness, and waits to be gracious, and for Christ's sake offers them favor; but they have not come to the possession of it, until they open their hearts, and receive the grace of Christ; then they are convinced of Christ's end, and that there is a possibility of enjoying the Spirit of God, and of being taught and led by it.

Take this along with you, that **it is your absolute and indispensable duty to wait from day to day upon the great God of Heaven**, the giver of every good and perfect gift that you may have that blessed gift, that you may have the assistance of a greater power than your own to lead you out of sin into righteousness, that through Jesus Christ you may be acceptable to God.

SERMON XXIII

Christ the Way, the Truth, and the Life

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, April 18, 1687

I fear the high places are not taken away; it has been so in all ages, and it is manifestly so in this day; where the heart is not rightly prepared for the Lord, there the high places are not taken away. For all the high places in the time of Israel's idolatry, they were ever set up when they departed from the Lord, and all the high places now are up in a time of ignorance of God. When people have forgotten the Lord, then they exalt themselves; then pride, and arrogance, and every evil way prevails upon us; but when men come to seek the Lord with uprightness, that brings down their high conceits, that brings every one into humility. For everyone comes to be convinced in themselves that none can find the Lord, but as they are brought to be humble; no, indeed, none seek after him correctly but such; none have the promise of finding him but the humble.

Therefore it is the duty of every one that is a real inquirer and seeker after God, to know the right preparation of mind, to know themselves in such a frame of spirit, that they may seek in hope, that they may have a right and just expectation of finding him whom they are seeking after; for this has been the reason that a great many have been frustrated in their endeavors, and in their purposes of seeking after the Lord, they have not been rightly prepared for him to manifest himself unto them, they have not known the *preparation of his sanctuary*, [cleansing of their heart]. There was a peculiar preparation that was requisite to those who drew near unto the sanctuary of God; they were hallowed, that is, made holy, before they drew near to the holy place; but alas! This has been greatly neglected in our days for unholy people with unholy minds have been seeking after the Holy God.

They have been inquiring after a holy way, and were not prepared to walk in it; there was nothing raised in their minds, that *was fit to walk in that way*.

For so long as men or women stand in unity with their lusts and sexual desires, with the spirit of this world, and the way of it, they are not capable of receiving what should lead them into the way of holiness; no, if it appears to them that they cannot receive it for it is with them as with other guests. There are other lovers already let in their hearts, which employ the powers and faculties of their souls, so that if the most beloved of all, the most excellent, or if *the greatest of ten thousand* appears, they cannot see the attractive appeal of him. The prophet speaking of this state and condition of men, prophesied concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, *when we shall see him there is no comeliness in him, why we should desire him*; and so it has happened to a great many now days, though the truth has appeared to them, yet they have not looked upon it as a pleasant way, as a way desirable, but a way to be shunned if possible. What rationalizations have a great many people made to keep themselves, if possible, out of the way of truth, arguing for this and that, and disputing for one way and another that was out of truth's way, out of the way of holiness. What was the meaning of all their arguments, but to tell us they desired to be happy, they desired to be saved, though they had not come into truth's way and walk in truth's way? And though they did abide in those things that were contrary to the testimony of truth in their own hearts, they thought it still might go well with them.

This is the strength of the arguments of all sorts, of all persuasions in the world, that have been arguing themselves out of the truth, and would argue us out of the truth too, and would take the liberty to do those things which are not agreeable with it; but now the reason of this is because the preparation is lacking, they are those who have no need of truth, and that have no need of God, and of a Savior; but think they can be secure without them; he has not become their principal priority to them. They think they can abide in the high places, that they can *call upon the name of the Lord*, and that they *can worship in the groves and in the high places* both

together. This is like those nations that were brought to inhabit the kingdom of Israel when the ten tribes were carried away; they sent for priests to teach them. They sent back to the king of Assyria to lend them some priests, to teach them to worship the God of their country [they were occupying Israel], and when the priest came to teach them, he taught them the ceremonies of the law, and the many observations that the Jews used to practice in that country; and so they grew into a formality of serving the God of Israel. They called upon the name of the Lord, while every nation continued the worship of their own gods too.

How is this nation, and the nations of Europe, now inhabited with such a people that are called by the name of the Lord, but with every one worshipping their own gods; one makes gold and silver his God, another makes his pleasure his God, another his honor, another this, that, and the other lust. And they bow down to them, that is, they yield themselves to their lusts, sexual immoralities, and corruptions, with which they stand in unity, but they call upon the name of the Lord too. They apply themselves to some kind of form of worship, which they say is directed to the immortal and invisible God; but alas! They do not come to the knowledge of God by this. Whatever that the priests could do, whom the king of Assyria sent back to the occupants of Israel, could not bring the Samaritans to the knowledge of the God of Israel; they only brought them to a report of such a God that had set up such a law. They had the report of it, and for fear that the lions should tear them in pieces, they would enter into that form, but they worshipped their own Gods still.

[Crisp is distinguishing between knowledge from reading or another man speaking about God, versus experiential knowledge of God, gained from being taught by God himself—which is hearing his voice and seeing his revelations about himself, his righteousness, and your individual heart's condition.]

So it is now, people do not come to the knowledge of the true God, the living

God, by entering into any form of religion; for instance, prayer, hearing of any ordinance or church-fellowship, these do not give men the knowledge of God for there is only one way to come to that, and one only. Men have found a great many, for which it is past your skill and mine to reckon up the many ways that men have found out upon the face of the earth, how they might come to the knowledge of God, and to peace and reconciliation with him; but they have only played the fool, and spent their time in vain, especially those who own the scriptures of truth to be a true and faithful record of the mind and will of God. They play the fool abominably; for the scripture that they give so much reputation to in their profession does testify the way is but one, and there is no other way for people to be reconciled to God, than by coming into Christ; to be found in him, to be regenerated and born into his nature, and have his qualities put upon them, *that as he was pure, they may be pure; that he that sanctifies, and they who are sanctified by him, may become both one, and so be reconciled to the Father through him.* This you know is the common profession of Christendom, or at least of our nation. And in other nations, the common profession is, there is no Mediator but one, no Reconciler but one. Indeed some others hold there may be other Mediators [Mary and their so-called “saints”], and that there are others that may contribute to them by their mediation, and by their prayers and merits, but the generality of the nations are otherwise.

Now for people to fall out, and say, my way is best, and your way is not best, and to fall into contests about many ways, when the scripture concludes there is only one way, is not well; we had better all agree about this doctrine, that there is no possibility of reconciliation with God, having fallen out with him, and since sin has made a separation, there is no way of being reconciled again to God, but by and through our Lord Jesus Christ; nor by him either, unless we receive of his Spirit to quicken us. Nothing can quicken us, enliven us, or recommend us to God, except the Spirit of Christ operating and working in our hearts, that he may prepare us for the Father's kingdom.

[The Lord quickens us to the life of God, the end of which is to live in the light, to see God, to be told what to say, to be shown what to do. To be prepared for the kingdom is to be cleansed, purified, and freed from sin.]

If people would agree upon this, there would be an end of all labor, and toil, and quarreling about the right way, for the consequence and conclusion would be this. That the man who does not know himself the sanctifying power of the Spirit of Christ Jesus, he is out of the way to reconciliation with God, let his form and profession be what may. If therefore he is reconciled to God, it must be by and through the Mediator, and he will never recommend him to the Father until he has made him a temple to let in the Spirit of Christ, to work in his heart, to fit him for the kingdom of God. And men have no other way to come to it; for though they are zealous in every prayer and form, it signifies nothing to any great purpose. Their hope will be frustrated; *there is no other way, said Christ, of coming to the Father, but by me; I am the way, the truth and the life.* If I am out of the truth, I am out of the way; and if I am out of the way, then I cannot come to the end of the way. This is plain reasoning among men. If I tell a lie, that is out of the truth. If I have vain communication, or deceive or wrong my neighbor, that is out of the truth; if I am in what is manifested in my conscience to be contrary to the truth, I am out of the way; though I am strict in that way, as to profession, yet I am out of the way to God, I am out of the truth; there is no way to God but by Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life; whoever is out of him, is out of the way; which made the apostle say, that *his labor; endeavor and desire was, that he might be found **in** Christ, not having his own righteousness, but having **on** the righteousness of Christ Jesus.*

Many men think to recommend themselves to God by their righteous, just, and honest dealings, and doing wrong to nobody. This is good in itself, but does not recommend us to God unless it is done by the righteous and holy Spirit of Christ Jesus, unless it is of his working; he must have the working of righteousness and truth in us; he must plant it, and it must grow by his

working if it is acceptable to the Father; *for without me*, said Christ, *you can do nothing*. A man out of Christ, a stranger to his Spirit, may do something, but nothing available to the well-being of his soul, until he has reconciliation by Christ Jesus. If he is reconciled to God, this Mediator must be the Reconciler, and he must fit and prepare him for reconciliation with the Father.

All the divisions, sorts and sects of religion, must all come to an end; if this measuring line is laid to them, they all appear too short; and there is nothing will do a man good, but the religion that obliges and ties him to the good pleasure of God, through the Spirit of the Mediator, which he feels working in him, by which he is raised from death to some degree of life. When he is sensible what a burden sin is to his life, that godly life which he has, he is burdened with every sin and oppressed with every vain thought and every vain word. If he is not in some measure quickened, he is not sensible of this burden; but being quickened, he is sensible of the burden that lies upon his life by reason of his sin; and then, being under the weight of his sin, he calls to God for his assistance. He cries to God to help him; he now knows that he has striven and labored in vain. O God of all grace, if you will not help my soul, if you do not intervene by the assistance of your grace, I cannot overcome this sin. There is a continual cry to God for divine assistance, and as they cry to God for assistance, he ministers assistance to them, by which they are able to overcome the enemy of their souls, and all temptations when they come. And when a man finds such divine assistance, his faith is strengthened and confirmed, and so *he fights the good fight of faith*, and at last gets the victory; victory over his sin, and his own lusts, and sexual desires, and victory over the assaults and temptations of the adversary; and at last he comes, through the grace of God, to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly and godly in this present world.

Now when people do thus, it is by the grace of God. This life of righteousness, sobriety and godliness, is not the effect of their labor and

exercise, and of their endeavors in this, but it is the effect of the Holy Spirit that has been the teacher. When you see a man has become a good scholar, eminent in all sorts of learning, you will conclude he did not attain to all this of himself; he did not learn this and the other language, this and the other are and science of himself; no, he had some judicious and able master and teacher, who communicated of his learning and knowledge to his disciple and scholar. This is the efficient cause of his improvement. Now if a man, by the grace and the Spirit of God, and the teachings of it, lives a holy, godly life, this is the effect of something; he did not always live such a life, so how does he comes to live such a life now? Is it by his own industry, labor and exercise? No, it is by being exercised, taught and led by the Spirit of God; so that it is the effect of the grace of God that he should live such a holy life, this is the meritorious cause of it, as he is a creature, and by this only acceptable to God in Christ the Mediator.

Thus a man comes to be justified and accepted, not because he is a godly man, but is made so by the Spirit of God. *You are not under the law*, said the apostle, *but under grace*. You are under the teachings of it, under the directions of it. Grace can reprove people; for that grace and that truth that comes by Christ, and manifests itself as a light in the hearts of transgressors, reproves their sin, and calls them out of it; it reproves them for it, and exhorts them to leave it, both at the same time; so that we must acknowledge all our righteousness, holiness, and obedience is of God, and all that we do in order thereunto, as it is done by the teaching, by the influence and operation of the grace of God given us in Christ Jesus; it is the effect of him who is our Mediator; he works it in us, and for us, of his good pleasure.

If we are justified, we are not justified for a righteous, holy life, and for our obedience; but we are justified through Christ, who works a godly life in those who believe, so that a man is not justified by any other way or means; and all other ways a man takes of being reconciled to God, are vain and fruitless, and have been spoken against by all that were moved by the Holy

Ghost in the New Testament. Said the prophet, what shall I come before the Lord with? I am fallen under death and sin, and in a separation from God; I would willingly be reconciled to him. What shall I do to be reconciled to God? He goes about to reckon without Christ, and without faith and holiness. *Shall I take a thousand rams, and ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I come nearer still? Shall I make an offering of the fruit of my body, for the sin of my soul? Shall I offer my first-born to God,* that I may not be rejected and brought to a separation from him? Thus men when they come to be sensible do feel in themselves that all this is to no purpose. The answer comes, you may live, but all your contrivances about making an offering are vain. *He has showed you O man! what to do.* It is not your finding this way and that way, i.e., your rams, and your oil, and your first-born, it is no way of your devising and imagining that can reconcile you to me; *I have shown you, man, what is good.* What is this that has been shown? It is comprised in a short charge: he is to *love mercy, to do justness, and to walk humbly with your God.* Will this serve without offering rams and oil, and offering my first born? This will do if you cannot help but *love mercy* when it is shown you, that is, embrace mercy, and love it. He has shown mercy to all men; then love it and receive it; *do justly*, leave everything that is unrighteous, and do what is just in the sight of God, but do not boast of your justice and righteousness, but *walk humbly with your God*; here is the whole duty of man. Here is no dependence on dead works, or my own exertions, in order to my justification.

Indeed the consideration of these kind of lessons do corrupt some men, and put them upon doing this or that, and upon avoiding this or that, and has brought many to confession and great abstinence, and put them upon great doings, thinking this would answer the justice of God. I have loved mercy, and given all I had to the poor. If I do justly, and abstain from this and the other liberty, if I walk humbly, that is, if I humble myself by this and the other manner of penance and contrition, then I do what God requires, and then I have pleased God.

Now all that have gone this way to work, to do justly, and love mercy, and to make themselves humble, and humbled themselves in such a low manner; they have missed the mark. *He has shown you, O man! what is good*; that it is impossible for fallen man to answer this himself; he may be convinced of his duty to do justice, but by his own power and strength he cannot do it; there are so many temptations from without, and so many from within, such a propensity in nature, that will prevail against all the bonds of charity that he can make.

Therefore is *help laid upon one that is mighty*; without the grace of God that comes by Christ Jesus, a man can never do right, though convinced. Though the Lord has shown him what is good, he shows us that we are unable of ourselves; he has taken care to send his Son. *God has so loved the world, that he has sent his Son into the world*, that he might help those who have need of help, that every one that is in distress might have an eye to Christ, the author and finisher of their faith. When men have a reference to their faith in Christ, this makes their duty acceptable. I cannot do it unless the Lord strengthens me; therefore I will have respect to the Mediator, Christ Jesus, who was sent for a light into the world. God sends forth his grace for everyone to lay hold on, who generally believe, that though they are unable to do what God requires, yet he will enable them to do it; *for as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the Sons of God*, though they were the devil's children before; *he is the same yesterday, today, and forever*. He abides always the same in his grace to men; he is in his operation to them the same; he offers grace to those who are in a frame of mind to receive it so that they may know that his power will give them ability; and so that whatever they do of themselves will prove fruitless, because it is not done in Christ's name and power, and so is not acceptable to God.

The greatest thing that we are to be concerned about, if we will be religious, and concern ourselves about divine matters, about the kingdom of God and the world to come, is to see what frame of mind we are in at present,

whether the high places are taken away, whether we are not exalted in our own conceits of knowledge and wisdom, and not acknowledge to be beholden to him for his grace. If we are highly conceited, and think we can stand upon our own legs, the high places are not taken away. Men are not in this state prepared to seek the God of their fathers; therefore, let every one turn to God, and see how it is with you; see whether there be a mind brought low enough to be subject to Christ, and to the gracious teachings of his Spirit.

A man may say, I can make a sermon, I can make a prayer and exhortation, and I can make a book, and send it abroad, I can do all this by my own talents and abilities; so you may, and may make it all full of good words, but you can never make it acceptable to God for *without me*, said Christ, *you can do nothing*. You must have the assistance of the Spirit of Christ; else you cannot make a good prayer, or a good book, or anything good; God esteems *the very praying of the wicked to be an abomination to him*. Where the mind is not exercised by the Spirit of God, if he should pray from morning to night, and spend all his days in penance, it will do him no good. *If I*, said David, *regard iniquity*; you may think I am a man in favor with God, a man after God's own heart; yet *if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer*. What signifies prayers and sermons, made of good words, if they do not come from a heart separate from iniquity? If it is not so, it will do no good at all, in point of acceptance with God.

O let the fear of the Lord enter upon every heart! Wait all to feel the Divine Power of the Lord, that brings down every high thought, so that so you may look to the preparation of your hearts, which is a right preparation; when the people are so low, so broken and so tender, that they are nothing in their own eyes, but what the Lord will make them to be, then they are as clay in the hands of the potter, they are fashioned by his hands, and made *the workmanship of God in Christ Jesus, the one Mediator between God and man*. They must bear the likeness of Christ Jesus, bear his Heavenly image; they must have his qualities, and have the same mind in those who were in

him. I do always what pleases my Father, said the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed he has the doing of things in the hearts of men, and God is pleased with him, and where men have the doing of them themselves, they are thrown back as dung in their faces; where any rightly desire justification, where men have a right preparation of heart, so to seek the God of their fathers, as to find him and be accepted of him, it is through Jesus Christ, in whom he is well pleased.

In all your assemblies, prayers, exercises and meditations, you must be separated and drawn off from your former lovers, and you must be joined to him who God has sent to be a leader and a guide to you. Then you will find his assistance daily; and as you have assistance from him, you will find acceptance with God, and *he will show you the Father*. That, and nothing else, will satisfy the soul hungering and thirsting after God. *Show us the Father, and it suffices us*. So when Christ, the Mediator, comes to have wrought so far as the purifying of the soul, and the sanctifying of it, and thereby fitted it for his glory, such holy souls shall behold his glory; *for the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold* from them that walk uprightly*.

[*Note! God only gives to those who walk in righteousness, (uprightly). Don't confuse this with the false gospel of prosperity, which is an abomination. Until a man's lusts have been crucified on the inward cross of self-denial, the Lord certainly will withhold prosperity; for if he gave temporal riches to such an unregenerated old man of the flesh, he would only waste it on his lusts. But, after a man walks uprightly, the Lord will be sure his beloved ones have the good things of this life to enjoy to his glory.]

That you may be brought to this state, and kept and preserved in it; that the Heavens may rain down fatness upon you, and that you may feel the living virtues that flow from Christ to every member, is the labor and travail of the

servants of God, for their own souls, and the souls of others that are in unity and fellowship with the Holy Spirit.



Text in Light Blue or **Bold Light Blue** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

SERMON XXIV

Captive Sinners Set Free by Jesus Christ

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire-House, April 29, 1688

**The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to preach the gospel to the poor** [in spirit];
he has sent me to heal the brokenhearted [who mourn due to their
slavery to sin],
to preach release to the captives [of sin],
and recovery of sight to the [spiritually] **blind,**
to deliver [free] **those who are oppressed** [in slavery to sin],

Luke 4:18-19

THERE is nothing that will make people live to God, but what they receive from God. For as all men are by nature in a state of death, so there must be something beyond nature to make them alive again; and this is what every one ought to wait upon God for, that you may feel something that is supernatural, and that you may be acquainted with God's gift; the gift of God, said the scripture, is eternal life. Many find a life in this world that is not the gift of God. The life that people have in sin, it is not the gift of God; the delights and pleasures of this world have become a life unto them. The world is what every one must die to; those who are not dead to the world live

to themselves; they do not live to God for no one can live to God, but by the life that comes from him. What people receive from man, gathers them to man; what they receive of God, carries them to God.

So men have made gatherings, and have communicated of what they have to one another, and by the virtue of their communications to each other, they have made themselves a people. Many men have gathered many people, many churches, and they live to those who gathered them. They do not live to God, never having received something from God; but all those who come to receive the gift of God, they die to the world, and they come to live such a life as the world does not love, does not care for, and has no pleasure in. *If you were of the world, said Christ, the world would love you; but because you are not of the world, they hate you.* How should this be understood, were they not some of the men of that generation? How does he mean they were not of the world? *Why, I have taken you out of it,* said he; and yet they were there still, and they were named by certain names, the sons of such and such men; yet for all that, they were not of the world; and what differed in them was being made partakers of that life which the world did not know [or appreciate].

And so there will be an enmity in the world against the life of holiness; those of the world will hate anybody that lives in it; and as it was then, so it is at this day, those who are of the world, they hear and receive those things that are of the world, from the men of this world; but those who are of God, they hear those who are of God, and they receive the things of God, and their greatest comfort and joy that they have is in their communion with God in Christ Jesus, through whom, as through a conduit, the blessings of the father are ministered to them, and through whom, as from the fountain of life, their life is renewed from day to day.

But these things are hidden from the world, prudently hidden from those wise of mind; they cannot dig into the depth, nor ascend to this height; they cannot *comprehend the length and the breadth of the things of God, which*

are in Christ Jesus. They may reach unto something of the love of God that is in the creation; they can tell when the sun shines upon them, and when the rain falls upon their fields, and when it falls in due season They call it a blessing; and while the covenant with winter and summer remains, they look upon it as comfortable, and perhaps sometimes will bestow a saying, *I thank God for it.* All these things are beneath us, and *there is neither love nor hatred known by them all. I saw the wicked, said one, I beheld his dwelling place, and he flourished like unto a green bay-tree, and was wicked still, despite all this.*

But now, those who see where they live, who live to God, they can say, that their leaf never withers, but *they bring forth their fruit in due season.* But he did not do the same, that is the wicked man that flourished like a green bay-tree; behold I looked, and he was removed, and his place was no more to be found. There came a blasting upon all his blessing and his flourishing came to an end; his riches perished, and his good things passed away from him. But the man *whose delight is in the law of God,* and makes it his pleasure both night and day, *he is like a tree planted by the rivers of water, whose leaf never fades, and brings forth his fruit in due season.*

But this is hidden; there is nobody in the world that would not like to have something of this life too for then they would be sure of eternal life; but they would not die to the other life, they would not be crucified to the world, they would not be separated from their lovers. If they could get into the state of a righteous man, an hour or two before they die, when they are sure they shall die, it would please them; but to live that life that is to God, is to die to the world, and to part with that they have, their comfort, their joy, their peace and honor, and all their worldly enjoyments in it, before they can come to receive the gift of God, they think is hard. But those who long for a godly life, and have a mind to find it out without parting with the world's life, they deceive themselves.

Do not you see how men have deceived themselves in these days? They have

sought after the kingdom of God until they are scattered in their own way; they are quarrelling about their own way, as if they never had any scripture to be their rule. They cry the scripture is their rule; this is the way to eternal life, says one; and this is the way, says another; and the one and the other say all these ways are false except their own; and all these contenders about the way to eternal life, they all say the scripture is the rule.

[They all say the scripture is the rule, but they all have different scriptures they hold true, and different interpretations, while ignoring many others that conflict; so that there are 45,000 sects in Christendom. Each sect has taken a subset of scriptures and created their own imagined [**image** of] Jesus and God. These sects are the Whore of Babylon. The whore and her billions of followers worship a different Jesus, created from a subset of scriptures, ignoring hundreds others that conflict with her creation, and twisting others into the opposite of their meaning. Their god doesn't teach them, their god doesn't cleanse them of sin, or purify them, or perfect them; their god has the form but no power to renew, restore, regenerate, create a new creature. And those who follow these ministers of this other Jesus will not realize their error until they die, at which point the real Jesus, who has power, will say to them: Depart from me you workers of iniquity for I have never known you.]

And yet the scriptures speak of the way too, and tell us the way plainly; the way to rest, peace and life eternal. If the scriptures had been silent in it, and had said nothing but of genealogies and histories of armies and wars, that would be a different case; but the scriptures of the Old and New Testament speak of a certain way to eternal life, and say it is the way of holiness, *a highway shall be there for the redeemed and the ransomed of the Lord to walk in, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err in it and go astray*. Though he never took a degree at the university, he shall not err in it; though he is a fool in the account of the world, and never understood

Greek or Latin, yet he shall not err in this way.

The way that leads to the kingdom of God, is called the way of holiness; but while many have been reading in their books, they have been contending for a way of unholiness; no wonder then they have been quarrelling about it, and have all missed it, and that is the main point of all. Let them make a way, which way they will, and frame it ever so wisely, according to the best wit they have, be it a way that has all material qualifications that should make it a way of holiness, these men may walk in it; but they will never find the way to the kingdom of God, though they have sought it out. Go to one place and another place, and ask them, what is your way? Our way, say they, is the right way, the most sure and certain way that can be found for people to walk in. But where will it lead me? It will lead you to the kingdom of God. That is what I would have; but will it lead me to holiness? No, never in this world, you must never come to holiness; do the best you can do here, it is but sin; the best day's work you make is but sin; the best child of God on earth cannot live a day without sin. Do you require that in your way? Yes; then I have done with that, and must go to another people.

So many have gone many ways to the kingdom of God, and when the upshot is come, they have found every way a polluted way, a sinful way. I know this way will never lead me to God; sin first led me from God; I had been well enough as I was created at first, if I had never sinned against God; a sinful way will lead me from God. It is against common sense, and against rationality, to say we first departed from God by sin, and must go to God again by a sinful way. Who will believe that such a way will lead men to God's kingdom? and that any way will lead men to God, which does not lead them to holiness?

The Psalmist said, *if I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me*; though a man keeps close to meetings, and ordinances, and duties, and performances, it seems iniquity remains still; there is no rooting it out in this world. This iniquity, continuing and remaining with a man, makes all

his performances, duties, and prayers unacceptable to God; they are all turned back again upon him, and cast as dung upon his face, and true enough too; so that there is no coming unto God in this way; those coming to God know well enough they are not reconciled to God [while sinning], if they are men who are conscientious.

There is a sort of people so stupid and sordid in their judgment, that if a man tells them they are reconciled to God, they will believe him though their conscience reproves them a hundred times a day. If the parson of the parish says, that he has made *this child an heir of the kingdom of God and an inheritor of eternal life*; I know some have believed it forty years after, and have born themselves up upon this man's word all their life. Do you think there is any danger of me, that in baptism I was made an inheritor of eternal life, and an heir of the kingdom of God? God has not appointed ordinances in his church for nothing. I am not talking about sordid hard-hearted people, who have never turned inward to inquire their status with God, whether they are converted; but I speak of sober conscientious people, who do not desire to be cheated in a point of salvation, though they have been deceived a long while, they may be undeceived. Then they must take this for certain doctrine, that nothing can reconcile them to their Maker but what takes away sin. *God does not hear sinners*, he will never be reconciled to a man in this world as a sinner; but there are many thousands (blessed be God) in this age, as well as in other ages, that were sinners, and reconciled to God through Christ, and had remission of sin; but there was never any man in his sin reconciled to God, though he believed the truth; if he did not come to the sanctification of the spirit, he could never be reconciled to God.

So that there has been in all ages a way of the working of the Spirit of God in the hearts of those who believe, to prepare them for the sinless kingdom, for that glorious kingdom, into which nothing that hurts, defiles or corrupts, can enter. And because we cannot enter with corruption and defilement, he has appointed the ministration of his Spirit to work out what might hinder the cleansing of us from sin, that we might have an abundant entrance into

his glorious kingdom; so that while they say there is an impossibility of living without sin, they might as well have said that it is impossible to enter into the kingdom of God; for never any shall come into the kingdom of God, but those who are without sin; for there is no purgatory after death.

The Papists have a better conceit than the Protestants in that respect. The Protestants conceive sin to be expelled at the point of death; and they say, all the sins of believers, all the guilt of sin, after we are believers, is pardoned, forgiven and done away, by the death of Christ upon the cross; we will have it, if we can get it. If men can imagine a way into the kingdom of God, they will have one. They believe that a man may sin and contract no guilt; and that he may sin until his dying day, and then all sin shall pass away, and he shall enter into God's kingdom. The Papists say none can come to Heaven until they are purged from sin; and they say God has appointed a place for that purpose, and persons must go into purgatory, and they must lie there until they are purged, and purified, and fitted for Heaven. Now, say the Protestants, truly; there is no such thing, we find no such thing mentioned in the scripture, therefore such a thing as this cannot be; for the apostle said, we have declared to you the whole counsel of God, and he speaks not a word of purgatory in all the New Testament. The Protestants have imagined a way to help themselves,* and the Papists, also, to help themselves, and both lie under danger. As for the Papists, if their priests are mistaken, and there is no such place as purgatory, then they must be brought back to the doctrine of the scripture, which declares, *that as death leaves us, so judgment shall find us; and as we sow so we must reap; if we sow to the flesh, then of the flesh we shall reap corruption*. Then the Protestants, likewise, if they are mistaken in saying, a man may act sin and yet contract no guilt, then they must be brought back to the doctrine of the scriptures, that tell us, the soul that sins must die. If a righteous man forsakes his righteousness, and does that which is evil, his righteousness shall be remembered no more, but in the sin that he has committed, he shall die.

[*The Protestant doctrine of instant justification, sainthood, and

salvation, through beginning belief was created by Martin Luther, who created his demonic doctrine by ignoring the books of Hebrews, Jude, James, Esther, and Revelation. He called the book of James a "letter of straw," and said regarding the Book of Revelation that he could "in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it." All scripture is true. If you have to ignore certain scriptures to maintain your beliefs in other scriptures, then you do not understand the scriptures you think you understand.]

This is sound doctrine. I had rather trust the doctrine of the prophets and apostles than the doctrine of all others, either Protestants or Papists; and had rather depend those inspired by the Holy Ghost for a doctrine for salvation, than upon the doctrines of those who say, there is no inspiration now days. Some conceive this scripture may be interpreted thus and thus; and others conceive it means so and so, but we must, say they, submit to better judgment. I am a fallible man; I submit it to better judgments. Now when people are concerned for immortality and eternity, to have such things dished out in such a manner, what souls are so dull that they would not arouse themselves, and consider and look about them before they depart from here, and how it shall go with them after they leave this life?

We are now to work out our own salvation; that is on our part. None ever have wrought out this salvation, it is wrought out on God's part already, and it is to be made ours; he that is our Savior, he has suffered for our sins, and rose again for our justification; *he was made to us, of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.* Now wisdom signifies the opening of the counsel of God, righteousness signifies the subjection of our wills to the will of God; sanctification signifies obedience to the Spirit of Christ. Sanctification signifies obedience to something; to what? What shall we be obedient unto? What is our rule? He that is led by the Spirit of Christ, he is his; but he that is *not led by the Spirit of Christ is none of his*; so that it is plain, sanctification signifies obedience to the Spirit of Christ, and redemption signifies buying again, or setting free from bondage.

You know when our friends are in captivity, as in Turkey, or elsewhere, we pay down our money for their redemption, but we will not pay our money if they are kept in their fetters still. Would not anyone think himself to have been cheated, if he pays so much money for their redemption, and the bargain be made so that he shall be said to be redeemed, and be called a redeemed captive, but he must wear his fetters still? How long? As long as he has a day to live [which is how long are we told we must remain captive to sin, until we die].

This is for bodies; but now I am speaking of souls. Christ must be made to me redemption, and rescue me from captivity. Am I a prisoner anywhere? Yes; truly, truly, everyone who commits sin, said Christ, is a slave to of sin; he is a slave to sin. If you have sinned, you are a slave, a captive, who must be redeemed out of captivity. Who will pay a price for me? I am poor, I have nothing; I cannot redeem myself; who will pay a price for me? There is one having come, who has paid a price for me; that is well, that is good news, then I hope I shall come out of my captivity. What is his name; is he called a Redeemer? So then I do expect the benefit of my redemption, and that I shall go out of my captivity. No, say they, you must abide in sin, as long as you live. What benefit then do I have by my redemption? I could have been in captivity no longer; if I had not been redeemed. I must wear my shackles and fetters all, and be subject to my old master and patron, and when he will have me be drunk, I must be drunk; and when he will have me be unclean, I must be unclean.

Thus there are many professed Christians, (you see it with your eyes), that will tell you they believe all the articles of the creed, and they have been baptized into the Christian faith, and can recite all the principles of the Christian religion, and perform the duty of Christians in going to church, saying their prayers, and possibly even giving alms; they are such as would be called Christians. They would be called so, yet they *are not redeemed from their vain conversations*; for what makes their shackles and fetters

about them? When their old master tells them to be drunk, they will be drunk; and when he tells them to commit whoredom, or lie, or cheat their neighbor, they will do it. You do believe the devil leads you to this; you will not say the Spirit of God leads you to do it. If one demands, why did you do it? You say, "the devil prevailed upon me." What, has the devil power over men after they are redeemed? What sort of redemption is this? Then comes in the old scam again: "we are redeemed from the punishment of our sin, but not from the act of it."

How if those who are called Ranters* had told me this tale, it would be typical; but when doctors of divinity tell us this tale, it is so unlike divinity, that it is *carnal, sensual, and devilish* to tell believers they are redeemed from the punishment of sin, but not from the act of sin; that this is the benefit which we receive from Christ's sufferings; that we may keep sinning without cost; that there is no guilt contracted by it; will any man or woman, that understand they have a soul, venture their immortal souls on this divinity? I hope not. They will not venture their immortal souls on this foundation-doctrine. I hope God will awaken the consciences of people, that they will not hazard their souls upon such a carnal, devilish foundation; that if the devil should preach, he could not preach a worse doctrine than this, to persuade Christians they may live in sin, and sin will not hurt them, nor impair or break their peace with God, and reconciliation with him.

[*Ranters believed that Christ had freed them from the law and so they were free to commit any sin defined by the law without guilt. To most of Christendom in the 17th Century, this was a radical belief. The Ranters engaged in drunkenness and adultery openly while claiming to be sons of God entitled to their freedom. Most of the Ranters were converted to become Quakers, seeing the error of their way. Notice the similarity of Ranters to today's Christendom, who think all the law is dead, (except for tithing, insisting on your money), and grace excuses their life-long sin; when the reality is that the moral laws of love and behavior are

still very much alive and require obedience, while tithing, sabbaths, foods, days, etc., are dead. Christendom has thus deteriorated to have made the blood of Jesus and unholy thing, breaking the everlasting covenant, doing spite to the Spirit of Grace, and trampling under foot the son of God. Today the retribution for this abomination looms not far.]

I will tell you how it has been with me. In my childhood if I had spoken a vain word, or a false word, I had contracted such a guilt by it, that I was ashamed to draw near to God or to pray to him; I knew he would not hear liars, I knew there was no way to be accepted without repentance and amendment of life. I believe others have met with the same dealing from God, by the secret strokes of conviction that have come upon their hearts, when they have sinned against God.

So that I am still of the mind, that the persons who depend upon this kind of doctrine, do at times [doubt their beliefs], especially when sickness comes, and death looks them in the face, or in times of common contagion or pestilence, at such a time they have a weight of guilt upon their consciences; for this doctrine will not support them at death, when then they believe they have contracted guilt, or committed sin.

I have wished many times that the Lord would open the eyes and hearts of the people of this city and of this nation, to see how miserably they have ventured their souls. Will merchants in this city ever venture their goods at such a rate as men commonly venture their souls? What, will they venture their goods in a ship without a bottom, before she goes to sea? Now this doctrine does not have a foundation; shall I believe a person that tells me I do not contract guilt, when I feel it upon my heart; when I commit whoredom and drunkenness, and cheat my neighbors, shall any one persuade me that I do not contract guilt?

O friends! We are speaking of great matters; it is about eternity, that we are

speaking, it is about the hazard of eternal happiness; therefore I pray, let every one be serious, and consider what I say, for I speak in God's name, and on your behalf. Men must come to a true search in themselves regarding the way of life in which they live. Many support themselves by *the doctrines and precepts of men*, and they buoy themselves into presumption of salvation. Let them examine whether it is a life that has its support from the Spirit of God; this is material for every one to consider. There are none who can live to God, but by the life they receive from God; the grace of God, which brings salvation has appeared to all men. Now here is a universal doctrine.

There is a sort of men in this city and nation who tell us that saving grace is given only to the elect. Saving grace is given to all men; but you must construe those words, *all the elect*, where they are somewhat injurious, and would cast off the condition of the text, if they make a distinction in the latter part of the sentence, for it will not be good sense. The grace of God that brings salvation, has appeared to *all* the elect, teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts. Here is *us* taken out of the *all*. The same grace, that is our teacher, appears to be the teacher of others, though they turn it into lasciviousness [a license for lusts]. The grace is the same, though they make many school-distinctions between common and saving grace. The apostle explains it, by telling what grace he means; the grace of God, which brings salvation, has appeared to all men, and that is by teaching us; what does it teach? I pray consider it; it teaches us to deny all ungodliness and all worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. Where is sin now, if a man is taught by this grace, and the dictates of it. Can a man live in sin, and yet live righteously, soberly and godly too? Can a man live in sin, and yet deny all ungodliness at the same time? Where have men's understanding been, that cannot understand their mother tongue, and consider sense? Where are men's understandings that will say, I may deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and yet follow the lusts of my own heart? You would think I speak nonsense if I should speak thus; and yet we have been put off with such nonsensical fluff as this. We must pray to God to send his Holy Spirit into our hearts to enable us to live godly, righteous, and

sober lives, and at the same time believe that we shall never do it; but that it is a business of impossibility.

Now when men come to say these things together, and when they consider between God and their own souls, how it is with them, many are amazed to think they should ever be put off with such incongruous, disagreeing, and dissonant things that are not consistent with one another.

But do you think it is possible for any man to live without sin? Yes, or else I would say it is impossible for any to be reconciled to God; for God will never be reconciled to sinners, as such; for his bargain and covenant is made of such kind of articles: "wash yourself, make yourself clean, put away the evil of your deeds from before my eyes. Cease doing evil; learn to do well, etc. Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "though your sins are as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be as white wool." Isaiah 1:16-17; still these are the terms, *put away the evil of your doings*, then patience, mercy and long-suffering, shall be extended to you. God will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold; what, from those who say their prayers, or go to the church or meeting? No, but *he will withhold no good thing from those who walk uprightly*. Psa 84:11. These are the men that will receive grace.

And when the Lord distinguishes by his prophet whom he would have among them; he speaks of a sort of people that called upon the name of the Lord; *those who feared the Lord, and spoke often one to another*; that is, of the goodness of God; they were a sort of people that *trembled at the word of God*; a sort of people that did not do as others did: hunt after pleasures, riches, and the honors of the world, but to be acquainted with the inward word that wrought upon their hearts; *in that day that I make up my jewels, they shall be mine, said the Lord*. Whose shall the others be? You will claim these for yours, but whose shall the others be: those who think not upon your name, and tremble not at your word? There is a place for them too. Tophet is prepared of old, made both wide and large; the fuel thereof is fire

and brimstone, and much wood, and the breath of the Lord kindles it. This is for all that are wicked, and that work iniquity.

This is in the Old Testament; then comes the New Testament, in John's Revelation; there is a separation again. There is a sort of people that are called the true worshippers, and the angel was commanded to go and measure the temple, and those who worshipped therein. The outward temple was not measured, but left for the Gentiles to tread in, and left without the measure; for outside are dogs, and sorcerers,* and the impure, and murderers, and idolaters, and whoever the deception of lies and cheating. And then the Lord speaks to his prophets in the Old Testament again, *if you put a difference between the precious and the vile, then you shall be as my mouth unto them*; but if you huddle them altogether, and *sew pillows under elbows*, then you shall not be as my mouth.

[*dogs and sorcerers are the ministers of Christendom. As dogs, they lick the sores of their congregation; they feed on the sins of the people in their congregations, telling them they are righteous, receiving their continual gratitude for giving them assurances of the favor of God and heaven to come; they are forgers of lies and physicians of no value. As sorcerers, they practice witchcraft with rituals and ceremonies that supposedly make a man acceptable to God, while that man remains a slave to sin, thus serving Satan, not God.]

So that in all ages God aimed at a separation of the state and condition of his people; and one sort of people were purified, through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; and another sort were unsanctified and unpurified, and remained in their sin; and the end of Christ's coming into the world, it was to call people to repentance. *He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, and to leave off their sin. To as many as received him, to them, he gave power to become the sons of God, to as many as believed on his name. Whose sons were the other? They made as

high a noise of profession as the other. He tells them who is their father: *you are of your father the devil*; and he precisely proved it, by the following reason: that they did the devil's works, therefore, they were the devil's children. It was Christ himself, the greatest doctor of divinity who ever was in the world, who spoke these words. And this is the manner of logic by which he argues with the Pharisees, to make them believe that they were the devil's children; *those who do the devil's works are the devil's children*; but *you do his works*, therefore you are his children; so they sought to kill him, they could not bear such arguments.

If one should go and search out a people in this city and nation, and see one man of this religion, another of that religion, and pick them out, and use this argument with them: there is a man who professes high, he professes a light within; if you look upon his deeds they are dead and dark, why then he is one of the devil's children? If you put me to prove this, I say because he does the devil's works; he is an extortionist, a deceiver, a drunkard, an unclean person, and does the devil's works, and so is none of God's children. And so go to another sort and use this argument; it is safe enough, you can never fail in this kind of argument which Christ used; and if people would use it with themselves, and think themselves no better, then we should have people confess themselves to be the devil's children.

None come to be God's children, until they come to acknowledge their lost estate, their deplorable condition; that they are fallen from God, and through sin and iniquity have gotten into a nature that is at enmity with God. Then they will cry out, *who shall deliver me from this body of death, and childship of Satan, this heirship of wrath*? I am an heir of an inheritance; I am an heir of wrath, and I would willingly part with this inheritance and heirship, and have *an inheritance with the saints in light*. We shall never know this, until we come to divinity without sophistry, and without tricks and quirks, and come to Christ's reasoning. He who does the devil's work is the devil's child; then they will confess this is of the devil, and the other is of the devil. This is an evil work; and I see that I have need to be

brought into another condition.

When people come to an acknowledgment of the truth, and of their own condemnation, then they are *one step* towards redemption and salvation. No one ever took a step towards their salvation, until they acknowledged their own condemnation. He that sanctifies, and those who are sanctified, are all of one; and those who are joined to the Lord, are one Spirit. An evil tree, said Christ, cannot bring forth good fruit. When Christ spoke this, he spoke it to men and women, and he spoke it *of* men and women, and not of trees. And when he said no man can gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, he speaks of a generation of men. As if he had said, this thorn must be translated and changed into another nature before it can bring forth grapes; and this thistle must be changed into another nature before it can bring forth figs.

There must be a change in the nature of man before there can be a change of the fruit and effect of his doings; whatever he sows, that he shall also reap; whatever a man does in the body, he must give an account of it at the day of judgment; for the books will be opened, and men judged according to the things written in those books. If there is a book for you and me, I will warrant you there is a great deal in it; there is a recorder and a clerk for the book, which God has opened in every man's conscience; and there is set down every man's transgressions and his sins. Said one, you have written my transgressions as with the point of a diamond; you have engraved it so deep, that it seems impossible that it should ever be blotted out again. Some have had their sins so deeply engraved in their conscience, that they have thought they would never be blotted out; they were written as with the pen of a diamond.

When people see and consider that they have ventured their souls upon such shaky grounds, I hope they will be awakened to seek after righteousness; when they see there is nothing good in them. Where there is anything good, it is God that has given it to them. Some will say, if I am perverse, corrupt

and wicked, I cannot help it, therefore I must be beholden to my Maker to help me, else I must never be helped. Now, because God knows that we are helpless, *he has laid help upon one that is mighty*, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ has sent forth his Spirit into the world to convince the world of sin, and to lead his people into all truth. And this grace that comes by Jesus Christ has been so universally shown, and so universally extended to all men, that I never met with a man yet who had none of it. But let them be as bad and as dark as they could, yet the light of Christ shined in that darkness, into the darkest heart, that ever I met with in all my life. He shows men, that his light shines in darkness, and the darkness cannot comprehend it.

Therefore the work that God has set us about, and the service which he requires at the hands of many of us, is to turn men from their own darkness unto the light of Christ their Savior, and from the devil's power, that has enslaved them, to the power of God that can redeem them; and yet we are far enough from what they call free will; it is God's will that every one should be saved. But some will not be saved; they will keep their own wills and not resign them up to God; they have a free will to go to destruction. As for salvation, if they will obtain it, they must part with their own wills, and they must take a yoke and burden upon them, before they can be saved. If people can have their wills, they will not take Christ's yoke upon them. He who will be Christ's disciple must deny his own will and take up his daily cross; these are the terms of the gospel.

But you will say, no man, by all the power he has, can redeem himself, and no man can live without sin. We will say amen to that. But if men tell us, that when Gods power comes to help us, and to redeem us out of sin, that it cannot be effected, then we must deny such a doctrine, and I hope you do the same. Would you approve of it if I should tell you, that God puts forth his power to do such a thing, but the devil hinders him? That it is impossible for God to do it, because the devil does not like it? That it is impossible that any one should be free from sin, because the devil has got such a power in

them, that God cannot cast him out?

This is lamentable doctrine. Has not this been preached, this doctrine of impossibility of living without sin? It does in plain terms say, though God does interpose his power, it is impossible because the devil has so rooted sin in the nature of man. Is not man God's creature, and cannot he newly make him, and cast sin out of him? If you say sin is rooted deeply in man, I say so too, yet not so deeply rooted but that Christ Jesus is entered so deeply into the root of the nature of man, and he has received power to destroy the devil and his works, and to recover and redeem man into his primitive nature of righteousness and holiness; or else it is false, that he is able to save, to the uttermost all that come unto God by him; and we must throw away the bible, if we say that it is impossible for God to deliver man out of sin. Is not Christ entered into the root of our nature? And has he not taken upon him the seed of Abraham, after the flesh? Has he not entered into the root of all men's natures, and tasted death for every man that he might quicken every one that is dead in sins and trespasses? All these things speak the love of God to mankind, in order to their salvation.

Much might be said to these things, these clouds of error and darkness that have overspread the nation; yet, this I say: if one were to speak of it ever so long, it must be by the eye that God gives you, that you must see it. It is he who opens the hearts of men as he did Lydia's. If there had not been the power of God that reached her heart, Paul could not have opened it.

When all is said that can be said, the counsel of God which has sounded in your ears, is recommended to you, that everyone may retire in quietness and stillness of mind to wait for the feeling of that quickening power of the Spirit of Christ that is sent into the hearts of men; that it may open your eyes to see your present state. Then you will see a better state, a further state; and when you see with your inward eye that your state is not so good as you would have it to be, then trust and rely upon the all sufficient and powerful operation of God's Holy Spirit to mend your state, and give you power over

your corruptions, and to go on from one step to another, towards the cleansing and sanctification of your souls, so that you may receive something from God to enable you to live to God. For all that you receive from men will only make you live to men, but what you receive from God, will help you to live to God; that will purify you and sanctify you, and make you clean through the word. So through the word you will come to cleanness, purity and holiness. And when you have come to the way of holiness, you may believe you have found the way to God's kingdom, and never until then.

It is not enough to make a profession, but we must live up to the profession of that religion that we make; it is not holding this tenet and the other tenet, and saying, this minister, I am sure, preaches the truth; you may be a child of the devil for all that. I now speak indifferently to all people, without respect to any sort. Those who believe they are walking towards the kingdom of God, and yet their way is not a holy way, they have cheated themselves, and deceived their own souls, and they had better look about them and take heed what they do. The clock is ticking, and time is fading away, and our life may end we know not how soon. It is good to prize and improve time, while you have it, and bring your deeds to the light; see what reproofs, instructions, counsels and openings you have met with from the Lord, and see how you have answered and been obedient to them, and so you will come to take a sound and infallible account of your condition; and if it is not as good as it should be, wait upon the Lord to mend it; he who made you, can mend you; he who made your ears, must unstop your ears to hear the word of God.

To that power that carries on the works of sanctification and redemption by his word, to that word I must leave you, and to his spirit I commit you. This word will be with you, and if you part not with it, it will not part with you; it will go with you to your houses, and to your shops, and to your beds; it will lie down with you at night, and rise with you in the morning. To that end, Christ is a leader and governor, and the captain of our salvation, to lead the

van, and carry you on in the way of salvation; and as many as follow Christ, and are led by the spirit of God, they are the children of God.

SERMON XXV

The Sheep of Christ Hear His Voice

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire-House May 10, 1688

The true shepherd said: My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me [they obey]. John 10:27

THE sheep of the true fold hear and know the voice of Christ, the good shepherd, and hear the voice of strangers too. But, said he, the stranger they will not follow. This scripture has been a mark of distinction in all ages that has been peculiarity bestowed upon the people of God, that they have had a discerning knowledge to make a certain distinction between those who were of God, and those who were of the world. Now those who are of God hear us, said the apostle.

Now, that you may all find in yourselves this peculiar gift of God, to be able to understand and discern between the precious and the vile, that you might know the ministration of life from the ministration of death, you must all be gathered inwardly into what you have received of God; for those who are only exercised with gifts and parts, and acquirements that appertain to this world, they have been always subject to delusions, apt to be led away into a bypath and crooked way, that leads to destruction. But those who are under the government and direction of the gift of God, they have been able thereby to make such a distinction of voices, and of sounds, that they have been preserved from the delusions of the age.

This was the difference of old between the prophets of God and the false prophets, between the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the false apostles; the difference was not so much in their words, for they had in a great measure the same words. If the true prophets used to say, *thus said the Lord*, the false prophets would say so too. If the true prophets declared against sin, the false prophets likewise would do so for *the false prophet stole his word from his neighbor*. But the greater matter by which the people of the Lord were preserved, was, that hidden and divine wisdom they received of God, by which they discerned the voice of the spirit from the voice of strangers, from the voice of those who were of the flesh; and that was the cause that the Christians in the primitive days did not adhere to, and follow those false apostles that came to them in their own names, and held a form of godliness, but denied the power of it.

But they among them in whom their witchcrafts did enter, they went away from the spirit, and sought to be *made perfection the flesh*; they went to the outward observation, and to the *beggarly rudiments of things that perish with the using and from the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus*.

And as it has been in those ages of which we have read, so it comes to pass in this our age, in which a dispensation of the spirit of truth is manifested and revealed unto the children of men; there is a remnant that have received the testimony of eternal life, and have believed the testimony, and waited on him of whom the testimony is born, not to have life by the testimony, but to have life in him; so they receive their life by the ministration of the Spirit of Christ, and they live to God. Others who have received no life from him, but have a life in the words, and sounds, and noises and terms, and distinguishing phrases of things; their life lies there, and they live not to God, but to themselves. Their glorying is not in the cross of Christ, but in the words and outside of things. So every one had need, at such a time as this, to approve their hearts unto the Lord, who knows the inside of people's profession, the inside of their religion, that knows how the heart is concerned towards God, and what they say and do upon the account of his

service; so that all that are met together might come to receive more and more of the life and virtue that sanctifies the soul of him who receives it.

For, alas! my friends, it is not the gathering together of the most excellent words about religion, and about worship and service, which will approve any man in the sight of God; that is *only the painting of a sepulcher*, and covering the rottenness that is in many; but the Lord sees into the inside of every professor. Whoever *names the name of Christ and does not depart from iniquity*, they only take his name in vain, and contract a guilt upon their own souls. So that every one who seems to be religious, ought to inquire from where their profession springs; if it springs from a real profession of a measure of what sanctifies the Life, and shows itself forth, in its working and operation, many times abundantly more, than it does in word and profession; it manifests itself in *holiness and righteousness*, to the honor of God. It is the aim and design of all such to exalt the name of him whom they profess, by *holiness and righteousness* shining forth in their works, for it will never shine through words alone; many good words may be spoken, yet God not glorified, but his name may be dishonored by them; but whoever comes to feel what is life in themselves, they know what will honor God; they feel the birth immortal that is of God, of his own begetting by the word of truth.

This living birth is what brings forth living praises; the other is but flesh, that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and it glorifies the flesh, and when the flesh is most of all glorified, most of all exalted, it is then but as the flower of the field; it is then cut down and withers. The sun of righteousness shines with the beams of the everlasting glory of God, and causes it to wither and come to nothing.

So friends, let your minds be gathered inward, that you may be able in your own selves, by virtue of the divine gift of God, to *distinguish between the voice of the true shepherd, and the voice of a stranger*, so that your minds may not follow a strange voice.* So that you may follow the Lord with your

whole heart, with a full purpose of heart; for there is a real word of prophecy discovered in the inward parts, which does distinguish between the precious and the vile in every one's particular; and what is precious in one, it answers to what is precious in another; and what is vile in one, it answers to what is vile in another.

[*Until spiritual maturity, the voice of the opposition can be indistinguishable from the voice of the Holy Spirit. The enemy will pretend to be the Lord, always tempting you to do **something wrong that you want to do**, or tempting you to do something that you have been told not to do. **When the enemy succeeds in tempting you, then the messages you receive become 90% plus from the enemy, with the Lord only *gently and very infrequently* repeating His warnings and orders that are contrary to what you are doing**; but because you have so many more messages from the enemy encouraging you to continue down the wrong path, it is very easy to think the Lord's messages are the enemy's. The enemy also speaks with messages that are obviously not from the Lord, but which criticize or complain about what you are doing wrong, further convincing you that you are right.

There is a voice of the Lord like thunder over the waters described in many Old Testament passages. This is radically different than the small still voice we hear from within our hearts from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit and the Word of the Lord within speak with words from Jesus, so we are hearing *from* the Son of god. But until we can truly hear the Voice of the Lord, we will not know for sure it is the Lord speaking to us. From the Word of the Lord within: "you will always have doubts until you hear His voice. My voice is like thunder over waters. You will hear His voice when He calls you." We will hear the Lord's voice like thunder over waters for the first time after we have

submitted to the baptism of fire and death to then be called forth and resurrected with Him as a new creature. Then, as John 10:3-5 states: we will know his voice, he will lead us out of the world to the kingdom, and we will flee from other voices. When you hear His voice for the first time, you have passed over from death to life; and once you have heard His voice like thunder over waters, you will ***always know*** whether or not it is the Lord speaking to you.

We first have to listen to the Holy Spirit and the word of the Lord within to hear and obey His many teachings and commands. Then with long persistence and patience in doing obedient works of repentance, we experience the baptism of fire and death, to then hear the Voice of the Lord like thunder over waters as we pass from death to life. Until then, we have to be on our guard to not be deceived by the enemy, pretending to be the Lord speaking to us. **Based on the advice of Edward Burrough, (click to read), a giant in the early Quakers, until we can distinguish between the voice of the Lord and the voice of the enemy, we should do nothing for the Lord but follow his commands to repent.** You may hear the Lord tell you to go ahead with your considering to buy something or do something that you feel is necessary; and **providing there it is nothing that you know to be wrong, or it is nothing He has told you not to do in the past**, you can follow His suggestions before you can distinguish His voice. If you don't need what you are considering to purchase, He may plainly tell you, "you don't need it." If it is not necessary to do something you are considering, He may tell you, "it's not necessary." If it is necessary and/or needed, he may encourage you to proceed.

William Penn wrote, "Though it is the duty of all to walk in the light, and to wait for it, that by it they may be instructed in the

way of life and salvation, yet **it is they only who are actually led* by it, [the light] that can rightly discern between the false spirits and the true.**"

* By way of review: to be *guided* or *led* by the light, the light must first arise in your heart like a magnificent star, so that you are shown everything to do and told everything to say; the unmistakable arising of the light comes from faith in the voice.]

For there is an inward and secret mystery of iniquity, as well as a mystery of godliness. The mystery of godliness is when God is manifested in the flesh; the mystery of iniquity is, when the wicked one is making himself manifest, and appears and shows himself in the flesh, that he may rise up and glory in the flesh.

Now the eternal truth, which never changes, this is what gives a discerning that has always put a difference between the true and false prophets, the true and false apostles, and between the true and false ministers. The difference has not been so much in words as in power. As the apostle speaks concerning some in his days, who had endeavored to deceive and to draw men aside from the simplicity of the gospel: *when I come*, said he, *I will know*. Now, he does not assert, that he will pay particular attention to their words, whether they were judicious or not; for he says, *I will not know their words, but their power*. How should he know their power if he were not in the power himself? Now this divine power, as every one acquaints himself with it, it works unto the sanctification of them, when they have fellowship with the stirrings and movings of all others that are partakers of it. This is what will establish and confirm your minds in the true faith and simplicity of the truth, so that you do not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. If you have regard to the principle of divine truth that you have received from God, then you can receive confirmation from any one that has a measure according to it. There is a measuring line and the reed of the sanctuary that

measures the temple and all that dwell therein; that measures them with one reed and one measure, and everyone answers to that measure, according to the stature and degree of growth of the grace of God they arrive to; and now they are come to a fixed foundation.

Others there are in the world, that have laid their foundation upon this creaturely help, and the other creaturely help, upon this man, and the other man; but now true Christians come to have their foundation, their rooting and building upon Christ Jesus, upon that word of life that first of all gathered their minds into a desire after holiness, into a desire after acquaintance with God that made them.

You that are true Christians can remember how you were begotten, and what did beget you; that word of God that is incorruptible, that is immortal, that was not of a dying quality, that need not be supported by this, and that, and the other means, but it has its support in itself, it has its nourishment in itself, and it grows up in itself, and everyone that receives it they grow up in it, until they come more and more to partake of the life and qualities of it; *that as he is, so they may be in the present world.*

But this is never known, but where the word of God has its free passage. Many have tasted of this word of God, and by tasting of it, have been acquainted with the power of the world to come; they knew well enough the power that would bring forth another world, a new Heaven and a new earth, and righteousness in it. Many have felt the power that have never continued to see the working of it, never continued to see and witness what this power would work; going aside from the power of the world that was to come, they have never seen the coming of it, but their foolish hearts have been darkened again, and their imaginations have grown vain, and they have conceived to themselves a false liberty to the flesh, and their wills have been strong, and have prevailed over them; that though they had tasted of the powers that did belong to the world to come, they never saw the working and operation of that power to bring to pass what by sight and vision they

did behold.

Therefore it' is needful for every one of you, in every state and condition the Lord has brought you into, to keep yourselves in a deep humility; to know the afflictions, temptations and trials you are under, and to exercise your minds, not only on account of what you have got over, but let every one know the state and condition in which at present they are laboring; for when some come to look at what sufferings and difficulties they have got over, they are apt to be exalted above measure, and lifted up in their minds; let every one consider what is their present state and work, their help lies in that condition. Some have always a foundation of their faith present with them, that they may feel the object of their faith where they hope for help, where they hope for comfort and strength to be present with them.

Now every one that believes in the word of God, their care is, that they may know this word of God, that they may hear it, feel it, and behold the beauty of it under the exercises of it; how it conducts and leads, how it counsels and advises, that so, in all things they are to pass through, they may not be as those who have run into it; as those who do this and that of their own wills, but may be properly followers of something.

Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice. John 18:37

Since Jesus is the truth, John 14:6, to be *of the truth* is to be in union with
Jesus and God,

one with them, they in you and you in them;

and when you are in union with the Lord,

you hear his Voice that is like thunder over waters.

Until then, you hear the the small still voice of the Word of the Lord within
our hearts or from the Holy Spirit.

I go into this, or that, or the other thing, not to do mine own will; I do not run into it, but I am led into it. My leader goes before me, the word of God, that has conducted me and led me. I am a follower of God in all his

dispensations, and in all his leadings and guidances; I am to follow him, for he teaches me his way, he instructs me in the true way. The best of all his scholars and disciples are to be led and guided into that work and service they are to do, that they may run into no irregularity or absurdity, for he will lead you into holiness, righteousness and humility, where all become the servants of God in Christ Jesus, and servants to one another. There is a mutual concord and harmony in the work of this spirit, in the service of this power, where every one finds what they are appointed and directed to, and all the members of the body of Christ know they ought not to be disjointed and rent, and separated one from another, but tied together in joints and bands, to edify one another in the love of God; so that here is one spirit that has been the guide of this one people in all ages.

Many people have been guided by many guides, and they have been scattered, divided and separated one from another, and have been under this, that and the other name; but all God's people have been guided by the Spirit of Christ, that universal Spirit that is one with God. In the Old Testament times, and the New Testament times, they were all led by the universal Spirit of Christ, and they were of one heart, and of one mind, serving the Lord. There was a concord and unity among them; and if at any time any discord or division happened, it was because *the roaring lion that goes about continually seeking whom he may devour*, had found some or other that he might devour, and draw into his snares and traps; for there are some that he may, and some that he may not. Whose are those who this roaring lion may destroy? The devil knows who those are that he may prevail upon; he knows that those which are in the hands of God are out of his reach. *My Father*, said Christ, *is greater than all, and none shall pluck them out of my Father's hands*; yet doubtless those who are in the Father's hands are tempted and tried, the roaring lion goes about seeking to devour them if he might; a man that he devours, he swallows up with prejudice, enmity, covetousness and pride, and he will lead him into any evil thing; he has many gulps to swallow men up in, but if he meets with one that is kept in God's hands, he knows such a one is out of his reach, and he is not able to

catch him.

If he meets with a man that he can prevail over, as he did over our father Adam and mother Eve, such as are in their own hands, that stand upon their wit and parts, and knowledge and eloquence. Those who stand upon these things as their foundation, they are in their own keeping. These are the ones whom he may devour and catch, and ensnare in one or other of his traps, and swallow them up in one of his gulps and temptations. But seeing God has opened and manifested these things by his Spirit, and seeing the secret wiles of Satan are discovered and made known by the shining of his light, how ought every one that is a believer of the truth, to depend upon God for his protection, and be careful that he goes not out of his Father's hands, that he never trusts himself to his own keeping for his security and preservation, lest he meet with a temptation that may swallow him and devour him.

I remember our Lord Jesus Christ when he was upon earth, he put his disciples in mind of what happened long before, *remember Lot's wife*. You may take notice of her; the power of God took hold of her and brought her out of Sodom, and was leading her to a place of safety, but she had something of Adam's apostasy in her nature, she looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt. Our Savior was pleased to make use of this passage that happened some hundreds of years before, to show how she failed of coming to the place of safety, though she was led out of Sodom by the hands of one of the angels of God. O! Remember her; she was turned into a pillar of salt, and this remains instructive to this day.

If we remember where our safety is, and from whose hands we must expect it, we need not go to look at Lot's wife. We have seen many in our days that have stood fair for redemption. They have had a power revealed to them, that is able to redeem them, and save them to the uttermost; but afterward by exalting themselves above this power, and taking the government of themselves into their own hands, they have robbed God of his glory, and he has withdrawn himself from them, and then it was with them as with Saul;

when the Lord departed from him, the evil spirit entered into him.

We have before our eyes from day to day, those who have known the beginning of the redemption of God's power, and have been in a great measure brought out of Sodom, and out of the way of Egypt, and they have had opened to them the mystery of the kingdom of God for their encouragement, but at last they have taken and arrogated those gifts to themselves, and looking upon themselves as far excelling others, magnifying their parts as if they were their own, when they were the gifts of God. Then the Lord has left them, to let them see whether they could stand of themselves, and they have fallen, and been taken in the traps and snares of the devil, who, like a roaring lion is going about continually seeking whom he may devour.

Now, my friends, it greatly concerns us all to know what refuge we have to flee to, in a time of trial; we have a time of trial now, though not a time of external suffering and persecution, and enduring hardship yet upon us, to try our faith and trust in God; yet we have no reason to be secure, careless nor remiss in our present duty, nor to put the evil day far from us, but to be in the exercise of humility and watchfulness as becomes Christians; for there is now as much danger and peril in this time of liberty and tranquility, as there was before.

If anyone in the time of persecution and suffering has said within himself, I had better give over and part with the truth, and forsake the ways of the Lord, and give over my testimony for his name, for I shall be undone and ruined in the world, this man by his carnal fears has lost his testimony.

So likewise, if a man in this time of liberty and freedom of serving the Lord, and bearing testimony to his name, if he shall not entirely trust in the Lord, to carry him on in his work and service, and continue his dependence upon him, and wait for the assistance of the Holy Spirit of God to work in him to will and to do of his good pleasure; this man shall lose his testimony, as well

as the other. Therefore, let every one of you keep up a dependence upon God's Holy Spirit for carrying on the work which he has begun in your souls. Consider what work it is that Christ is now at in every one of you. I know what his work was when I was first convinced; he was burning up and hewing down everything that hindered his carrying on the work of sanctification and redemption, and firmness and stability in the covenant of life and peace.

And now our meeting together ought to be in the name of Christ. I hope it is so with most of you. I hope it is not to see and hear what this or that man says, but to know within yourselves what part of the work of redemption the Lord Jesus Christ is carrying on, that you may join with him, and *be a willing people in the day of his power*, and say as Paul: *Lord, what will you have me do?* If you will have me part with everything, Lord here it is, I offer it up; and if you will have any service done; Lord here I am, *speak, for your servant hears*. Let there be in every one of you an attentiveness, and a humble waiting upon the Lord, and say as the Psalmist: *behold, as the eyes servants look unto the hands of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hands of her mistress, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until he has mercy upon us*.

Whenever a Christian has his dependence upon God's wisdom and power, such a one shall never lack wisdom; the Lord will give him wisdom to preserve him against all the wiles of Satan; and he shall never lack power, for the Lord will enable him to fulfill and perform what he required of him. He shall be replenished with judgment and understanding, ability and power, to direct him into the good ways of God, and to enable him to walk in them.

It is the earnest desire of my soul, that every one of you may be exercised in those things which are profitable for you, and which may be comfortable to your friends and brethren; that you may all grow up into a stability and steadfastness in the good ways of the Lord, that you may not be shaken and

tossed with every storm and tempest; that when there comes a time for the trial of your patience, and fortitude and courage, you may not be tossed to and fro like children, but be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that so living in all holy obedience and patience, and continuing in well-doing, you may have a constant supply of strength and power from God ministered unto you by his Holy Spirit.

SERMON XXVI

No True Worship without the Right Knowledge of God

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, May 24, 1688

My Friends,

THERE is no man can truly worship God, until he comes to a measure of certain knowledge of him; for all the worship in the world where the veil of ignorance still prevails upon the mind, is all abominable; there is no acceptance with God. There must be a knowledge of God before there can be a true worshipping of him; for those who worship before they know God, *they worship they no not what*. They worship a God they have heard of, but do not know; so every one that would be a true worshipper, must first; come to what gives a true knowledge, that raises up a certainty in the mind that *this is the Lord, we will trust in him; this is our God, and we will serve him*.

[To read about God in the Bible, and to hear others talk about God, is not to know God. God is known by revelation, by him revealing himself to you, in your heart, by his teachings from the word in your heart and his light's revealings: Because what may be known of God is revealed in them; for God has shown it to

them. Rom 1:19. The Father is revealed by the Son, to whom the Son chooses. Likewise, no one knows Jesus, except by revelation. Likewise, no one knows the mystery of the gospel, except by revelation from God to an individual. Likewise, faith is received when you experience the power of God by revelation.]

And that all people might come to this certainty of knowledge, therefore it is that God has sent forth his Spirit, so that the things of God might be communicated by the Spirit of God, for without the assistance of this Spirit, men seek after the knowledge of God in vain. If they seek after the knowledge of God, they cannot find it; and if they seek after the worship of God, and seek after acceptance with God, they cannot find it. So that all religion, and religious performances, in which the people are exercised, where the spirit of truth does not have the beginning, will all prove fruitless in the end.

There are wise men in the world that have employed their wisdom to find out the true God; but God in wisdom has ordained that the world by all their wisdom shall not know him. For there is an end of all their labor. How shall they know him then? *As none can know the things of a man, save the spirit of man that is in him, so none can know the things of God, but the Spirit of God;* so that those who resist the guidance, direction and counsel of the Spirit of God, are like unto those who desire to enter into a house or palace, and not remember the door that leads into it.

People would willingly come into the divine knowledge and into the understanding of divine mysteries, but they try to come by it another way. They would study for it, they would learn it by arts and sciences, they would attain it by their own industry, and in this they labor to excel one another. If a man comes among such seekers, who tells them: "friends you are all out of the way," then they are angry; and instead of inquiring what is the way, they are angry that their way must be rejected. Friends, you will never come to the knowledge of God unless by the Spirit of God; then they mock, and then

they scoff and scorn the doctrine of the Spirit, for the teaching of the Spirit has been the common scorn and derision of our age.

It is so in our day with many; if they cannot come to the knowledge of God any other way but by the Spirit, they would deny making use of that, to be subject to that. These put their trust in their own power and industry to find out the mystery of the knowledge of God; so *they are ever learning, but are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*. How could they? How can a people come to a knowledge of the truth, without the spirit of truth that reveals it? Can any come to the knowledge of Christ; unless he that sent him reveals him? Where are the people's books? Where are their bibles? Where is their rule, (they call it so), that all their endeavors for many ages have proved fruitless in respect to the knowledge of God?

This is only your opinion, some may say; how does it appear that we have not attained to the true knowledge of God? And to the true worship, and to the true religion?

I will tell you how it appears; for all, in all ages, those who have attained to the knowledge of God have been made partakers of his divine nature and his divine qualities; they have brought forth a sort of fruit in their lives and conversations that has been of the same nature, it has been holy and divine. They have known the sanctifier, and they have been a sanctified people, so they have become one with him, and have shown forth the beauty of holiness in their lives, which is a demonstration that may show the knowledge of God. For without the true knowledge of God, they live another life; an unholy one, a corrupt one, a life of self-love, a life of pride, vanity and enmity, and all had not come from God, but from another root, a life of iniquity and sin; it came from another seed, so that they are still without the knowledge of God.

And again, all that have come to the knowledge of God, they have trusted in him; that people cannot do now days, except here and there a few that do

know him; the generality of the age they cannot trust God; they must have something else to rely upon, and trust in, for in him they cannot trust. Now the Lord said by the prophet of old, those who know my name will trust in me; that is enough if people know God, whom to know is eternal life; even to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. This is life eternal; if people were come to this divine knowledge, they would never take care or study for any refuge, or set up this, or that, or the other thing to lean upon. A rich man trusts in his riches. One trusts to one thing and another to another, but they would trust in the living God, and he should be their God and their rock, and they would venture their concerns upon him, both in this world and what is to come, if they only knew him. People may talk as much as they will, but he can never, properly, be said to be my God, and your God, until we cast our care upon him, and can venture our concerns upon him, both in this world and what is to come; and can say, he is our God, and our reliance and dependence is upon him.

[No one can know God, unless they hear his voice and obey him.

Listen to and obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people; and **walk completely in the ways that I command** you, so that it may be well to you. Jer 7:23.]

Now this is the effect and consequence of this knowledge of God; such as come to partake of it, they shall have no need to be told to worship him. You shall have no need to make a law, that this people shall worship the God that they know; there needs no law to command the people of God to worship him; his law is written in their hearts, and those who know him, will worship him. There was never any man on earth, who had the knowledge of the true and living God, who needed to be pressured to worship him, who needed a law to oblige him to it; for the very knowledge that is given of God through Christ, this brings forth naturally an adoration of the invisible power which men put their trust in; it produces an adoration that is true worship; it causes a humble reverence of that power. It brings the soul upon its knees, as it were; it brings the soul to stoop and bend, and bow upon all

occasions to God, as his God. It raises his expectations to receive counsel, and judgment, and understanding, from him, as the fountain of wisdom; and by this people are taught to worship in the right divine knowledge.

But to tell men of the worship of God before they know him; though you make as many laws as you will to force them to worship that God they do not know, yet you can never do them any good, nor make their worship acceptable, nor make them devout; you can never bring devotion, nor divine adoration into their hearts, by all the laws that you can make.

But there is a spirit of life that sets the soul at liberty from its former bondage to sin and Satan; and when this law comes to be revealed in my heart, what does this law say? Worship God, give honor and glory to him. This law says, submit yourself to him who redeemed you, you are his, you are no more your own; this law being written in the heart obliges a man to a true worship, and to worship God in spirit and truth for this man has done imagining among the Heathen, that there are many Gods many, and many Lords. He has done imagining what God is, and where he is, for he has now come to know him; he is instructed beyond the best scholar in Athens, let him be ever so poor and despicable in the world; if it is ever so poor a lad or lass, they are beyond the best scholar in Athens; for the best scholar there came only so far as to contradict their fellow scholars. Some of them were for Mars and some for Jupiter, some for one God and some for another. These scholars, by some beam of divine light shining in them, had come to perceive that the influences that were in Mars, Jupiter and Venus, and the sun and moon, and other planets, they received them from a higher power, that is, God. They did not deny that these planets had power and influences given to them; sometimes they are called heavenly bodies; the sky, or canopy of Heaven, and sun, moon and stars are called heavenly bodies, they have power and influences; but this was given them, and that power must be greater than theirs from whom they receive their power, virtue and influence, even that God who is the maker of all things. The scholars at Athens understood so much, as to see there was a God greater than the

planets which the nations worshipped; they thought that God was to have an altar as well as Jupiter and Mars, and those other Gods, and therefore they built an altar *to the unknown God*, whom they ignorantly worshipped.

If you and I have come to the knowledge of the true God, then we must know more than these scholars of Athens, who erected an altar to the unknown God. When the apostle came to preach divinity among these scholars of Athens, who were masters of arts and sciences, he preached to them, saying, that unknown God, whom you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. We do not need to declare to you the Gods of the nations, for you worship them, but to declare to you the unknown God whom you ignorantly worship; these were the great scholars of Athens that the apostle spoke to. What do you declare of God? He is the God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that *he is Lord of Heaven and Earth, and dwells not in temples made with hands*, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any things seeing he gives to all life and breath, and all things, and *has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth, and has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he is not far from every one of us; for in him we live move have our being; for as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring; for as much then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device.*

Here is away of learning so that you need not turn to books any more. If I would know the true God, I must know who gave me life and motion, and who created me, he is not far from me; and how should I find the knowledge of him? Feel after him, if haply you may find him; for he is not far from any of us; in him we live and move, and have our being; we cannot live without him one moment; he gives life, essence, and power, to all creatures in Heaven and Earth; we must have him with us, or we cannot live. I die as soon as my life departs from me, so do you. If my breath and life continue

with me, it is by the power of him who gives it, in whom I live, and move, and have my being; still it is in him who first gave it.

Here all the great scholars and philosophers were counseled to feel after him; so are all people now days. This is our business, when we go to preach the knowledge of God to those who lack it; our commission runs not, that we must read such a book, such an author, and turn to such a page, and there you shall have a discovery, and a fair demonstration of the attributes of God: of his wisdom, power, goodness, mercy, omnipotence and omniscience. Our commission does not run that way, but our commission runs thus: *that we turn people from darkness to light; and from the power of Satan to God*; to turn their minds from what may hinder the knowledge of Christ, from darkness, blindness and ignorance; God is not far from them; perhaps they might find him, if they would seek after him.

There are a sort of men now days, (such as were in former times), who say unto God, "depart from us, we do not desire the knowledge of your ways;" such a sort of people are dark, and blind and ignorant, and are likely to continue so, who say to God, "depart from us;" God is come to them, but they tell him depart from them. We are sent to these people that are dark and ignorant and do not have the true knowledge of God, though they have abundance of notions, hearsay knowledge, learning and speculation; our business is to convince them of their ignorance and to turn them from darkness to light.

There are a people who have mocked and scoffed at us many years. "What," they say, "is there a light within? Must we go to the light within? Does everybody have a light within?"

Yes, I believe so; and you must believe so too, if you will believe the scriptures. Christ is the true light, and he has enlightened every man that comes into the world. If he did light them, how did he do it? "I will tell you," they say; "he spoke a great many gracious words, and somebody has written

them down." What, will this prove to be the light within? Because we have obtained a New Testament, and because Christ has spoken a great many gracious words that are written down and recorded, does this prove the light within? No, people might have been in darkness still, for all the books of the New Testament, and the Old Testament too, and for all the books in the world; for they would never have conveyed light into the hearts and consciences of men, if God had not placed it there.

Indeed these books may be instrumental, and God does make use of them as a means for the conveying of light and grace, and working of true conversion; but the holy scriptures cannot do it themselves, unless there be a co-acting and cooperation of the Spirit of Christ with them; without this spirit they cannot convey saving light to us; then how do you prove a Light within? The apostle tells you, if you will believe him, 2 Cor 4:6, God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; so that every one who retires into himself, will know quickly, and understand his error, and confess that there is a light within, and that by this rule, because there is something in the heart, that makes manifest what is reprobable; if they do or say a thing reprobable, what manifests a thing is light; what manifests dark words or works, is light. Now when they have found this light within, the next question in controversy is, whether this will give men sufficient Light for the true knowledge of God; whether this is sufficient to bring a man to life and salvation?

I am of that judgment, that it is sufficient; and I believe it heartily, and preach it boldly in the name of the Lord, that the light that shines in your hearts shines there to give you the true knowledge of God, in the face of the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot believe this, you will say, for you have had this ever since you was a child, and you know not the least good it has done you; all our learned men and ministers, go to what sort you will, they speak very slightly of it; this light within is nothing but natural conscience, a poor light, it is but an *ignis fatuus* [a misleading illusion], that

will mislead us. But let me tell you, the reason why it does you no more good, is, because you have been loose and wanton, and vain, and would not receive the reproofs of it; remember the time, and call to mind, when you received the reproofs of it, then it did you some good, and brought you to remorse, and brought anguish and sorrow, and trouble into your mind, and brought you to a right sense of what evil you had done; but if you did not regard it, no wonder it did you no good; its reproofs and its counsels were like the seed sown by the highway, *the fowls of the air gathered it up*, and it did not grow; that is, the devil plucked it up, and then the soul lay as seed that brought forth no fruit to God, and the devil might have what advantage he would.

I will tell you the reason why so many learned men, men of great abilities, speak so slightly and poorly of it: because it has done them no good, inward nor outward, that they know of. How could it have done you good when it has done them none? The reason why it does them no good, is because they do not believe in it; and did Christ ever do anybody good who did not believe in him? *He gave men power indeed to become the sons of God*, the greatest good that they are capable of; but it was *to those who believed on his name*. Were all those who heard Christ preach, the sons of God? No, some were the devil's sons; our Savior tells them, that *they were of their father the devil, and they did his works*; they came to meetings and heard Christ preach, he discoursed to them, but it did them no good, for they did not believe on his name, [they did not believe it was Christ speaking to them; they did not believe what he told them to be the truth].

And then it appears in the next place, that if this light is taken heed to, and if men come to be taught by it and receive instructions, they would then have it all for no cost; they would have it all for God's sake in all the counsels and understanding of divine mysteries, all the openings of God, and all their knowledge of God would be obtained without charge. What then would become of the trade of preaching Christ, and the attributes of God; then their silver-shrine-trade will be spoiled, and then their Diana is gone; and

this light has done them no good inwardly because of their unbelief, and it does them no good outwardly, because it spoils their preaching trade, because it teaches men for free, but teaches them, for God's sake, *the light of the knowledge of God, that shines in the face of Jesus Christ*, in which are the openings of the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

So that if any come to know the virtue and the power that turns men from darkness to light, they have come to another state, and turned *from the power of Satan to the power of God*; and when the power of God is revealed in them, then they say, *this is my God*; now I know the true God. They speak as those who are acquainted with him; *this is life eternal to know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent*. It is not to know him at a distance, but as always present. The soul comes to be acquainted with God, as familiarly as a man is acquainted with his friend, and better too. A man that is acquainted with his friend, only knows some things pertaining to him, but those who are acquainted with their Maker, they know *the whole counsel of God*, so far as belongs to their peace; therefore it was not in vain said of old, *acquaint yourself with him, and be at peace*. Be but acquainted with that inward power that knows your thoughts, and then nobody needs to preach a sermon to you of the omnipresence of God, nobody needs to make you a doctrine of it, and offer reasons and motives for you to believe it; it is all foolish labor. I know that God is with me, and near me; I feel him in me and with me, at *my lying down and rising up*; when I am in my shop and about my business, he is with me in all places; and such a man is also well instructed about the omniscience of God; God's knowing everything. I have learned that since I came to know him, all the doctors [of religion] in Europe can tell me no more than I know in that point: the Lord observes all my goings and numbers all my steps; Lord, *you make manifest the thoughts of my heart, you search my heart, and try my reins*. Here is God's omniscience and knowing all things. Here is divinity growing out of the life.

Then the wisdom of God is infinite; so are all God's attributes infinite, incomprehensible and unspeakable, they are all so in him, but he makes

manifest a measure of his wisdom. He brings a man from being such a fool as he was before, to become a wise man. He was such a sot and fool as to become drunk and tumble in the dirt. He could not stand upon his legs, but now he has become wise and sober. Another was so foolish as to defile himself and wallow in his uncleanness. Now such a man comes to true wisdom, it begins in the fear of God for *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*. What does his wisdom do? It keeps him out of the dirt; it makes him live, first as a man, then as a Christian, to live righteously, soberly, and godly, in this present world. It leads him into the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God; *to know and comprehend with all saints, what is the height, and length, and breadth, and depth, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge*. This is more than bare sobriety and moderate living; such are taught *to live soberly, righteously, and godly, to live by faith*, and to be led into *the knowledge of the mystery of the kingdom of God*; to know the Lord Jesus Christ to their justification. This is the learned and the wise man; he has gotten the substance as well as the shadow; he has the marrow as well as the bone; he is reconciled to God, through Christ; he has *remission of sins through Christ Jesus, that died for him and rose again*.

When you come to be partakers of this, it will do you good; notions will not do it. When you come to know God for yourselves, and understand him for yourselves, to know him as your Savior and Redeemer, who has rescued you from the snares of the wicked one; whoever does this, they will worship God; when they have this knowledge of him, they will bow to him, they will be like those of old that said: *he is our judge, he is our law-giver, he is our king, and he will save us*. There arose a testimony in the hearts of good people of that age, that God was their judge that judged them, their law-giver that directed them. How they should make their way to him, so that he was their king, and ought to rule them, for he must save them.

So when people come to know God for themselves, to be inwardly acquainted with God for themselves; when a company of these souls meet

together, when they have been at this school, and learned this lesson of divinity, they then sit down and wait upon the Lord, that God *that searches the heart and tries the reins*, and observes how they do service for the honor of his name; and they receive spiritual gifts from him to their edification and comfort; and they receive judgment from him when they do anything contrary to his mind.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Minister of the Sanctuary which the Lord has pitched. If men have a church, as they call it, they must have Bill or Bob for their Minister. We know who the Minister of such a place is; but here is a Minister set up in God's sanctuary, this priest's lips shall preserve knowledge. All that come to God's church are taught of this priest; he is a high one, the high priest of our profession; we have no such other. He is not set up by a carnal commandment; his induction came not from any priest in this world, but his induction came from the God of Heaven and Earth. His Father set him up for a priest; he comes by a Heavenly induction and commission. *He is a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek*, not after the order of Aaron. If you come to God's church, you may hear this Minister.

Some have called a house of stone, or wood, a *church*; but that will not do now. Therefore there are people who know better; they see churches gathered of living stones; men and women are gathered to these churches. Now the apostle said, *the church is in God*, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you will come to church you must come to Jesus Christ; the church is in God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the general assembly, the congregation of his faithful people. What do you mean by a church? Ask a learned man, that understands Greek and Hebrew, what is the meaning of the word? A church, said he, is the congregation of the faithful; it is an assembly of the faithful people congregated together. Where must they meet? They must meet in the *general assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in Heaven*. The Hebrews had come to that church, though they lived many hundred miles asunder, in Asia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. You are come to the general assembly of the first-born; there is a

priest, there is the high-priest of our profession, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is a priest after the order of Melchizedek, not after the order of Aaron. How long is this priest likely to stay in his priesthood? Forever; *he is a priest forever, not after a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life.*

The priests that were after Aaron's order, they could not continue. Death snatched one away, then they must have another priest; but here is one that has a priesthood higher than the Heavens, by the power of an endless life. Here is the priest of God's church, and the teacher of God's people; so that when God's people come to church, that is, to God the Father, there Christ teaches them, according to the old prophecy, *I will teach my people myself.*

We have labored to bring people to this teaching, so that they might come to the knowledge of the living God. Now no one needs to teach them for *they are taught of God*; blessed be God, our *labor has not been in vain for we see the fruit of our labors and are satisfied.* We have been laboring to bring men to know the Lord; now *all shall know the Lord, from the greatest to the least*, and bow before him, and worship him; they hear that *their high priest's lips shall preserve knowledge.* If they do amiss, he chastises them for it; if they do well, then he comforts them by his Spirit. Now our labor is, that all may be brought to this, and that every one may know the Lord, and may fear him and serve him, and worship him in his temple. Our bodies are a temple for that use, in which to worship God: *know you not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost?* You must worship in yourselves, you must go into yourselves, you must know the exercise of the grace of God in yourselves, and the workings of the spirit of truth in yourselves, so that your souls in your bodies may be bowed to the power of the spirit, and that your worship must be in the spirit; you must pray in the spirit, and give thanks in the spirit.

Though those who set up worship in the church, talk of divinity and religion in every part of it, yet the substance of all the shadows of the law are fulfilled

in the gospel; the substance of all the modes, and rites, and forms of religion, are fulfilled in the gospel-way. So then let every one compare and examine their state, and consider how the case stands between them and their Maker, what knowledge they have of God, and what trust they have put in him, so that they may be persuaded and prepared to come within the enclosure of this church. But you must first come out of the world, else you can never come into that church that is in God; if you are in the world, you must go to the world's church and be the members of the world's church; and you shall have this for your pains: the world will love you, but if you come out of the world's church into God's church, the world cannot love you.

Be as good as you will, you can never be so good as Christ Jesus, and they loved him not, because he was not of the world; *if you were of this world*, said Christ, *the world would loves its own*; but since you are not of the world, I have taken you out of it, therefore the world hates you. If they do so to the green-tree, what will they do to the branches? Are you better than I, said our Savior; *the servant is not greater than his Lord*: those who are the disciples of Christ must be content *to be persecuted, reviled and hated for his name's sake*; for thus they treated him, who was *holy, and harmless, and undefiled*, who gave them a good example, and who did them no hurt, but did them good; yet the world hated him, and it is but reasonable to expect that you should suffer from the world in the same manner, and bear it at their hands.

If you come to this church that is in God the Father, *and Jesus, the Mediator, the church of the first-born that are written in Heaven*, and come out of the world's church, then the world will come down on your head. All the world will set themselves against this church, against the woman that shall bring forth a birth, that shall rule over the nations. *There appeared a great wonder in Heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there also appeared another wonder in heaven (a terrible thing) and*

behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns , and the dragon stood before the woman that was ready to be delivered, to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, that was to rule all nations with a rod of iron, and her child was caught up to God, and to his throne. When the dragon was ready to devour this birth, God took it into his own care, in spite of the devil and all his instruments, and he will save the child and preserve the woman; he that sits in Heaven will laugh at his enemies and defeat them. There is a place appointed for the woman in the wilderness, where she is preserved by the Almighty Power; where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, [1260 days] from the face of the serpent; but she must come out again after some time, in spite of the devil and all his instruments, of all his dragons and serpents. The woman must come out of the wilderness, and the man-child must come down with great power, to rule the nations.*

[*The woman is the true church, which was forced by the devil to flee into the wilderness for 1260 days (years) by the persecutions of the false church in which Satan rules. George Fox refers to this throughout his writings. The true Church of Christ returned from the wilderness in 1648, Fox's entry into the Kingdom, which resulted in thousands entering the kingdom of heaven to be kings and priests to God. The true church totally disappeared around 388 AD; a few years after Roman Emperor Theodosius I had enacted a law in 380 AD establishing Roman Catholic Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire. The crushing boot of the Empire's sponsored Roman religion was used to persecute and kill the true church. The Roman Empire's church, both east and west, had doctrines, which had been dictated by the *sainted* Emperors Constantine and Justinian the despot, thus eliminating the true gospel by 388 AD. As prophesied in Revelation, the church adulterated with the Kings of the earth. As the true early church was eliminated by 388 AD, so was the early Quaker faith totally lost, with the woman and

her child forced into the wilderness. The time approaches when the man child will appear again in his saints, and this time he will appear in power to rule the earth with a rod of iron.]

This has been accomplished, say some, more than fourteen hundred years ago; and if you will take their word, the church has been out that long from the wilderness. But the church that they speak of [Roman sect], has it not lacked holiness and righteousness? Has it given glory to *God on high, with peace on earth and good will to men*? No, their church has lived in tyranny and barbarous cruelty, and shedding of blood. They say the church was in the wilderness in Diocletian's time, and when Constantine came to the empire then she came out of the wilderness.

If it had been a holy church, we should have seen the man child come down from God, and holiness and righteousness would have *run down like a mighty stream*, and truth would have filled the whole earth. All these things had not yet been fulfilled, for we have seen the professors of truth fallen in the streets; they have been persecuted and troubled, and thrown into prisons and dungeons; but there is a better church somewhere to be found.

I read of the holy church, the lamb's wife, the spouse of Christ that has been hidden somewhere, a great while, in some corner or other in the wilderness; but she will come forth again out of the *wilderness, leaning upon her well beloved*. She does not come out, leaning on this prince and the other king [having adulterated with the kings of the earth as in Revelation]. She does not come out of the wilderness leaning on captains, generals and armies, but leaning on Christ her well-beloved, the immortal, invisible power of the Son of God, in whom she trusts.

All the other churches, I have read of, they have leaned upon one prince or king, or one emperor or another, and they have relied on these great men as on their bulwark; but this church that comes out of the wilderness, will come leaning only upon her well-beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the

author and finisher of her faith; she will put her trust in him, for he will deliver his church from all her enemies. And though the serpent *cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman*, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood, yet the Lord will cause the earth to help the woman, and *the earth shall open her mouth and swallow up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth*. Let the dragon do what he can to destroy the woman and her seed, she knows what her beloved can do; he will command the earth to open and swallow up the flood, and she shall go dry through it.

How happy are those who lean upon Christ, their well beloved! The church of Christ in all ages has leaned upon him, and he has founded his church upon a rock, so that the devil and all his instruments, and the very gates of hell shall not prevail against her. The members of this church have Christ Jesus for their teacher, and they receive counsel and direction from him. He is their priest and teacher, and he teaches them by his spirit and his word, which he has placed in their hearts, and given them an understanding to know him who is true. Christ's word you must keep to, if you will be true scholars. This is true divinity; if you will have the mysteries of the kingdom of God communicated and opened to you, give heed to his word and that truth that is in your inward parts. Attend to that light and that grace that is manifested in your hearts, and the Lord will show you more of the power and efficacy thereof; and if you are faithful in a little, he will make you rulers over much; live answerable to the understanding and knowledge that God has given you, and if you are faithful in a little, he will communicate more and more of his mind and will to you; and if you are led by the spirit of truth, you will trust in it, and hearken to it, and understand the language of it in your own hearts; and if you are *a willing people in the day of God's power, work all things in you and for you, and work in, you both to will, and to do of his good pleasure*.



Text in Light Blue or **Bold Light Blue** can be "clicked" for backup in scripture or detail in writings.

SERMON XXVII

God's Wonderful Love to Mankind

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at St. Martin's-Le-Grand, Nov. 9, 1690

IT is our great concern while we are in this world to promote the glory of God, to work out our own salvation, to endeavor, as much as in us lies, to be aware, and to help one another to be aware of the love of God to us. This is the only thing that can give us true comfort, to have a sense of the love of God to us in Christ Jesus, God's wonderful love to mankind, in Jesus. There is nothing more certain than that all of us are partakers of the love of God, which is imparted to us daily, and we live not a day without it. However if we are not careful, we can spend many days without it, and without the comfortable sense of it; and that is the reason that a great many of the sons and daughters of men show forth in their lives so little love to God because they have so little sense of his love to them; for the apostle John, who had attained to a great knowledge and experience in Christianity, plainly declared, that the reason for the we have to God is, because *he first loved us*; and I do not believe that any man can have any true love to God, who does not sense the love of God to him.

And as for those temporal blessings that we enjoy in this life, as health and strength, and our very breath and being, and well-being, that every day and hour are continued, they are from the love of God to us, and the lengthening

out of our lives and permitting us opportunities for the good of our souls, as evident tokens of God's love and good-will to us. Where these things are not considered and regarded, men live like the beasts that perish, and do not regard him who made them, but go on in disobedience to him, dishonoring his great name, and heaping up wrath upon their own souls. And so does every man, while he remains in his natural state and condition; for there is in every man by nature the seed and root of all sin and rebellion against God, which makes a man return evil to God for the good he does to us.

And I believe we are all of us aware in some measure of the depravity that has fallen upon all mankind, and of that enmity to God, and that aversion that is in men to the doing the will of God; and in every man are impotence and inability to the reforming of his ways, and the changing of his heart, and leaving off his corrupt and vicious inclinations, without the divine help and assistance of the grace and Spirit of God.

Now those who are thus far aware of their alienation by nature from the Lord, are also aware that the time they have here is the only time they have for their preparation and being fitted for that everlasting kingdom, which we all would enjoy; how ought this to affect the mind of every one, that while they have time, they might prize it and improve it, and come to an inward sense of the love of God, so that they might have a love raised in their hearts again to God? For people will never be obedient to God, until they love him, or ever love him, until they are sensible of his love to them.

Therefore, what is the means and way of God's making himself known to the sons and daughters of men; that means, and that way, everyone ought to embrace? What is the way every one ought to be acquainted with it, and have the exercise of their minds in it, that so we might come to the knowledge of God, and might know, by an experiential and sensible feeling, the kindness of God to us.

And truly friends, those who intend to spend their time and exercise

themselves in the consideration of the mercy and kindness of God, they have work enough for their whole life-time, to consider and contemplate the manifold mercies of God bestowed upon them; for we have our life and breath from him, whom the whole world obeys, and serves [except fallen man]. God, that made all living creatures, has created us, and preserved us; he has had long-suffering and patience towards us until now, and he is yet mindful to do us good, which is evidently manifest by the invitations and promises he has made us, and the workings of his Holy Spirit that he has made us acquainted with.

For who is there in this assembly that God has not made sensible of the offers of his grace and invitations to repentance and reformation, so those who live loosely and vainly in the world might turn to the Lord with all their hearts and consider their ways and doings? God has waited to be gracious to the sons and daughters of men, and his mercy and patience has been beyond all human patience, which is beyond the patience that you ever bestowed upon any. What the Lord has bestowed upon you, therefore I entreat you, in the love of God, let this consideration sink deeply into your spirits, that you may be affected with the kindness of God and his patience towards you and his longsuffering while you have been sinning against him.

But some will say, how shall I know this? After what manner may I experience this love of God to me? How may I be sure that the Lord has a love for me?

My friends, it is not only temporal kindness that we enjoy from God; it is not only the lengthening out of our days that is an evident token of the love of God to us; but there is a demonstration and manifestation of it that is universally extended to the sons and daughters of men in that he has sown his word in them and has sown his truth and his grace in their hearts; so that every man, though he may be ever so wicked, ever so foolish and vain, yet he has many times checks and reproofs in his own heart. I know it, and I doubt not, but you do.

Consider where the principle originates that stops you in a course of sin and checks and reproves you for sinning against the Lord? If you attend to it and consider it, you will find it proceeds from God. It comes from him, and from him comes our life and breath; then people should be incited to receive the grace of God; the favor and mercy of God that he has bestowed upon them in order to their salvation. The scripture tells us that *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*. If you have any good, it came by Jesus Christ, and if you have any truth, it came by Jesus Christ, who is the fountain of truth, and the fountain of the grace of God. It is he by whom God has made himself known to the sons and daughters of men. It is Christ alone, whom God has ordained to be a *Mediator between God and man* so that he might be the *minister of an everlasting covenant*, which we are brought into with God; so that now people should come to the consideration of the way and means that God has ordained for their redemption, namely, that he has given Jesus, that great and unspeakable gift of his love and kindness, to the sons and daughters of men; here is *grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ*. How does it come? It comes into my heart. Though sin, lusts, and corruptions, perhaps, have a place in many, yet Christ has a place too; he has made his grave with the wicked, and was numbered with the transgressors; he was like the seed that lies under the clods, and is the least of all seeds, yet when it comes out of the ground, it rises high, and spreads abroad its branches, and brings forth fruit; this love of God, this *unchangeable holy truth*, is in everyone; why then should not every man be ruled and governed by it?

But some men will say, is truth better than falsehood, and grace better than lust and corruption?

You may see that by the light that is discovered in the inward parts. Let every man turn inward to the grace of God, turn to that light that shows itself in the creature, and see what it will do for us. This is the doctrine with which the apostle was sent; he was sent with a commission to *turn men*

from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Why did he do it? It was for this end, that men might have remission [release from the bondage] of sin, and that they might come to an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus our Lord. So that this gospel is the same that it ever was, though men have many ways of preaching, and several methods and ways of declaring the truths of the gospel; blessed be God the apostolic doctrine is preached again, and the blessed gospel has the same power attending it that was in former days, and may have the same effect; and that this may be the portion of every one of you, is the end of our labor. And we have in our eye only two things.

First, to discharge a good conscience in the sight of God, who has given us his word to preach, and to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God; that we might keep ourselves free from the blood of all men.

Secondly, another end is the desire that God has placed in our hearts that *all men everywhere might be saved*; this is God's will. If any are damned it is their own will, and the devil's will; this is God's will, that *none should perish*, but that all should come to repentance and be eternally saved. Now in this work of your salvation, we would have regard to him who sent us to preach the everlasting gospel, and we would discharge ourselves faithfully, and *be made manifest in your consciences*, that the benefits of the gospel might come to be yours; that you might answer the purpose of God, in sending Christ to be the Savior of mankind; you must turn from sin to God, and then you will find the blessing that comes by Jesus, which is *to turn every one from his evil ways*.

You may read this in a book, and you may also plainly read it in your hearts. The Lord Jesus Christ has given you light to distinguish between good and evil; if you do good, you may make a comfortable reflection upon yourselves, and this will be your rejoicing, *the testimony of your conscience* on that account; but if you do evil, though all men do justify you and commend you,

yet you will be condemned in yourselves; so that you have in yourselves what distinguishes between things that differ in their nature and kind, and you have a little enlightening by the knowledge and understanding you have received concerning the things that are pleasing and displeasing to God. If after you know this, you will go on in a way displeasing to God, he will at length be too hard for you, and plunge you down into the abyss of his wrath to all eternity.

After persons are satisfied and enlightened with the light of Christ, and come to the experience of things in themselves, they will love the light and walk in the light; but there are many in this age that have read the scriptures plentifully, and yet still go on in a way of sin, they cannot love the light that reproves them. *He who does evil hates the light, and the dawning of the day is as the shadow of death to him;* and it brings nothing but condemnation upon such persons, so that they do not love the light, though it is evident they have it and enjoy it; and it shall be their condemnation whether they will or not; if they do not love the light and embrace it, it will never be to their salvation.

God has given Christ to be a light to the Gentiles, and his salvation to the ends of the earth. He is the true light that enlightens every man that comes into the world; the apostle John tells you the genealogy of the word of God; *in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was god; and the same was in the beginning with God; all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made; in and the life was the light of men;* the life of the eternal word was the light of men; what men do you mean? I answer, *he is the true light that lights every man that comes into the world.* He extends his light to every man, but it is condemnation to every man so long as he continues to be a sinner against God. This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

Now all men are by nature dead in sins and trespasses; after our first

parents fell into sin they were dead to God: *in the day that you eat thereof you shall die*; when they had eaten the forbidden fruit, they did not die as to outward appearance, but they died as to that communion they had with their Maker; in this dead state lie all the son's and daughters of Adam; but, as our Savior speaks, *though they are dead, they shall live again; Christ is the Lord from Heaven, a quickening Spirit*; this is the object of our faith that has been extended and offered to mankind ever since the fall; there is no name under Heaven, no other power or spirit by which a man can be saved; this great Mediator, the eternal Son of God, is the light that lights every man that comes into the world. Faith in Christ is the same that ever it was, despite the many forms of worship among the sons of men; some of God's setting up, and some of men's setting up; yet among all these, the object of faith is the same, and said the same.

[Christ, the *object* of faiths, is the same; but the *faiths* are not. There is the faith that Christ was born of a virgin, was crucified, was resurrected, and ascended – the Son of God; that is a dead faith in historical events. Then there is a faith beyond concurrence of history in the Bible, which faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, the word that is in your heart and mouth, so that you may obey it; faith comes when you are led, (hear and obey), by the Spirit of God in your heart; this is the faith that the Bible speaks to, a faith by revelation. Faith in the promises of God is necessary to obtain them; faith in the power of God to produce cleansing, purification, holiness, and salvation, is necessary to realize any or all of the above.]

In the 11th chapter of the Hebrews, that little book of martyrs, the apostle there gives you a catalogue of the mighty things that have been done by the faith of God's people. He begins with Abel: *by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and by it, he being dead, yet speaks; by faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and was not*

found, because God translated him, for before his translation, he had this testimony, that he pleased God; and so the apostle there goes to Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. And what shall I say more, said he, for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Sampson, and Jephtha, of David, Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, and quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. All these great and noble things were done by faith; it was the aspect their souls had upon Christ the Mediator between God and man; it was their trust and reliance upon God through Christ the Mediator that did support and uphold them in all they did and suffered. This faith is still the same.

There are many faiths in the world beside, but they will prove only the faith of hypocrites. Some have a faith, that if they do this and the other work,* they say you may trust your souls upon these good works; but this is not the faith of Abraham, the father of the faithful. But some called Christians are gone so far in the doctrine of merits, that they think they can do enough for their own salvation and for their friends and relations too; that there may be more merit still over and above, that others may have benefit by the merit of their works of effort beyond their duty. But this is not the faith of Abraham, and other saints, by which they wrought such wonders in the world. I would not have men trust at all in their own works for salvation, but trust in Christ alone, who is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him.

[* ritual and ceremony are believed to save souls, which are micro, extremely easy works. Water baptism, eating bread/grape juice, saying a special prayer — are fundamental doctrines or works in Christendom today, and yet they are just heathenish ritual, invented by the beast of man, looking for cover to remain in his selfish, immoral, impure, covetous, vain life of sin.]

Objection: But some will object that we are taught the doctrine of faith in Christ, and justification by him.

Well, for my part, my tongue shall as soon drop out of my mouth, as oppose the doctrine of being justified by faith in Christ. But, let me tell you, this may be misapplied. If a man believes that he is justified by faith in Christ, and yet knows, in his own conscience, that he is condemned, he believes a lie; he is seduced and deceived. A man cannot be justified by Christ, when the Spirit of Christ condemns him. Such a one, when he comes to lay down his head upon his dying pillow, all his faith will fly away. I have met with some instances, lamentable instances, of those who were called Christians, who have made a profession of religion, and at last have laid down their heads in sorrow. If this is your mistake, consider, while you have time, that you may die in peace.

[We are justified and purified by faith in Christ; but we are not immediately justified or immediately purified when we first believe. But if, while we **seek to be justified by Christ**, we ourselves also are found sinners, does that mean that Christ encourages sin? God forbid. Gal 2:17. Notice, by seeking, which is waiting on the Lord, we are shown the sins in our heart; after these sins are removed, we are sanctified and justified at the same time. There is no justification until our obedient faith in Christ results in him cleansing us, redeeming us, purifying us, sanctifying us, and perfecting us.]

Now the proposition and tender of the love of God to mankind, has always carried that limitation with it, that everyone in the world ought to observe; **if a man hopes to be saved by Christ, he must be ruled by him.** It is contrary to all manner of reason, that the devil should rule a man, and Christ be his Savior. The whole tenor of the New Testament is against it, (pray read it as often as you please, for it is a good exercise), you will find the true Christian's faith to be this: that he that has faith in Christ has an

operation upon him for the cleansing his heart, purifying and purging his conscience from dead works, that he may serve the living God; though he had previously been a servant of the devil, it will make him leave his former servitude, and bring him under the influence of another law, the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which will make him free from the law of sin and death. The apostle sets down the several conditions he had passed through:

- I was alive without the law once; he thought himself a man, a brave man, a man of understanding, who had profited among the Jews; I was alive, having respect to that law which should have been my governor; [Paul knew the law well. He thought he was observing it well too.]
- but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. He had read the law, the commandment, many times, and had been at the reading of it in the synagogue; but there was a coming of the commandment [as it was commanded by the Voice of the Lord within him] which he had not been acquainted with; there was a writing of the law of God in his heart; when he came to this inward work upon him, where was the life he lived then?
[The Lord shows us the secret sins of our heart, of which we were not aware until his light reveals them to us; and with his conviction, he also commands us.]
- When the commandment came, sin revived, [when he was convicted by the Voice of the Lord, his awareness of sin in himself revived],
- and I died. [Realizing how poor in Spirit he really was, he deeply mourned over his condition. His pride was dying. The root of sin, his carnal mind is being destroyed. This is the Ministry of Condemnation; this is how one *dies to the law, through the law.*]

There was a professing life he formerly lived, but he was slain by the power of the commandment; it laid him in the dust as a slain man; when he was in a slain condition he found out that law in him, which was the law of sin and death, and this caused a combat and a war in him; *I find a law*, said he, *that*

when I would do good, evil is present with me; for I delight in the law of God in the inner man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Now this brought him to a poverty of spirit, into a sense of his miserable condition, and then he cries out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?*

Now some people in this day, they are like the apostle, they have a law in their members warring against the law of their minds; the good that they would do they do not, and they can go no further. But the apostle Paul did reach further, though he did not in that state know deliverance; yet he had a faith that he would be delivered, and that he would not be miserable all his days. Thus having led the Romans into the several states through which he passed, he brings them to a further state, *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. And now there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.* How shall we know this? *They walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.* Now Paul had come to that sanctified state, that state of freedom and liberty which Christ Jesus will bring all those unto that believe in him.

Holy men, in former days, experienced and found a great strife and warfare in their own hearts; they all wished to do well, and exercise a conscience, void of offence, towards God and towards man; but there was a law of sin that warred in their members. If we yield to it, it leads to sin and death; but if we yield ourselves to *the law of the spirit of life*, there is a power that is derived from the Mediator, that will translate the soul *out of the kingdom of darkness and sin*, which the devil is the prince of, and *bring it into the kingdom of God's dear Son.*

There must be a real change wrought in us before we can come to God, and to fellowship and communion with God, which alone can make the soul happy. Let this be the exercise of every one of us to adore and magnify the great mercy and the kindness of God, that he has not withdrawn his spirit

from you, but has placed a monitor in your bosoms that calls upon you to *cease to do evil, and learn to do well*, and to consider that *the wages of sin is death*. Here is a sin, I may commit it; there is a temptation before me, but I know there is a bait and a hook. I may swallow it if I choose, but if I do, it will be my ruin. Do I wish to come to eternal death, and have my portion with liars and wicked persons in the kingdom of darkness, *where the worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched*? Or would I have my portion with saints and angels? If I would have my portion with the blessed in the kingdom of God when I die, I must walk in the way that leads to it; but *the gate is strait and the way narrow, and few there are that find it*. **Labor then to be one of those few.**

Objection: But what signifies our labor, (some may say), if we can do nothing that is good, not so much as think a good thought? What signifies our labor? All the labors and endeavors in the whole world cannot make a man happy.

I now speak to a people to whom God promises the help and assistance of his grace and Spirit, and the visitations of his love and power; you must now endeavor to do something. If a man endeavors, with the help of God, he may do a great deal of good, and shun a great deal of evil. Though all our endeavors, in our own power and strength can signify nothing, yet they are required by God, and by joining them with his grace, and laying hold of opportunities, by divine assistance, we may do what God will accept. But if a man does anything in his own power and strength, whether prayer, hearing, reading, meditation, or any other duty, he might as well not have done it.

I would consider you as those whom God has followed with his grace and the manifestation of his spirit; this is given to every man to benefit all, and every man has opportunity to work with it; but he must *work while it is day, for the night comes when no man can work*.

Let every one of us that are now met together, labor to be sensible of the love

of God to us, and love him above all, and express our love by a willing and persevering obedience, that we may have the *love of God shed abroad upon our hearts by the Holy Ghost*, and offer up living praises to him through Jesus Christ, *who has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father*. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XXVIII

Salvation from Sin by Jesus Christ

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire-House August 9, 1691

IT is a general doctrine in the world that no man by any means can ever be set free from sin in this life. This is universally received among almost all Christians, in all churches; and though they differ ever so much in other things, yet they agree in this; so that this doctrine has gotten a controlling grip in the world, and it is accounted a great delusion, a heresy, and a grand error for any to question the truth of it.

Now while a man is of that belief, that there is an impossibility of living without sin, and of breaking down the kingdom of Satan in any one soul in the world, how can men hope or believe that righteousness should prevail in the heart of one man? There is neither king nor beggar, nor bishop nor a gospel Minister, but the devil must have a rule and government in him, so long as he lives in the world. As long as this is believed, it is not possible that the other belief should take place; it is madness to think that I must be under the rule and government of Satan if I am under the government of the Son of God. And it is still greater madness to say, that Christ and the devil are both my governors and rulers. It is prodigious folly and madness to speak after this manner.

This belief prevails over all men; over the wise, and mighty, and noble, and learned, that they can never be freed from the power of sin in this world, but that the devil will lead them into sin every day; let men be ever so sober, ever so abstemious in their lives; let them spend ever so many hours in prayer every day; let them come to meetings and hear sermons, and write them, and repeat them, and do what they will, here is a bar of unbelief that lies in the way, that makes men depart from the living God, and his power, and lose the benefit they shall receive from Christ. And therefore they go to obtain it another way, that is, to have the righteousness of Christ *imputed* to them. By *imputed righteousness* they shall be pure and holy in the sight of God, when they are polluted in their own eyes; and when they see their daily failings, infirmities and corruptions, yet God may not see them; but that he sees them holy, just and righteous in his Son.

What strange kind of doctrine is this? I must presume that God will see me in his Son, Jesus Christ, when I never was in Christ. How can this be? *He that is in Christ is a new creature; old things are done away and all things are become new.* But if there are old things remaining still, and I have not become new, shall I presume that I am *in Christ*, and that God will see me in his Son? When people come to use the understanding that God has given them, they will look upon themselves as barred out by their unbelief that the nations have drunk in; and it is as sweet to them as the honey and the honeycomb [which is what the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her (the Whore of Babylon's) fornication, the wine of her fornication being the false promise of living in lusts and pride with no consequence of the fury of God.]

But, blessed be God, many have vomited it up already. If they would have based this doctrine upon man's natural inability, I would have said Amen to it; for I know that no one has a natural ability and power to deliver his own soul from sin and Satan. However, when they base their doctrine of perpetual sin on God's power, even though the Lord bares his arm and

reveals his power, even though they come to have the grace of God, that still they could not be delivered from sin by God — this has blasphemy at the bottom of it. The previous reflected upon man's power, but this is disbelief of the power of God Almighty. That the devil has gotten such a power over us, that God has not power over us, nor can have power and dominion over us, so that in a whole nation he cannot have one man to serve him.

Much might be said in answer to this. When men are once willing to serve God, they will be willing to leave the service of the devil. There is no way to answer that good wish, but by waiting upon God for the revealing of his power. I pray to God that when you come to a meeting, you may say. "Lord, let your power go forth upon my heart; let your arm be made bare, and deliver me from the power and dominion of sin," that some will say they feel God's power in a meeting; some will say "I feel the power of God working upon my heart, in order to the taking away sin and transgression, and giving me victory over it, through the Lord Jesus Christ." If they feel this power of God upon them, it is their duty to believe it and depend upon it. If I believe it, I must wait for the dictates of it, and believe that I shall be able to do all things through Christ that strengthens me. Then faith will come forth into works, and appear to be a living faith.

You may remember what the apostle James said, *as the body without the Spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also*. As soon as a man comes to join with the mighty power of God, he will be able to withstand temptation. If he comes into evil company, he will deny them and not comply with them; he will find then something of a power and ability to serve God; though he has not come to perfection, yet he is walking in the way of holiness, and pressing forward towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He will say, I have gotten a little nearer than I was towards the place where I desire to be, towards that life in which I desire to live and die; then let death come when it pleases God, it shall be welcome.

This is the wickedness of many in the world: they will not live such a life as

they would be willing to die in. They cannot come to such a life unless it is given them to believe, for it is the gift of God; they must come to their governor and leader, which goes before, to the gift of God, which is eternal Life; then let death come when it will, if I have the gift of eternal life.

It is a miserable thing to think that there are many that have not laid hold of eternal life. It is manifested, that we may lay hold of it; there is a hand of faith joining with it. When a man comes to lay hold of eternal life, this life will purify him and sanctify him, at least by degrees, until he is wholly sanctified in body, soul and spirit. This is what the apostle writes in one of his epistles, *your salvation is nearer than when you at first believed*. When they first believed, their salvation was pretty far off. He describes salvation to be the end of their faith and hope.

When a man comes to be delivered from his sins, he shall serve God without fear; but when a man comes to live by faith, he shall overcome; he is a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and he must fight valiantly under his banner, until he gets a victory over all his enemies, and then his salvation is much nearer than when he at first believed.

I would I could say the same about some of you; for I fear your salvation is farther off. Some go straggling here and there, as sheep not having a shepherd; this is what my spirit is exercised with. You who are travelers towards the kingdom of God, it is the wonderful grace and mercy of God, that it ever came into your minds to *seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof*. Those who have obtained this mercy from God, shall receive and enjoy other mercies, better mercies, for *blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness*. That is one mercy; but there is another mercy: they shall be filled; they shall be satisfied. When a man comes to this, he must take up a daily cross, and exercise self-denial; but if he follows Christ, he shall be satisfied; he shall then have nothing but peace and joy; he shall then sing praises and glory to God in the highest, and to the Lamb forever.

There is none can understand the glory that is laid up for those who take up their cross and follow Christ, and love his appearing. This is the greatest blessing that God gives to his people; he has sent his Son Jesus to bless us, and turn us from our iniquities. This is a blessing indeed. Take heed that you do not admit of any new terms. Do not think to bring God Almighty to new articles, the terms are declared and concluded on already. If you will obtain the blessing, you must be turned every one of you from your iniquities. The terms are already made, the law of God must be written in the heart and inward thoughts, and you must close with that power that will write the law in your hearts, and by traveling towards the kingdom of God, you will see the coming of that kingdom in you.

It was the joy of my soul, that I saw the kingdom of Christ would be set up in my heart, before it was set up there; then I saw the Lord's wonderful work, and there was a great alteration in me, when the Lord was pleased to wean me from the world's bread, and take off my heart, and wean it from worldly lusts, from the world's joys and pleasures, and fashions, and the world's honor and reputation. I say the Lord was pleased to wean me from, these things, and brought me to a holy resignation, to give up my heart to him. If I have joy, it must be from the Holy Spirit; if I have pleasure it must be in the presence of God, who in the multitude of my thoughts within me made his comforts delight my soul; and if he does not bring comfort to you, you will never have it; you cannot expect it until you do believe; and when you have faith, you can feel the kingdom of God within you. There must be the new birth, the work of regeneration, for *except a man is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God*; there must be a translation from, death to life, there must be a turning out of the old bottom and a fixing upon a new bottom, upon Christ Jesus the rock of ages; there must be a subjection to his holy power and government, else you cannot see the kingdom of God.

Many have gone on in a profession many years, and never saw the beauty of it; and every little trifle in the world has diverted them, and drawn them

away. This, that, and the other pleasures have drawn away their hearts; they have seen the glory of the world, which has captivated them. But those who make a profession of the truth, and have seen the beauty and glory of the kingdom of Christ, they shun in horror the thought of returning to the world again, for the apostle said, it happened to them according to the true proverb: *the dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire; it had been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.* They made a profession, and were members of a visible church, and had a name to live, but they were inwardly dead, the sight of the kingdom of God is not given to such, but unto babes, who have a divine birth, and *who desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. God has hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.*

I speak to those who are here this day, that would receive some kindness from God, and that desire the knowledge of his ways; and desire that the mysteries of his kingdom may be revealed to you. Let your minds be retired and you shall find the great things belonging to your peace made known to you. We have spoken much of this, but I would not have you know it only by our sayings; I would have you go into yourselves to see whether God has not bestowed this grace and blessing upon you. If God has given you grace, do not turn it into wantonness; do not abuse the grace of God. What is it that you do when the grace of God has convinced you, that such and such a thing is sin, and if you do it, it will turn to your ruin? Dare you venture to commit sin after you are convinced of it? O take heed of doing *despite to the spirit of grace*, and of *grieving the Holy Spirit, whereby you are sealed to the day of redemption.*

I wish that the weight of this consideration might lie upon you, and that a holy dread and awe of God might be wrought in your hearts, that you might be kept from sinning against God. You know there is a general outcry against presumptuous sinning, sinning against light. Why should not we all

cry out against it? It is a most dreadful thing for any man to sin against his knowledge and conviction; if any of us have been guilty of sinning against light, let such a one say, "I have done iniquity, I will do so no more;" and enter into covenant with the Lord, and say, "O Lord, so far as you have revealed your will unto me, I will obey it; I will delight to do your will, O God, though I cross my own will. Whatever I cross, I will not cross God's Holy Spirit, by which I may be sealed to the day of redemption. I will never do this though I hazard my chief interest in the world." This is the temper of a true Christian, and I pray that God will make you all of this mind.

And now my friends, you that desire to see this great work wrought in yourselves, commit the whole work to God, and trouble not yourselves about it. I am sure God will carry on his own work, and bring down the devil's kingdom, and rebuke that unclean spirit that is gone forth over the whole nation, and **pour out abundantly of his Holy Spirit to carry on a glorious reformation. This I believe God will certainly do, from what he has wrought in my own soul.** I do not know what instruments are to be employed in the work, I leave that to the Lord; but **the kingdom of Christ shall be advanced, and it shall be outwardly, and a broom of destruction shall sweep away all his enemies from the earth, and the wrath of God shall burn against them;** but there is a stubbornness and hardness of heart that has been upon the nations of the world, and something has stood in the way in all generations.

[This is Crisp's prophecy of the end of the age, when the Lord destroys all the evil out of the earth, leaving few men still alive; only those with light will be spared. The Lord has said righteousness will spread over the earth throughout the prophets, and Revelation foretells how it will occur. For righteousness to spread over the whole earth, all sinners will be destroyed; but Revelation's time of great troubles will give some people the motivation to seek the heart-and-soul purifying grace that he has always offered, but which Christendom has turned

into an unholy thing. Christendom changed the covenant, making the blood of Jesus a promoter of evil, an excuse for sin; which Isaiah said would result in the Lord devouring the earth and making man as scarce as gold. That time fast approaches. Edward Burrough had a similar revelation of this world-wide event, described as: **the kingdoms of this world must become the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ [his anointing in his saints]** . Isaac Penington also related this same prophecy in his *Protection of the Innocent: coming into the gospel life and principle* - and then **so spread by degrees, until it has overspread the nation, and then from nation to nation, until the whole earth is leavened**, and but yet there is a better state, which the Lord has already brought some into, and which **nations are to expect** and travel towards.]

But, however, I am sure we all may well say, that Christ is the Savior of all men, but especially of those who believe. He has saved this city and nation from the plagues and vengeance that hang over us. Many years the Lord has spared us, and waited to be gracious for a long time, to see if we will at last turn to him. How long the Mediator will intercede on our behalf, we cannot tell; there is a time when the long-suffering of God will come to an end. God has brought a scourge upon the nations round about us, and the flames of his wrath have kindled upon them, and destruction has overtaken them; how soon it may be our lot, we know not. All our money, our silver and gold, and valor and courage, will not be able to ward it off, if the Lord but blows upon us. It is even at the door; there is but one way to save us, and that is turning to the Lord, and crying to the Lord for the continuance of his mercies and long-suffering, and patience towards us. In this cry to the Lord, let us all unite, that are lovers of the nation, and let us join our earnest supplications in this work, seeing the Lord has made us the monuments of his mercy and preserving goodness.

We have been continually surrounded with war and blood, and flames and

destruction; and the cry of the orphans has been heard from other nations. And while they have been consumed with flames, and deluged in streams of blood, we have sat under our own vines and fig-trees; but judgments hang over the nation, and whether they will fall or not, the Lord knows. But what shall we do for the good of our nation, and cities and families, but labor everyone, in the fear of God, to reform our lives, and to take heed that we sin not against the light, lest we die, and perish in the middle of those terrible judgments that hang over us.

Let us turn from our evil ways, and depart from all iniquity, that the kingdom of Christ may be set up in ourselves. It is the righteous in the nation that the Lord looks at, and for their sakes he will spare a nation. If there is a people among us that walk in humility, and lament and mourn for the abominations committed in the midst of us, God will have regard to them, and he will hear the cries and the supplications of a praying people.

Friends, you that cannot make use of sword and spear for the saving of a nation; you may do good by your prayers, and turning to the Lord with an unfeigned heart, and let your sincerity appear before him. If I would take a common prayer-book in my hands, and pray ever so devoutly and solemnly, if I am not sincere, what will that do? Or, if I pray without a book, or if I pray without a form, or reject the form that others have made for me, what will this avail? But the *cry of the poor, and the sighing of the needy, and the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous* has availed much for the saving of this nation many years.

Therefore, I exhort you all, as you love the nation, and as you love yourselves, and your families and relations, sin not against the Lord; for he is now setting up righteousness, equity, and justice, and it shall prevail in the nation. God has been pleased to gather in many, who have been enemies and are now turned from sin to God, led by the truth. And it is their greatest joy, now they are no longer servants of sin, but have now become the servants of God.

Now truth will prevail, and righteousness go forth as the morning sun, and we hope the Lord will show mercy to us for the glory of his own name, though we are an unworthy people. It will be a matter of joy and gladness to us, if the kingdom of God has come to us; then we may say our prayer is answered. We have often prayed: *your kingdom come, and your will be done in earth as it is in Heaven*. If the will of God is done, then I can do my own will no longer; then I can be led away by Satan no longer; the devil will have little power, if I do God's will on earth, as it is done in Heaven; then praises will arise in the hearts of every one that delights to do the will of God, and God will carry on his work for the glory of his own name, and for the redemption of his people, that Christ may be preached for salvation to the ends of the earth.

SERMON XXIX

The Acceptable Sacrifice

**Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Grace-Church-Street, July 3,
1692**

I beseech you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God,
that you **present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to
God,**
which is your spiritual service and worship.

Rom 12:1

For if you live after the flesh [the sinful nature], you will die;
but **if through the Spirit you mortify [put to death] the deeds of
the body, you will live.**

Rom 8:13

Therefore **mortify [put to death] the deeds of the body** that are of the

earthly life:
fornication, impurity, inordinate affections, evil lusts of the flesh, and
covetousness, which is idolatry.

Col 3:5

Strip yourselves of your former nature that controlled your conduct,
which corrupts itself through lusts and desires that spring from delusion;
And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;
And **put on the newly created nature [of Christ],
which is created in God's image of true righteousness and
holiness.**

Eph 4:22-24

ALL people that would worship God and meet together for that purpose, they had need have a great reverence upon their minds, and a holy fear upon their spirits, that when they enter into the house of the Lord, and draw near to the living God, they might not offer the sacrifice of fools, but may offer to God what may be acceptable to him. For all worship, and all religion, and all offerings and oblations that ever were offered to God by any people, they have had a return unto the offerers and worshippers, either of acceptance or rejection. Many you know have been rejected though they have offered, and many have been accepted of God, and their offerings have been a sweet smelling savor in his nostrils; and, I hope, we are all of that mind, that we would be glad to have our worship, service, and offerings to God, accepted in his sight, and that our present assembling together might be for the better, and that everyone might have an answer of peace, and of acceptance in their bosoms; but that can never be unless men are qualified and prepared in their drawing near to God, and in all our offerings and worship that we perform, our hearts be prepared according to the preparation of the sanctuary, the preparation of God's dwelling and holy place.

The worshippers must be holy; there must be the fear of God, and a reverence of the great God upon their minds, before people can offer an

acceptable sacrifice unto him, as the holy apostle said, Heb 11:6. He that comes to God must believe that he is; which signifies, that a preparation ought to be in the minds and hearts of people that would draw near to God; or perform any service or worship to God, they must have the knowledge of the God whom they worship, they must first know that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. Here is a qualification for worshippers, for religious persons; as they expect when they meet together to find the Lord in the midst of them, they must be qualified accordingly, there must, be an awe upon their minds.

I am in the preference of God; I have an expectation from God that he will open his abounding treasury and minister some good unto me; or else to what purpose do people draw near to God? * It is because they would have something of him; but they must come in an humble petitioning frame; *he gives grace to the humble*. It is the lofty, the proud, those who exalt themselves, the fat and the full, that want nothing. These, *said the prophet, the Lord knows from afar*. A proud man or woman cannot draw near to God, the Lord looks upon them far off; nor do they partake of those divine and heavenly comforts and blessings, and counsels and instructions that the humble mind has the promise of and will certainly enjoy; *the humble, God will teach*. He will instruct the meek in his way, but what is this to the lofty mind? What is this to one that is exalted, and conceited and puffed up, and reckons himself full and lacking nothing, while he is swimming in the streams of pleasures of this world, and favors only the things of the earth, the pleasures of a sensual mind? These persons are not hungry, and so they are not fed; they are not thirsty, and so they never obtain what can satisfy the soul. Our Lord Jesus Christ pronounced a blessing upon those who hunger and thirst; but what is that to those who are full and lack nothing?

[*There is another reason, than seeking some reward: it is to know and be pleasing to your creator, or to find what way there is to comply with the teachings of Jesus found in the New Testament. This can be done without any knowledge or

expectation of a reward. Why would a created being not want to see how he can please his creator; or at least to know this creator that is infinitely greater than himself?]

So my friends, in this and all other religious assemblies a great care ought to be upon everyone that their coming together to wait upon the Lord may be in that reverence and fear, and that hope and expectation at the hands of God, that they might be bettered by it, or else they all lose their labor as Cain did; he wished to offer to God and offered sacrifice, but he was not accepted because his mind and heart were not right before the Lord; his sacrifice was rejected. It was before he had killed his brother. He had great guilt upon him before he had killed his brother; he wanted the qualification of well-doing; *if you do well, shall you not be accepted? But if you do not well, sin lies at your door.* He had gotten into evil doings, and an evil mind hindered his acceptance with God; so it does with all men and women in the world that meddle with religious worship, and sacrifice to God, if they meddle with evil doing. There must be a taking off the mind from the evil of sin and corruption, and the mind must be brought over to something that they have received from God before ever they can be accepted.

You know the general doctrine of all Protestants is that we have no acceptance with God but through Jesus Christ. We have no way to please God, nor can do anything that shall be acceptable in his sight, but through only one Mediator. Now if I should go to worship God or perform any religious duty without respect and deference to the sense and participation of the virtue and power of that only Mediator, how can I be accepted? And it has pleased God out of his infinite love to mankind to send this great Mediator into the world that every man that comes into the world is made a participant of something of the life and virtue of that Mediator. So you read, John 1:4,9, in him was life, and the life was the light of men, the true light that enlightens every man who comes into the world; and that is with respect to men whether they are good or not, both good and bad, though all men are bad by nature. So that though they are children of wrath and heirs

of eternal damnation in their natural state by reason of sin; yet for all that, this one Mediator, in whom this light has shined, has sent forth his light among the sons and daughters of men, that is, the light of men, that enlightens everyone. So there is an offer made of something that presents itself to the view of every man; a good offer that if he applies his mind to it, he may have the good that comes through Jesus Christ. He may draw near to God; as bad as he is, he has some good that God has bestowed upon men both good and bad. There is no man barred for he has some truth in him; there is no man so ungodly, but that he knows what is pure and holy, what has reproved him, checked and convinced him of his ungodliness. This presents itself to the view of every man and woman, and calls them to repentance.

[The **grace of God has appeared to all men**, which brings salvation, teaching us to deny ungodliness and lusts and how to live soberly, godly, and righteously in this present word. Tit 2:11-12. The gospel has been preached to all creatures under the heavens. Col 1:23. Every man has his day of visitation from God. Even if a man has never heard of Christ, if he seeks the light, and is totally obedient to the light (who is Christ), he will be shown who the light is, and receiving him, he can be delivered from all sin, which is salvation.]

Now for men to make a show and pretence to worship, and not have regard to the glory of God, how can they draw near to God, or God draw near to them? Our Lord Jesus Christ said, that *where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them*; but **if people meet together in their sin and wickedness, if they have a loose and vain mind, and intend to go on in wickedness and sin; if they meet, they do not meet in Christ's name, but in the devil's name.**

[Thinking to be worshiping Christ, they unknowingly worship the devil, who approves of sinners], **and he is in the midst of them**, and he works and *rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience*. So that this has been the

ground and reason why many meetings upon this account [of people who still sin with no remorse or hope of stopping] have been fruitless as to the benefit of their souls, and the expectations of people have been frustrated as to their salvation; they have not met with that in which the blessing is, and to which the promise is made. The promise is not made to people whom the devil rules; there is no promise to such but the promise of eternal wrath to be executed upon them, with the devil and his angels to all eternity; if you can make that a promise.

The promise of life and salvation, which is recorded by the prophets and apostles, has always applied to the seed that is in the covenant with God. The covenant stands in what *God said to Abraham: Gen 17:7, I will establish my covenant between you and me and your seed after you, and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto you, and to your seed after you.* The covenant is made to Abraham and his seed, that is, with Christ Jesus the Mediator. It is he that brings to God those who trust in him and come to him; *who comes to him, he will in no wise cast out*; those who do not come to Christ are cast off already. All men by nature are cast away already; if any of them will be saved, it is by coming to Christ *who is able to save to the uttermost* and to make peace for them, and of two to make one new man; and to make peace between God and the soul.

There is a necessity for all people, who have any sense of their natural state and condition, that according to nature have no title to the kingdom of God, to be reconciled to God. By nature they cannot make a claim to righteousness and life; they cannot reconcile themselves to God by all their works; said the prophet Micah, *will the Lord be pleased with a thousand rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man! what is good. And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?* Those who will be saved must lay hold of salvation in that way and method that the Lord God

of Heaven and Earth has prescribed. He has prescribed a way for everybody to be saved; he would not have any one to perish, but that all should come to repentance, and obtain everlasting life. God has made a way that will serve everybody alike; thousands as well as ten; and all the world as well as one man. Now the way that God has made is turning out of the state into which they are fallen, and forsaking that governor that rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience, and closing with Christ, whom God has appointed to reign in everyone's heart. People in Christendom will say they have closed with Christ. Do you not hope to be saved by Christ on the terms of the covenant? It is not crying, Lord, Lord, but doing the will of God; the terms are, *all men must believe in Christ,* [believe Him] the eternal Son of God*; and through the power of that faith they have in him, he comes to rule over them, and they become subject [as in obey his every command] to him. And if a believer is not subject to Christ, he is the same as an unbeliever; *circumcision, or uncircumcision, avails nothing, but a new creature; and faith which works by love.*

[*Belief is the beginning prerequisite to salvation. But beginning belief does not result in salvation as Paul shows in addressing *believers in the churches*:

1. **now is our salvation nearer than when we believed,**
Rom 13:11,
2. **continue to work out your salvation** with fear and trembling, Phil 2:12,
3. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and **for a helmet, the hope of salvation.** 1 Thes 5:8,
4. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are ***being saved*** it is the power of God. 1 Cor 1:18. (While in the inward cross of self-denial, you will see the sin slowly disappear from your life until you are free of sin.)

5. godly sorrow produces **repentance that leads to salvation**, 2 Cor 7:10.
6. do not grieve the holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed **to the day of redemption [future happening]**. Eph 4:30.
(Paul is speaking to *believers* in the church who have not yet been redeemed.)
7. For we are the sweet aroma of Christ unto God, to those who are ***being saved***. 2 Cor 2:15
8. For you need patience, so that **after you have done the will of God**, you may receive the promise. Heb 10:36
(The will of God is to totally obey Christ, who will deliver you from sin to righteousness, purity, holiness, and the kingdom.)
9. we are made partakers of Christ, **if we hold firm** the beginning of our confidence **to the end**. Heb 3:14
10. we desire that every one of you show the **same diligence in realizing the full assurance of hope to the end**. So that you are not slothful, but followers of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. Heb 6:11-12.

And Peter echoes the same message that **salvation is not just believing or faith**, rather **salvation is the end of faith's obedient journey**:

Who are kept by the power of God through faith **to salvation ready to be revealed in the last time**. In that greatly rejoice **though it is necessary to suffer a few griefs through various trials, so that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tried with fire**, might result in praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. Though you

have not seen him, you love him; though you do not see him now, but believe in him, you rejoice with joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, **receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.**

1 Pet 1:5-9.

Yearn like newborn babies for pure, spiritual milk so that you may **grow up to salvation**, 1 Pet 2:2]

The covenant does not stand in mere words; if I conform to such articles, then I am a Christian; if I believe all the articles of the creed, then I am a Christian and a child of God. If a man will say, I believe, his say so is not sufficient. The condition of the covenant that God has made, is, that Christ shall rule and have the government of those souls that he presents to God. How should it be otherwise, seeing he is not to present any to God that are unclean? Christ has no commission to present any to God in their uncleanness and wickedness. He who believes must be cleansed and purified by him. If so, then that cannot be done, but by ruling over them. If they had the rule of themselves, they would be polluted, and be like water, whose current is stopped with dirt and mud, not running in its own proper stream. People will commit sin when they have the rule of themselves; but when Christ presents people to God, and where they come to be led by him, they are cleansed and purified.

When the apostle describes true faith, he does it by this quality and property of it, *it purifies the heart*. All other faith is *but the hope of the hypocrite*; but real faith is the operation of God, said the apostle; and that faith works in an unclean heart to the cleansing of it, and in an impure heart to the purifying of it. If the heart comes to be purified, then it follows that the conduct must be pure also. No one does an ill work, or speaks an ill word, unless it is from an evil heart. Now if the *axe comes to be laid to the root of the tree*, and the word of the Lord operates in the heart powerfully, if ever so much evil is in it, the axe when laid to the root of the tree, will cut it down; the power of

God will execute judgment upon everything that is contrary to him; *Christ is holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sin and sinners*, and though he extends his life and virtue to the life and soul of the most wicked man in the world, it never joins with their uncleanness, but keeps immaculate and undefiled in the heart of the worst of men.

Now this immaculate power that comes from Christ will purify the hearts of men and preserve them from evil thoughts, words and actions. This is the manifestation of the one Mediator that they must be governed by, else they cannot be presented spotless to God the Father. There is a necessity of coming to a Savior with more than just words and profession; we must come to him and heartily join with him. We have all joined with the devil; he has suggested, moved, and instigated, and people have followed his instigations and motions; there is no man who is not sensible of a devilish motion, why not then of a divine motion? Though now it has become a dreaded thing to say that we are moved by the Spirit of Christ, why not by that Spirit, as well as by the spirit of the wicked one? No man doubts but that there are motions of the devil which they are sensible of, that sometimes they have joined with him, and sometimes they withstand him. What is the reason that men should join with evil motions? There is no just reason for it. The reason why you and I withstand the motions of the devil, is because we find another motion conveyed into our hearts by the Spirit of God; if a man has one motion to commit uncleanness, he has another motion to keep himself pure; if he has a motion to speak a lie, he has another motion to speak truth. If there are two movers at the same time, in the same heart, with which shall we join? Shall I join with the devil's motion? If I find anything of the love of God in my heart, it will constrain me to mind the good motion, and make me withstand the evil motion; so that the moving of the Spirit of God is not such a wonder.

There are none who have not had bad motions in them, and they have also motions of the Spirit of truth; they have met with evil motions, and they have admired them too much. Then it is time to repent. If there is a

distinction between a motion of the Spirit of truth, and a motion of the spirit of error, then I may boldly say, it is our duty to join with the Spirit of truth, and not with the spirit of error. If there is a desire in us *to be saved from the wrath to come*, then the way to be saved from God's wrath is to be saved from the cause of it; take away the cause and the effect ceases. The cause of God's wrath being kindled against man is sin, for God had no wrath against man when he first made him; for he made him after his own image, and gave him power to continue in that holiness and righteousness, in which he created him; but he fell, and was cast out of paradise, and an angel was sent with *a flaming sword that turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life*. Thus man fell under the wrath of God by his sin; but how shall I have the wrath of God allayed? By breaking off from sin, and returning to God again.

Objection: This looks like a covenant of works, say some. Do you say I must break off from sin and so escape the wrath of God?

[In addition to *works of the law*, (the dead works done by the will of man), ***there is another class of works: works of faith***, which are works that you hear from Christ within your heart command you to do, as you expose yourself to hear His commands by waiting on God; which is to sit in humble silence, listening for His voice and watching for His revelations. To obey the commands of God that you hear him speak to you are ***operational works of faith, which Paul declared a must and James declared faith without works is dead***. These are not works that you decide to do; these are works that God wills you to do, and when you do them, you are doing His will on earth as it is done in heaven. ***These are works of faith done in loving obedience to the commands you hear God speak to you from within your heart***. These are works of life too, commanded from the life of God, Christ; and the words he speaks to you impart the life of God. John 6:63. Repetitively

seek, wait, watch, listen, hear, believe what you hear or are shown, and obey — and eventually you will have received so much of the life of God that you become cleansed and purified. Then you are directed by God to do works of love to your joy and his glory.

The first class of works you will hear God command you to do are works of repentance — forsaking your evil habits, passions, and pleasures. This is the function of grace: **Teaching us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and how to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;** Tit 2:12. The commands you hear him speak to you are to be kept, remembered, and obeyed; if he orders you to deny something in your life, you are to keep denying it. The commands you obey and keep are then written in your heart and mind, supplementing the inner the law already on every man's heart; thus the scripture is fulfilled: I will put my laws into their hearts, and I will write them in their minds [inward understanding]. Heb 10:16.

God's grace and salvation are provided to create a people dedicated to good works:

- Who gave himself for us, that he might **redeem us from all iniquity** [lawless deeds, sin], and **purify for himself a people who are his very own, zealous for good works.** Tit 2:14
- For we are his workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus for good works**, which God has ordained before that **we should walk in [doing good works]**. Eph 2:10
- **Make you perfect in every good work to do his will**, working in you what is well pleasing in his sight, through

Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Heb 13:21

- That you might walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing in all things, being **fruitful in every good work**. Col 1:10
- Let your light so shine before men, that **they may see your good works, and glorify your Father** who is in heaven. Mat 5:16
- But he who practices truth comes to the light, so that **his deeds may be shown to have been produced [formed and powered] through God**. John 3:21
- For it is **God who brings forth in you, both the will (to work) and the works (as commanded)**, according to his good pleasure. Phil 2:13
- Therefore **if a man purges himself from the latter, [iniquity, lawlessness, sin] he will be a vessel of honor, sanctified and ready for the master's use, and prepared for every good work**. 2 Tim 2:21]

Yes, I do; but no mortal man can break off from sin but by joining with the Mediator; he is the author of eternal salvation that he works in us to desire his will and to do his will and enables us to work out our own salvation. It was sin that drove man out of paradise and brought upon him the wrath of God. Sin is the devil's work. Now that Christ might be a Savior to us, he will destroy the devil's work; *for this purpose, said the apostle, the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil*. Now the devil was not the destruction of man simply in himself, but by tempting him to sin, which is the devil's work; and Christ was manifested, to destroy the devil's work; that propensity to sin that is in the nature of man, which makes him rebel against the mind and will of God. Christ the eternal Son of God became man; he took the nature of man, that he might bring man again to

his primitive state, in which he was created after the image of God.

Now how does the devil perform his works? Does he do his works coercively? No, he uses no irresistible force. But does Christ the Mediator work coercively, with an irresistible power and force, to bring a man again to God? No, no more than the devil did to beguile man from God. Man might have stood and continued in his state of innocence if he would; he might join with evil, and yield to the temptation of the devil, if he had a mind; he knew if he gave over his mind to evil, he would be ruined; and it proved so. Man was resolved to try out what it was to yield to the devil and obey him. He told those who if they ate of the forbidden fruit they would be as Gods, but they became more like the devil. They got this by being obedient to the devil, not that the devil laid an irresistible force upon them, "God knows that on the day that you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil;" but there was only a presentation of it to them, and with that he prevailed, and so came to the destruction of mankind. Christ the Mediator, in order that he may present us to God, comes himself and presents his commands to us; and his command is, that we must break off from that servitude and subjection that the devil has brought man into, and there must be a subjection unto Christ. We must believe in Christ, hearken to the word of God, and break off from sin; but where is the power to do so? "If God would have me holy, let him make me holy; if he would have me pure, let him make me so, and give me ability to do what of myself I cannot do; when it pleases God to give me grace and captivate my will, I shall become a good Christian." Now here is a great mistake that people should think they must wait for an irresistible power to bring them back to God; there is a presentation of love and mercy, and earnest invitations, and the long-suffering and patience and goodness of God's long waiting upon sinners. God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor 4:6. "What shall I do with the light that shines into my heart? I will shut my eyes against it; I love darkness rather than light, and evil more than good; this light will lead me to holiness and

righteousness, I will quarrel with it, it comes to bereave me of my comforts in this world, of my merry companions, and of all my bravery, I will not hearken to it." Alas! for these. This is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil. Said our Savior: if I had not come and spoken to them, they had no sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin.

Here is the gospel preached by Christ himself; here is the presentation of an opportunity for every man and woman to return again, but I must be in the way of returning, that is, by joining with what presents to me holiness, righteousness, chastity, and humility that presents and offers to the soul all the virtues and graces that are in Christ, and shows it the light and grace that comes from Christ. Because this light and grace shows itself to my soul, I have a view of it. Do you have a view of it? Have you seen purity, humility, sobriety, meekness, and self-denial, and a heavenly frame of spirit in yourself or somebody else? How do you like it? "I don't like it at all; I love to have honor and dignity, power and dominion, and my elbow-room in the world; I do not love this meekness, humility and strictness of life that a man must have a care what he speaks, and set a watch upon his lips, and upon his heart, tongue, and hands; I do not like this kind of life."

If you don't like a good life, somebody will like it, and live in it; and notwithstanding all your vain boasting, your hating, and despising it. When people come to live this kind of life, they will outlive you; your proud life, your reigning life, and your having elbow-room in the world, will at last come to be limited; the hand of God is against it, and he will bring down the pride of man. When you come to lie upon your dying pillow, expecting any moment to expire and breathe your last, then you will say, "O that I had been more serious, and lived more like a Christian; lived a godly life, and given up my heart to God, and been more watchful over my thoughts, words, and actions! There is such a friend of mine, that has lived better than I; if I had lived such a life as he has lived, I would have had more comfort;" and those who are despisers of the godly, though they do not like such a life now,

they will like it then.

Friends, you who are lovers of your souls, and meet together that you may become better, and have expectation and hope that you shall receive comfort and benefit by your meeting together; I tell you, as a servant of God, and a lover of yours, it is but a little while, and you will wish that you had chosen the most holy, harmless, innocent life, that ever you saw yourselves, or heard of from anybody else; and you will wish that you had been more watchful over your thoughts, words and actions. There is a day, a day approaching, when we must give an account for every thing that we have done, whether good or evil; you must give an account for your cursed debauchery, for your swearing, lying, and inordinate passions; you must give an account for every vain thought, and every idle word.

If this will certainly come to pass, how shall I prevent these idle words and evil actions? *How shall a young man cleanse his way*, said the Psalmist? *By taking heed thereto, according to your word*. I am not as those who say *lo here* and *lo there*. I do not say, you must come and learn truth of me; rather I say: if you find it, you must find it in yourselves. "What if I live in the truth?" That will not serve you, and if I am a holy man, that will not sanctify you. You must hearken to truth's speaking *in yourself*; you may hear it speaking in your own heart; you may hear it call you to righteousness and holiness; and if you hear it, you may do it too, if you please; for there is a power that goes along with it.

"I know enough," you will say, "but I cannot do what I know; I do not have the power." What ails you that you do not have power? "If I had power, then would I abstain from all sin, and break off from my evil ways, but the devil throws this object and the other object in my way, and by his temptations he ensnare me; I do not have the power to resist. Would you have me do more than I can do? And as long as I do not have the power, I am to be excused."

[Without the power of God working **in** you, there is no victory,

there is no overcoming. There are three sources to the power of God being released to purify you: 1) power in the true hope and gospel, 2) power in the inward cross of self denial, and 3) the power in the name of Jesus. This **power of God works in us**, and keeps us through faith to salvation, which is to be delivered from sin. Power is released by carrying the inward cross of self-denial, which is obedience to his spoken and heard words, while meditating on the name of Jesus and holding onto the hope of purity, union, and the kingdom. The combination of all to access the changing, infinite power of God to work in you, cleansing you, purifying you, delivering you from all sin, and bringing you into union with God into his kingdom, while on earth and then forever.]

Now here is a device of the devil to keep people in his net still. If men would be true to themselves, they would not be long without power. If you are convinced of the evil of your ways, and that it is your duty to break off from sin, there is a power offered to you, that, if you join with, you may overcome all temptations, and forsake your sin. I would have you all prove, and search, and see whether I speak truth or not. I am persuaded there is not a man or woman here but they have sometime abstained from an evil work, which they were tempted to. How were you restrained; because you knew it was an evil work, you dared not do it; the devil did not have a coercive power to force you to do it; "I knew it was an evil thing, and I joined with that in my mind which dissuaded me from it; and I prayed to God to give me power to abstain from it." The devil still tempted you, so who helped you against the temptation? God restrained you by his grace. Will not he who is present in you, help you? He is *the same yesterday, today, and forever*; depend upon him still, and he will be always ready to help you, support you, and strengthen you; and you shall be kept from sin in an hour of temptation. Consider that *all power in Heaven and Earth is given to Christ*; and if he is able to keep you, you shall not fall into it? *Those who come unto me*, said Christ, *no one shall pluck them out of my Father's hand. My Father is*

greater than all. If you come unto Christ, he will in no way cast you out, and if you depend upon him, he will preserve you, and none shall be able to pluck you out of his hand. If you join with the truth, and with what is holy, you shall have strength and ability to withstand temptation and overcome it; and (I may speak with reverence) Christ has bound himself to those who trust in him; those who keep the word of my patience, I will keep them in the hour of temptation. If I keep waiting upon his power, that is ready to help me, and have a mind to be purified and sanctified, and to have righteousness brought into my soul, and have mine eyes unto God, and my expectations from him, he will work in me to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Now here people have a fixed foundation for their faith; but there is no working at this rate without bearing a daily cross. There are a great many can receive the truth in words, and receive doctrines, and tenets, and that with delight; but there is no practicing holiness and righteousness without a daily cross and self-denial. There are a great many who have come to truth, as far as it stands in words; but when it comes to something that they must do, to speak the truth, and live in the truth, they meet with so much of the temptation of the devil, so much lust and corruption, and ungodliness in themselves; they meet with such evil things that their souls join with and yield to, that they cannot go on in the ways of holiness, unless they look up to Jesus, and have an eye to their Savior and take up his cross and follow him. Whatever reproaches, sufferings, and persecutions they endure, they must have a godly resolution to follow the Lord Christ; and say: "I will obey his commands; he shall have the rule and government of my life and be the guide of my way; Whatsoever stands in my way, I will take up my cross and deny myself;" without this there is no good Christianity in the world.

There are a great many that seem to be religious and are talkers of the truth. We all know there are many talkers of the truth in notion, and with talk about it with great zeal; but they do not know how to live and walk in the truth. They do not live uprightly and honestly in the truth. They do not keep

their words; they do not live justly and honestly with all men, nor do unto others as they would have others do to them. They can describe how to speak and act; then why do they not do it? They have got a notion that *they are above* the cross of Christ, and *self-denial is far below them*. People will not live in the truth.

This is lacking in the whole world. If we look around we shall find a great many are illuminated. There is abundance of knowledge and understanding among talkers; there is abundance of learning, and great numbers of learned men. What is the reason that oaths, and curses, and all manner of wickedness run down the streets like a river? There is pride, wrath, envy, revenge, and violence to be found among us, which seem likely draw down vengeance upon us. They have heard preached in pulpits much of holiness, humility, patience and meekness; and have heard that *a meek and quiet spirit is an ornament of great price*. Men have heard much preaching against pride, profaneness, drunkenness, and uncleanness, but they have heard it *like a tale that is told*, not much concerned about it, and have given little credit or regard to what they have heard of these things. Why are people so wicked? The reason at last results in this: *men are lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; they are not the servants of Christ, but serve many lusts and pleasures, and are led captive by the devil, at his will*; and so they go on in iniquity. No laws can restrain and curb them, when the law of Christ is not written in their hearts; but when men come to see a necessity of self-denial and taking up the cross, this will produce a reformation.

This is what I labor for, and all good men and women will do it. It is time to try for reformation. Vain fashions, and garbs, and pride have been cried up; why should not we cry for reformation before the wrath of a provoked God is kindled against us, and his vengeance poured down upon the nation? We must reform our lives. How shall men reform, you will say? By getting the law of God within their hearts, that is pure, and holy, and heavenly, that will be as a light to men's feet, and a lantern to their paths. Now until people

come to this, they will go on in sin and iniquity until they are swept away with some overflowing and dreadful judgment.

So that, my friends, in the fear of God, and out of love to you, I seek that you may be brought to God, through Christ, that you may live in the love and fear of the Lord; and, when you come to die, you may have rest and peace for your souls. There is no rest for those who are evil-doers, *there is no peace*, said my God, *to the wicked*. The ungodly cry, *peace, peace*, and talk of peace, but there is no peace for them; but they shall have for their portion tribulation, and wrath, and anguish. This shall certainly come upon everyone that does evil. It is no matter what religion you are of, if you do not obey the truth, but live in unrighteousness.

Now, friends, my exhortation to you all is that you will return to the truth in your own hearts, and do it while you have time. I am not persuading people to love my opinion, but to love God's truth in their own hearts; to love it and obey it; and you cannot do this unless you resolve to take up a daily cross, and be followers of Christ, who has gone before them to prepare a place for those who are his true disciples. Then he will present them to God, as *holy, harmless, and undefiled*, for these are heirs of that everlasting kingdom, *which God has prepared for those who love him*.



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SERMON XXX

Christ the Way to Eternal Life

Preached at Grace-Church-Street, May 6, 1688

THE desire of all nations has come; what all people desire in their own way, has come in God's way; for all nations and all people on the earth desire eternal life. They would all be happy in the next world, and in order to achieve this, they have fitted themselves with many ways and methods, in which they have proposed to themselves the enjoyment of eternal Life; but by reason of the darkness that is in them, they have erred. In their ways, they have been scattered; they have been driven and tossed here and there, and can never agree about the way that leads to eternal life.

This comes because of the great darkness that is over the sons and daughters of men in general, in which they have lost their way, and are endeavoring to find it again. But the subtle adversary led them out of the way, and as long as he leads and they follow, they will never find the right way. The great calamity that has come upon the world in this respect, is very greatly to be lamented; for when the eye of the mind is opened, to behold the universal state of mankind, and to see how they are scattered here and there, and often left in confusion, by the craft and delusion of the wicked one, and that none of the ways that they have found, are likely to bring them to the proposed end, because they are defiled, because they are unholy. This has bowed down the spirit of the Lord's servants many times, and a great cry

has arisen in the hearts of those who have seen the fruition and enjoyment of life eternal. O, that the sons of men might hear! And O that they might consider their ways before they come to their latter end! For mark friends, this you may take for a certain doctrine, and a sure rule in judgment, concerning all the ways that the sons and daughters of men walk in: if they are unholy, they will be unprofitable. **The way of the Lord was, and is, and ever will be the way of holiness; and the people that walk therein, they were, and are, and they will always be, a holy people.** Now the sons and daughters of men have not gone to measure their way by this rule. Instead the greatest endeavors that have ever been in the world, from the beginning, (the greatest endeavors that men undertook), were to see how near they could approve their doctrine and practice with the scriptures of truth. That has been the bone of contention, which they have stumbled about from one generation to another; one crying my way is right. Here they have been contending, disputing, jangling, and debating with one another, and could never agree, and could never come to that understanding, which is given by the Holy Spirit who moved holy men to write the Holy Scriptures of truth. If they had, it is manifest they would have agreed, for this one spirit must agree with itself and will give judgment according to its own righteous judgment. Men, being alienated from the life of God by evil works and by the suggestions of Satan, have not known the way of peace and have not come to what is the desire of all nations. Now in the fullness of time, the Lord God eternal, who created the Heavens and the Earth, the sea and the fountains of water, he has looked down and beheld the miserable calamitous state of the sons and daughters of men, and he has seen how they have been scattered and driven to and fro by idle shepherds; and how everyone has indulged himself in his own way, though unholy and impure because of the darkness of the night of ignorance that has been over the people. Therefore in his infinite love and mercy, he is risen, and has brought forth his light and his truth, that the nations might be enlightened, that they might come and see with a divine eye that the truth is but one, and the way but one, and all who really desire to be inheritors of eternal Life,

must come to walk in that way. So that people are never brought back again out of that way in which they have been scattered and driven about, until they come to see that the way they practice brings forth iniquity [lawlessness, sin, evil]. Then they see there is no light to be had in them, they see the anger of God kindled, and the indignation of God poured out because of sin and unholiness.

Now when they come to be convinced of their disobedience by the light of Christ Jesus, then they come to feel and find a principle, a seed and root that gives them a law that they should obey, and hear the right law-giver, and have respect to him. Here is the revelation of Christ Jesus by his Spirit, and this extends itself in its operation and working to the sons of men, to those who are far off, as well as to those who are near; therefore our continual exhortation, from time to time, **according as the spirit has given us utterance**, is not so much to make profession of this and the other doctrine of Christianity, as to persuade all men everywhere, so that they might believe in the light, and hearken to the voice of the light in their own consciences, that they might hearken to what is purely of God *in* themselves, as we know, whoever comes to love the light of Christ Jesus, with which they are enlightened, it would discover doctrine to them, and make known faith and practice too; it will lead them in the way everlasting, it will open their understanding far above all preaching this and the other doctrine and tenet.

What good is it to show colors to the blind, or to speak words to the dead; until men come to have their senses opened, so that they may discern things belonging to the spirit of truth, the carnal man cannot understand the things of the gospel of Christ, the carnal man is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can he be; there must be something done in the soul, to bring it out of its carnality, and bring it to something that is spiritual, before it is capable of understanding the things of the spirit. Therefore when our minds can witness what we came here for, when we meet to serve and worship God, we shall have a hope to receive some illumination, some refreshment, some comfort, or some knowledge of things divine; it is in vain to attend

religious doctrines with an irreligious mind. It is my judgment in love, that everyone who comes here, has some expectation of illumination in their understandings, some gift, or some instruction; this they may receive from the God of Heaven, by the ministry of those who must be the mouth of God, to speak to them in his name. When people are thus prepared, and their minds fixed to hear the truth; if they do not find it in themselves, if they do not come to a sense of the word of Life in their own hearts, their hearing cannot give them life. We are commending ourselves to every man's conscience; let your minds be turned inward, search and consider, is there a light that enlightens every man that comes into the world? Is there a desire of eternal life manifested in me? Is there something in me that pleads obedience to God, to mend my life and conduct, so that I might be recommended to God? Is there something in me that checks me when I speak amiss, and do amiss? I appeal to the witness of God in you; if that is so, then believe me for the word's sake, the testimony of God in your hearts.

Let us next consider, whether we had best agree on this conclusion: that God has enlightened us, and whether we had not best obey that light; this is the best way, let us put the question, and wait for an answer from ourselves. There is much indeed to be said on the other side. "If I should hear and obey that by which I am enlightened, if I should hearken to the reproof of my own conscience, I would lose a great deal of the pleasure and of the comfort of the world; I would lose a great deal of the profit which I gain in my trade and calling, and of the delight and pleasure I have with my neighbor. "

This is not to be denied; I would have things put in the balance. I grant you will lose some pleasure, and ungodly gain, and the friendship of the world; but pray consider, and let us go through the account. If you obey this light of Christ Jesus, *this is God's way* of drawing you nearer to himself, to make you an heir of his eternal kingdom. On the other hand, if you indulge you carnal parts, **you will lose your immortal soul**; if you should gain the whole world, and lose your own soul, what will it profit you? You should consider, why I am enlightened; how did it happen that my nature is evil,

and I am fallen from my primitive state, from the knowledge of God, and from the enjoyment of his presence, and communion with him? How does God come to take notice of me, and to enlighten me and kindle in me a desire of returning to him? Why should he do this for me? You will never find a reason in yourself of this extraordinary kindness, of this singular mercy of God to you; it is because his mercy moved him, and it was his compassion that stirred him up. He has sent his Son Jesus Christ into the world so that men might have light in and through him and have it abundantly. The mercy of God is a fountain from which all this flows to us. If this does not prevail upon you, no argument will. What, was it mere mercy, mere grace, that God was not willing to see me perish, and run headlong to destruction? He was loath to execute his wrath upon me, therefore he found out a way by which I might return to him. This made a good man cry out: *behold! what manner of love is this, with which the Father has loved us?* Here is the grace of God; here is the good will of God; here is the way; a way, what way? A way of coming to God, a way of being again reconciled to God, whom we had provoked by our sins; a way of enjoying eternal life again, after we had lost all pretence to it.

The next question is, who will walk in the way that leads to eternal life? We would all have eternal life; it is the universal consent of all nations; all would have eternal life; but the question is, who will walk in the way that leads to it? Some of the other nations, and many in this nation, will walk in their own way, and yet they would have eternal life; but their way must be of the same nature and quality with the life they would have; if the way they walk in is not of the same nature and quality, it will not lead to it. Let everyone examine their way; let everyone examine their progress, and their lives and footsteps in this world; if they sow to the flesh, they shall of the shall reap corruption; and if they sow to the spirit, they shall of the spirit reap life everlasting; a suitable fruit to that life they live, and the way they walk in. If we conclude with reason; with pure, sound reason, we must conclude it is better for us all to walk in the way of holiness; and we shall have more reason to believe that we shall have life eternal, than in walking in an unholy

way; therefore we should be resolved to walk in the way of holiness; and if people are brought to this, it is an easy thing to draw them to confession. You say true, it is better to walk in a holy way than an unholy way; but alas! We do not have power to do so; we are feeble, weak, dark and ignorant; and we have many lusts, temptations and impediments, lying in our way, so that it is not possible for any to walk in that way. We know the way, we understand the way well enough; you would have us walk by the light of Christ, and the dictates of our own consciences, then we should never be condemned for anything we do, but we would stand in an openness of access to God. When a man sins against God, sin lies at the door; but those who do not sin, have an access to God. Alas, these things cannot be done! What can a poor creature do that lacks power?

My friends, this excuse must go no further; let us try and consider in the presence of God this day, the powerful God who is the assister of his people; let us try how far this will go. I have no power of myself; all good men grant it to be true, you do not have power to walk in the way of holiness. But let us ask another question; does God require of you and me to walk in the way of holiness, and does he deny power to us to walk in it? We cannot walk in the way of holiness, except by the operation of his power working in us, to the extinguishing of the life of sin and corruption, that has hindered us all this while; God knows we cannot do it ourselves. Christ tells his disciples, without me you can do nothing, nothing good, nothing that is right. This being concluded, all power comes from God; the next question is, how, and which way must we receive power from God greater than our own power? What is the way of people's receiving power from God? You have read how people came to have power: to as many as believed, to them he gave power to become the sons of God. What does this mean to those who do not believe? If believing is the way to obtain power, it is nothing to those who do not believe; there faith is necessary, in the first place, for obtaining of this power. This is a great mystery, such an odd saying, that the world does not know what to make of it. Believers, we are all believers; I believe the truth of the principles of the Christian religion, and I believe all the articles of the

creed. To talk of believing at this time of day, we have believed this twenty, or thirty, or forty years, but the first act of faith is yet to be done after your sense. This is true, with the greatest part of the nation; the first act of faith has not yet begun for their faith is men's faith. We are for the faith that was delivered to the saints; it is the gift of God, and it comes from the operation of God; so that I may conclude, whoever remains a stranger to the operation of God, he is a stranger to the true faith; and those who estrange themselves from what God works, are strangers to the operation of God. Therefore, until people's minds are turned to Christ, whom God has sent, who is appointed to be for salvation to the ends of the earth; until men come to reduce the government both of the soul and body to him, as the captain of their salvation; until they come to be thus resigned, they cannot come to the true faith.

Now when God works this resignation in us, a man will reflect upon himself and say, alas I have been my own keeper too long. I see I have gone off from God; now I will return to him, and resign up myself to the Lord so that he may work in me what he pleases to work. When men come to this resignation of soul, they have faith given them; they must believe God will never leave them nor forsake them, but he will magnify his power in their weakness. I will rest my soul upon him, and cast my care upon him who cares for me. It is not faith barely in words, and in the articles of the creed, but it is a faith in the Son of God, to whom all power in Heaven and Earth is given; I may expect a share of it, he will give me a little, if I come to him for it; and if I am faithful in a little, he will give me more; the reason why you lack power, is, because you lack faith; and the reason of your lack of faith, is, because you lack a resignation to the will of God. You will be your own servers, and your own keepers and guides. When you come to this resignation to the will of God, God will give you power, and then you will find him the God of all grace. You are what you are by the grace of God and by his power, and by that power you will obey his will. Here is faith that gives glory to God, to that God that takes an unholy man and makes him holy; how does he do this? By his holy spirit, which is as fire that burns up

what is corruptible, then the man is well, (I speak according to the dictates of the spirit), when he is reconciled to God by Christ Jesus, the Mediator between God and man, the Mediator of the new covenant, who makes our peace. That you may come to the knowledge of the day of the Lord's visitation, is what our souls labor and travail for, that you may be in the unity of the same spirit after the desire of all nations is come; he is come to you, that you may all say within yourselves, salvation this day is come to our house and into our hearts.

[Do not confuse the beginning of faith with the end of faith.

Faith is a journey. It has a beginning and a finish; listening to, and obeying Jesus, is him being the **author** and **finisher** of your faith. When you hear him speak to you, **Jesus authors your faith** by laying the foundation of your faith on rock;

Whoever comes to me, and **listens to my spoken words and does [practices, obeys]** them, I will show you what he is like. He is like a man who built a house, and dug deep and laid the foundation securely built on a rock; and when the flood arose, the torrent beat violently upon that house, but could not shake it because it **was founded on a rock.** Luke 6:47-48

And when you hear Jesus speak his words to you, and you believe it to be him, **the foundation of your faith has been set in rock**, a rock so solid that the gates of Hell cannot prevail against it.

Jesus **finishes your faith** when **you see** him bring your salvation:

To those who persistently and patiently wait for him,

he will appear the second time, not to bear sin,
but **to bring full salvation**.. Heb 9:28

For the grace of God that **brings salvation** .. Tit 2:11
looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to
bring eternal life. Jude 1:21

**Receiving the end of your faith - the salvation
of your souls**. 1 Pet 1:9

And Peter describes the necessity of making every effort to
progress in the journey of faith:

For this reason **make every effort [the maximum
possible] to add to your faith**, virtue [excellence];
and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge, self-
control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to
perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly
kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. Therefore,
brothers, **be diligent to make your calling and
election sure**; for **if you do these things you
will never fall**. 2 Pet 1:5-7,10.

You are saved through *faith*, and by *faith* your hearts are
purified; but obviously in the beginning of faith, you are not
purified, neither are you saved. Before purification and salvation,
**your faith must be tested in several trials, in which you
must grievously suffer** in order to be purified of sin. Before
purification and salvation, **your faith must be tested in
several trials, in which you must grievously suffer** in
order to be purified of sin. You must contend for the faith, grow
in the faith, build up your faith, increase in faith, perfect what is
lacking in your faith, fight the good fight of faith, until victory
when your faith is finished by the finisher; faith is a process and
a journey, the end of which is to see Christ bring your salvation,

to bring your eternal life.

James corrected the shortcut of *believing in Jesus*, being all that is necessary for salvation, writing to the Jewish Christians: You say you believe that there is one God; you do well. Even the demons believe, and tremble, James 2:19; realize, James was writing to Jewish believers of the Father, the Word (Son) , and the Holy Spirit being one spirit, and without conflict to — Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one. Deu 6:4. So James is in effect saying, "you say you believe in Jesus, you do well, the demons do too, but they tremble at his name — do you?"

Faith is Hearing the Spirit and Following It

Therefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

But after that, when faith [received with the fruit of the Spirit] has come,

we are no longer under a schoolmaster [the law that is on everyone's heart]. Gal 3:24-25

But **if you are led by the Spirit**, you are not under the law. Gal 5:18

Did you received you the Spirit by the works of the law or **by faith in what you heard?** Gal 3:2

He who supplies the Spirit to you, and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law, or by the faith in **what you heard** [said to you]? Gal 3:5

But what did it say? "**The word is near you, even in your mouth, and in your heart [so you may obey it];**" that is, **the word of faith, which we preach.** Rom 10:8

So then **faith comes by hearing**, and hearing by the word of God [Christ from within your heart]. Rom 10:17

See that you do not refuse him who speaks. For if they did not escape, who refused him who spoke on the earth, how much

more will we be liable, if we turn away from him who speaks from heaven. Hebrews 12:25

"Today if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness. Hebrews 3:15]

SERMON XXXI

Christ All in All

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire-House, June 10, 1688

THE Lord Jesus Christ is the only light, life, and virtue that can satisfy. **Christ is all in all.** There is nothing can satisfy the souls of the upright, unless they feel life and virtue to flow from Christ Jesus; and this, whether it flow through the words spoken in spirit by his chosen instruments, or whether it flows directly from the hearts of the hearer, it always comforts, it always refreshes the upright in heart.

Therefore all those who desire satisfaction to their souls, and who meet together upon that account, ought to have their eyes turned to the Lord so that they may be capable to understand the ministration of the spirit, whether in themselves, or through any other. For while they are exercised outwardly, and the dependence of their souls is upon what is outward, there remains a veil upon the mind, that they many times hear excellent things spoken of the kingdom of God, but they do not really understand them because they are alienated and estranged in their minds from that of God in themselves, which should give them an understanding. As preachers, we never pretend to give people an understanding; we have always said, that is the work of God. We have spoken many things of the kingdom of God; excellent things have been revealed to us by his holy spirit, and the same

spirit has given us utterance, to speak of the great things of the law of God. Yet many, who have been constant hearers of these things, remain ignorant, and are insensible because they are not exercised in their own measure of the grace and light of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which they should receive and understand them. This has made me often lament the case of many of the people of this city and nation, who are daily hearers of the word of God preached, and do not retain it in their hearts. The sowers are gone out to sow, but many receive it in the wayside ground; the way that everything can pass in; there they receive the word sown, and the devil takes it away. So, although they have heard excellent things of the strength, ability and power of God that he ministers to his people, they remain so weak and so feeble that they are blown away with every blast of the adversary, with every temptation, and with every snare and trap that is laid for them. They are caught, ensnared, and taken; and so these come to meetings again and again, one year after another. I might say unto you, why do you come? It may be you may say, we desire to be satisfied; we desire satisfaction for our souls. Do you so? Then I tell you, you may come all the days of your life, and lack it, and lay down your heads in sorrow at last for all that. For all the words in the world will never communicate that heavenly life and virtue which brings true satisfaction to the soul, unto any, except to those who have an exercise in their own mind and spirits, in what they have from God; they must first be brought to know the way they should walk in, and to believe that is the way [enough to walk in it]. When people believe this is *my* way, the light within is *my* way, the grace of God is *my* way, which searches and tries *my* heart, that is *my* way I must walk in, speak in, and think in, and do all that I have to do in; when I believe this is that way, then this belief obliges men to take heed to their ways, to their footsteps. And here those who are thus exercised, are in a tender care every step they take in their way; and so perhaps they may receive great benefits by hearing the reports they do daily hear from those who were in the way before them, and have traveled further in it, than they ever yet have done. The experiences of the servants of the Lord are daily helpful to them, and they are daily comforted, strengthened, and confirmed, to hear how they have sped, who

have traveled through their condition, and through their present state; the helps and advantages they have met with, will do you good, and comfort you. But what is this to those who are not in the way, who do not have active faith in the way? Though they have a clear belief of the doctrine and way itself, yet they are not exercising themselves to walk in it; for they do like the rest of the world, saying, this good man, and the other good man, made a good sermon. Why was it good? Not for any good they found by it, but because he raised his doctrine well, and proved it from the scripture, therefore we are obliged to believe it.

But now this good doctrine, however so good, and however so firmly proved, it brings forth no fruit to the amendment of life, except in those who believe [to be motivated]; no fruit except in them where there is an exercise in the fear of God, where people are concerned for their soul's satisfaction. For those who look for true satisfaction by this, or that, or the other way of the world, they spend their days without satisfaction, and so at last they die in sorrow; and so it will be to the end of this, and all succeeding generations.

And therefore, my friends, though I confess it is not a grief to me, but a joy, to see people willing to hear the truth, and to come together in great assemblies; though I say, this is not a grief, but a joy, for I am not about to discourage those who do so. Yet I must be plain with you, I know what I say, and you will know it too one day, that all this meeting together, and gathering in great assemblies, and hearing what is preached to you, with ever so great delight to your minds, it will do you no good, unless you believe in the grace of God, that has been ministered to you through Jesus Christ.

And when people come to this foundation, and build on it, and grow every day more and more diligent in the exercise of their minds towards God, and examine their way, and examine their footsteps, how they have walked yesterday, how they have walked this day, and how their minds are exercised at this present time, whether they have answered the grace of God;

when they come to be thus exercised, they will look upon themselves as duty bound to give account to God every moment, for their thoughts, words, and actions. When they are thus exercised, then let them come to meetings in the name of God, and hear the experiences of those who have gone before them, and treasured up sayings in their hearts for their encouragement, and they will find this will be a help to them. But if people go and build a religion upon the sayings of this and that man; even if based upon the sayings of Christ himself or his apostles, if they were here to preach to them; and build a religion upon their words, and sayings, and doctrines, without the operations of the Spirit of God upon their hearts, inclining them to holiness and righteousness; this religion will do them no good. By this, to make the best of it, they might make adapt to reach to a form of godliness; which is people conforming themselves outwardly to the outward precept, command, [ritual, or ceremony] from without. This conformance might amount to a form of godliness, yet it might be supposed and granted, that the power of God, the power of divine life and virtue, where it is found, it sanctifies and seasons the mind, and brings men into an awful reverence of the living God, their Maker, so that they might stand in awe and not sin against him; for here is the life of religion.

This has a great difference from the manner of building men in religion that many have been acquainted with. They tell us, our fathers before us were built up in these forms, and modes, and methods of religion; they received so many doctrines, ordinances, sacraments and articles; and when these are received, believed and professed, you are a saint, you are a child of God, and you are a member of the church. How did man arrive at this? One says, men in the past were instructed in all the principles of the Christian religion, and subject to all the ordinances of the church; and another says, someone could speak excellently concerning the doctrine of our religion; therefore he is [to be believed] and certainly a child of God, and a member of Christ; but all this acceptance of the principles of the Christian religion, of doctrines, and ordinances, and sacraments — all this will not amount to the purifying of the heart, and cleansing and purging of the conscience. No, and it comes far

shorter to the bridling of the tongue because they would be in a passion upon the least provocation; and upon the least disgust and distaste given them, their tongues would run over into wrath, into wantonness, and profaneness. Upon any occasion and provocation given, their corrupted words would prevail, and lead them into deceit and covetous practices; and though the fruits and works of the old man remain, yet they will follow the principle of the regenerate, as far as they consist *in words*.

If our Lord Jesus Christ says, *except a man is born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, then this old corrupt birth will preach a sermon upon this text, and profess it. How many have taken upon themselves to preach a sermon, upon some excellent sayings of Christ, that never knew what regeneration was; for the new birth always has a new life; but they have lived the life of carnal corrupt fallen man, and yet preach a sermon about regeneration. Thus the ministers have done, and the people have believed them, and have been gathered into ditch* and such a church; for most put themselves into one church or other; they have been covenanted Christians, members of a church; but they have lacked what makes a Christian, a religious man, that is, the answer of a good conscience.

[*Then he spoke a parable to them, "Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into a ditch? Luke 6:39. So who is spiritually blind? Jesus tells us in the next verse that any unperfected disciple is blind. *The disciple is not above his master, but everyone who is perfect [purified, restored to the spiritual image of God, specifically authorized, and perfected]* will be like his master. Luke 6:40.

Notice! Unperfected **blind leaders cannot lead**. Jesus is speaking of spiritually blind leaders. A blind guide is anyone who has not been **perfected**.

But everyone who is perfected will be like his master (Jesus). Perfection takes the log out of your own eye, so you can remove the spec from your brother's eye.]

As a true Christian, he is bound to be an obedient child unto God, that begat him of his own will, by the word of truth; and this person can expect an answer of peace from God, through Jesus Christ, in whom he has believed, and by whom he is reconciled to God. If you take away this new birth, and this new nature, and an answer of peace from God to the soul, then tell me what the Christian religion is, more than the religion of Heathens and Pagans that worship stocks and stones? All the rest is only talk, and men are never a bit better for it. One man may excel another in talk and discourse. A debauched man many times has been able to talk at a great rate, and to speak notable things; and some have been ready to say, it is a pity a man of such excellent parts should lead a wicked life. But alas! if such a one can talk of the power of God still, and the devil has power over him, or if he speaks highly of the wisdom of God, yet he himself plays the fool abominably; so that by such a kind of life, and such a kind of religion, people never attain to satisfaction; after forty, or fifty, or sixty years spent therein, they must after all, lay down their heads in sorrow, when they have been constant keepers to the church, and sayers of their prayers, and receivers of the sacrament, and steadfastly believe the articles of the creed, and make profession of all the parts of the Christian religion; yet after all, they must lay down their heads [die] in sorrow. Why, what is the matter? What did they lack? They lacked faith in the power of God that would have enabled them to overcome their sin, and live in obedience to God; and they lacked to their outward profession, the answer of a good conscience, and justification through Christ the Mediator.

[Perhaps because the early Quaker's truths were so prominently preached in England and America at the time of this sermon, (the late 17th Century), those who died in their false church's faith, had serious doubts as they lay on their death bed, and so were in sorrow before death. But today, those truths have been smothered by the magnitude of Babylon, even prostituting the Quaker faith to nothingness; and so, I fear, many so-called

Christians lay on their beds of death, totally unsuspecting the fate that awaits them in the next life.]

They talked of redemption through Jesus Christ, but were never redeemed from their sins. This is so evident and plain, that there is no speaking to the contrary. If you see a drunkard, or a swearer, or an unclean person, and if he shall preach, and make an excellent sermon of the redemption that there is in Christ, and therein tell you, what great benefits they receive by Christ, that they are true believers, and that Christ is a Redeemer, and redeems them from the curse of the law, and from the guilt of sin, and reconciles them to God; so that he who was under the curse of the law, and an heir of wrath, is now a child of God. Now if you come to examine this man, and ask him, whether he is redeemed, and delivered from sin, so that sin has no more dominion over him, he will tell you, no. What not redeemed, when you have been a believer so long? Are you still under the bondage and captivity of sin? Then you are under the government of some other master than Christ; some other master has rule over you, if you are not redeemed from your swearing, lying, drunkenness, and uncleanness. If you are doing these things, you are under the power and government of some other master than Christ. Now this has startled people, when they have been thinking, that they have been baptized, and are professing Christians. They have flattered themselves with a groundless confidence; let me die when I will, this night, or tomorrow, I shall be saved by Christ; I am an heir of the kingdom of God. Let me tell you, you dishonor the name of God by your presumption.

When people come to examine matters, and read over the book of their consciences, and see what servants they have been to the devil, how the devil has led them up and down at his will, those who were supposed covenanted Christians and followers of Christ; when the devil has said to them, follow me, then they answer: "I will." When the devil says, follow me to do this and the other evil thing, they say: "I see I cannot resist; I cannot withstand the temptation; I was overtaken, surprised, and led away by such an allurements, and ensnared by it." Such people, I pray you to leave off talking about Jesus,

for you disgrace the Lord Jesus Christ; he and his disciples did not do these things so. He was tempted as you are, and his disciples were tempted as you are; so were Christians of old time; and true Christians who live in the present time, meet with many temptations, but they are not at the devil's beck and call as you are.

[Today, as a people, we have become so intellectual that most deny there really is a devil; most would deny they are controlled by master other than their own brain. They would say they choose to indulge in whatever sin it is they are committing. There are few who realize that the Spirit of Satan is within them and their fellow men, the spirit of selfishness, that rationalizes their lusts, which lusts are an illusion; the illusion that you can become happy with more money, more women, a bigger house, a more expensive car, a boat, a plane, a vacation on the space station, a promotion, etc. For this reason, as long as man thinks to create his own happiness, from following his desires, man has no use for God; and as the word of the Lord within has said to me: “unless a man has had a life-shattering experience, he cannot come to me.” A man has to give up on his selfish quest for happiness in this life, and look elsewhere for satisfaction, turning to God with desperate hope.]

The apostle Paul, in one passage of his life, we find came to be awakened and startled. There was a light from heaven that shined around him, and he heard the voice of Christ speaking to him: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? And he said, “Who are you Lord?” And the Lord said:” I am Jesus whom you are persecuting; it is hard for you to kick against the pricks [of conscience].” Trembling and astonished he said: “Lord, what do you want me to do? Acts 9:3-6, 26:13-18. He was brought to this pass after his conviction, but before that he was overcome and led captive; and when he would do good, evil was present with him. *To will, said he, is present, but how to perform I know not*; but he did not call this a happy state He did not

say then, I am in a good condition, when I am led captive by the devil at his will. The good that I would do, I do not, and I am carnal, and sold under sin. He does not say, this is a good condition, I am satisfied with it; see what he calls that condition; he gives it a more right name than many do now days, that say, this is the state of God's children; that the best of all God's children have no power to live without sin, and overcome all their corruptions; that they sin in their best duties, and can do nothing but sin, and that sin mixes itself in all their holy duties and performances. Many of their ministers tell them, that if they think they can perform any duty without sin, they deceive themselves, and run the hazard of being accursed. But this is not a teaching of Christ, but rather comes from a different master. Paul gave this state another name, which I would you were as wise when you are in this state and condition: *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?* I see a wretchedness in this condition; I see, if I am not delivered out of it, I must perish to all eternity. This is not a state to live in; who can live at ease in such a condition as this? Who can but cry out, “*who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?*” Alas! We hear no such cry now among priests or people, and separate congregations [those who appointed their own preacher]. I fear this cry is almost lost among us, unless it is some few that hear the voice of God, and feel such a stroke of the divine power as Paul did, and answer to the heavenly voice. I confess that I myself have heard such a cry, and have been sensible of my woeful captivity and bondage, by reason of sin. And though I had a mind to do good, I could not do it; it was my desire that I might sin no more. I desired not to sin against the Lord, if I could avoid it; and when I would do good, I found that evil was present with me; but I was far from sitting down [giving up] there, and saying, “this is the state and condition of God's people; it is as well with me as it was with the apostle Paul, therefore I will sit down [give up trying to change] in this state.” The people of God cannot find satisfaction in such a state as this, though I confess, that **God's peculiar people** at first came to this state, for their conviction; and the opening of their minds, and enlightening their understandings, to see the evil of their ways; but they do not come to this state, as to their rest, and then persuade themselves that they are in the

condition of the children of God. Rather they give their state an accurate name, and cry out, “wretched man that I am! What a miserable condition I have fallen into! I did not see it before. Now my eyes are opened, now my understanding is illuminated; now I see that the corruption of my nature prevails against the grace of God; and when I would join with the grace of God, and the motions of his Holy Spirit, the enemy is present to lead me away. I am not now in a happy state, but I am so far advanced that I am convinced of my miserable and wretched state and condition; if some way or other is not found for my deliverance, I shall never see the face of God with comfort.” Then arises that cry: “*Who shall deliver me?*” Thus the apostle Paul (Rom 7:24) sets forth the state of his conviction, and how miserable a condition he was in. Then he goes further, and tells you how it was with him. I thank God through Jesus Christ Our Lord. O! I have cause enough to thank God, I am not a wretched man now, I am not carnal, sold under sin; I am not led captive by the devil at his will now. Why, how so? The apostle said, *the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, has set me free from the law of sin and death.* Here is something to glory and to comfort the soul in. The law of the Spirit of life triumphed in his soul, and delivered him from the law of sin and death, and redeemed him from the power of sin, and made him serve God with freedom and liberty. *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* I would have all come to this, to thank God, not only in words, but in reality, in deed and truth. For one may teach a parrot to talk over these words; but it is the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, that will make you free from the law of sin and death.

This is a hard lesson; therefore you must go home into your own consciences, before you can make a right judgment of things and give a right answer to yourselves. The law of the spirit of life will set you free from the law of your passion, and of your pride and covetousness, and sensuality, and the law of your carnal inclinations. Are you set free from these?

Now when people come to examine themselves, they have nowhere to flee to, but they must take up a daily cross, and trust to the Lord Jesus for their

deliverance, who has enlightened them, to see their wretched and woeful state; and illuminated their understandings, that they might come to him, in order to their being delivered from the dominion of sin.

The greatest part of the world thinks this is a thing impossible, and therefore they do not hope to be set free from the bondage of their sins. Which of these ways is it that you take? I am afraid many of you have taken the wrong way. I judge no one in particular, but I speak this in faithfulness and love to your souls.

If there are any here, who are aware of their sins, and in a captive state under sin and Satan, who have despaired of ever being set at liberty, and have said, it is a vain thing to expect it; for some learned men have told them, that there is no deliverance from sin in this world, therefore it is in vain for me to strive, in vain for me to engage myself in a continual care and conflict, in a continual warring and watching against sin; for this deliverance can never be obtained in this life; it is in vain to seek for a thing that can never be found, and to strive for what can never be obtained. If there are any such here present, I have this to say to them, that the Lord, in his infinite mercy, has done two great things for you, to help you out of this despair, of obtaining a full deliverance from the bondage of your sins:

First. God has placed a witness for himself in your bosoms, in your consciences. Let me ask you, have you not gotten victory over many sins and temptations that you have been assaulted with, from your childhood to this day? I might challenge any person in this assembly, when a temptation has been presented before you, has there not been something within you, to tell you of the danger of complying with it? Has not your conscience warned you, and called upon you, O take heed, do not this evil thing, do not cheat your neighbor, do not commit this sin; whether drunkenness, or uncleanness, or whatever sin you were tempted to. Now, did you join to that voice in your own

conscience? And did it not help you over the temptation? And when you did escape the sin, were you not glad of it? And did you not rejoice that you obtained victory over it? Satan laid a snare, and an opportunity before me, to commit such a sin, but I did not join with it, and now I am glad of it. It was not only the devil's fault, for he came to his own, but there was an evil inclination in my heart to it. How did it happen that you didn't do it? I knew it was a sin against the Lord. How did you know that? I knew in my conscience, that if I did it, I must sin against light, and against conviction, and against grace received; and that was the reason I did not do it. Thus you acknowledged your own conscience helped you against the temptation.

Now I appeal to all your consciences, that hear me this day, whether God has not done this kindness for you; and there is none here but who have been some time helped out of temptation? I do not believe that ill of any, that they comply with all the temptations they meet with, but the light in their consciences has shown them the evil of sin, and they have been kept out of it, and they have been glad of it afterwards.

Now this is one great kindness, which God has done for every one of you, in order to help you out of this despair of being delivered from your sins.

Despair in the common notion of it, is what makes a man doubt of his eternal salvation. I shall go to hell when I die; there is no mercy for me. This despair has so wrought upon people that many have lost their wits and common sense, and at last committed suicide; many have been distracted and undone in this world, while they lived in it, and at last have dispatched themselves out of it. And there is another despair; a despair of getting victory over their corruptions, and obtaining a freedom

from sin. This latter despair, this nation is generally fallen into;* though the effects of the other despair is lamentable to behold, the effects of this will be as bad one day, if not prevented by rectifying that mistake men lie under. Why should you despair of the power of God to help you, and of the grace of God, and of the good will of God for your deliverance? If you will not join with the grace of God, and the power of God that is ready to help you, and give deliverance from your sins, the consequence will be dreadful at the last. Therefore believe in that grace of God, which has helped you against some temptations, and given you victory over some sins, that it will, if you faithfully join with it, give you victory over all.

[This is a measure of how different 17th Century England and America were. There was a general despair of not being able to stop sinning then. Today, most people couldn't give you a fair definition of sin, much less express any remorse. Our world has changed so much that our consciences have been dulled to non-operation. Not only has Christianity made grace a license for immorality, but Christianity has caused their believers' consciences to be seared as with a hot iron, leaving them indifferent to sin and evil.]

Secondly. Consider God has done another kindness for you, he has sent his *light and truth* into your heart, to engage you in a war against sin. There are a great many faithful soldiers of Christ who have fought this battle before you, and have obtained the victory, and they will tell you, they never went out to war in their own names, but in the name of the Lord JEHOVAH. When they relied upon him, and in meekness and fear waited upon him, he gave them power to overcome; and they were made conquerors,

and *more than conquerors*; for they have overcome those enemies, that sometimes overcame them; and Christ has fixed and settled them in this conquest, never to be overcome again. Here is both outward and inward evidence. The outward evidence will do you no good, until you come to lay hold of the inward evidence in your own hearts; then the outward evidence that God sends will be serviceable to you.

Therefore, my friends, I tell you, (as I said before), nothing will satisfy the soul, but the virtue and life that flows into it from the fountain of life; here is the way to it. If you should hear of a treasury and store of bread laid up for all that are willing to come to it, and if you knew not the way to come to it, and were ready to perish with hunger; what a cry would there be among you! If a man should come and tell you where there is such a treasury of bread, when you are ready to perish with hunger, and tell you the way to it is intricate and narrow, but that he himself has been there, and that he can tell you the ready way to it, and that he himself had relief and supply, and great plenty bestowed upon him, and that he would bring you there; O how welcome would such a one be to you! O that you were as wise in spiritual things, and as much concerned for your souls, as you are for your bodies, and would take the advice of God's ministers! They would turn you to the light within; the grace of God in your own hearts, which you are partakers of; and speaking to you in the name of God, desire you to follow the duties of your own consciences, and you will come quickly where there is bread enough. By that light within, you will see your state is not as good as you imagined it was. This *oracle* within, is what you must live with and dwell with; you must go home with it, lie down with it, you must rise with it, and follow the dictates of it; if you do so, before the week is out, you will have experience to tell me, if I should come and ask you, I have gotten more victory over my sins, by following the dictates of the light of the grace of God within my own bosom, than by all my reading, hearing and praying, and performing other duties.

Make a trial of this, and you will find the presence of God with you, and that he is a God at hand, and not afar off; and if you buckle on your spiritual armor, the captain of your salvation will not be far off, but he will be present before you.

Therefore keep your eye unto Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, and you will be able to do all things through Christ that strengthens you; and you will be able to conquer those sins and temptations that have conquered you.

May the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, break down the body of sin and death, and bring you into the glorious liberty which God has prepared for his children.

SERMON XXXII

Christians should often think on the Name of the LORD

Delivered by Stephen Crisp at Devonshire-House, July 17, 1692

(This last sermon was delivered a short time before Stephen Crisp's death.)

THE people of God in former ages often thought upon the name of the Lord. I wish it might be the daily practice of all that make profession to be the people of God in our days to think often upon the name of the Lord. This you know is an inward exercise, invisible and known to none but God; he only knows when you are met together, whether you are thinking upon his name, whether the exercise of your minds is upon his power, or upon whatever else your minds are engaged. They whose exercise and desire is to

feel God's power and to be acquainted with his name, the Lord is near to them to reveal his mighty power and his name to them; and they are a people that partake of his goodness and of his virtue, and have an experiential knowledge of the many administrations of both his judgments and mercies to their own souls. So they can proceed from thinking, to speaking of the goodness of God from the experience that they have in themselves, that the Lord is good to them.

For all that some do in their manner of speaking of God and his goodness, and crying up the name of the Lord, it is all worth nothing; it is only noise. But everyone that partakes in his own soul of something of the divine virtue and goodness that flows from God invisibly to him through Jesus Christ, he has assurance in himself that he speaks the truth. It is not merely words, made ready to his hand, but it is his own knowledge and experience of what God has wrought in him by his own Spirit; there are none that think upon the name of the Lord, and his power, and the working of it, but they are able to speak of it effectually and truly.

[Take notice! Crisp is qualifying who should be speaking of God: everyone that ***partakes in his own soul of something of the divine virtue and goodness*** that flows from God invisibly to him through Jesus Christ, he ***has assurance in himself*** that he speaks the truth. He is limiting it to very mature Christians, who have words provided by the Spirit. He is **not** suggesting that all *anyone* has to do is think on the name of the Lord to be assured his words are truth; that would be totally contrary to what the early Quakers consistently preached.]

I know it has been, and is the practice among many, that they are able to speak of God's goodness from what they find in the writings and sayings of some that lived before them, that did bear an honorable testimony of God's goodness in their religion; and they learn to say it over again in their particular age. But what has this tale that they have told, brought about?

This report they have made, how God was with the Christians of old, the primitive Christians and martyrs, they have told a tale of these things, and what has it affected? It has either brought forth Christians, or it has not.

The way for people to be grounded and settled in divine knowledge, is for everyone to speak what they know. And if they know nothing of these things [from experience], then say nothing of them. And the way for them to come to receive divine knowledge, is, by thinking, by meditating, by consideration of the converse that God has had with their own souls; for there is a way provided for all men to converse with God that made them. Every man and woman may ask questions of him, and may have answers from him,* if they have patience enough to wait for them; every soul here present, that with seriousness of mind [and humility] shall ask of God what *their state and condition is*, if they were to die presently; God will tell them, he will answer them. He will shine unto them by the light of his Son Jesus Christ, and let them know whether they are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of their iniquity still, or whether they are redeemed out of it, and brought into covenant with himself. But will you believe his answer? I would have no man go about to ask such a question of God unless he has a mind to believe the answer that God gives him. To what purpose should men ask, if they ask amiss? If they ask without faith, they do not believe unless the answer pleases them.

[* He is **not** suggesting that *anyone* can ask any question of the Lord and expect an answer; his statement applies only to questions that really are requests for conviction of your condition, or as Crisp says, "*the state and condition of their souls*." If you ask questions like: "what job should I take," you will most likely never get an answer. Likewise, if you ask questions that you really do not have a need to know, (in the Lord's opinion), you will most likely never get an answer until you are in the Kingdom and know all things. It is very wrong to wait on God to get your questions answered; that is you trying to

set the agenda. You must wait on God in humility, eager to receive whatever He wishes to convey to you, not what you want to hear. **Proper prayer is with words only supplied by the Spirit**; until you sufficiently mature to be able to form such a prayer, you are to be silent, and think on His name. See the footnote to Eph 6:18, in which Isaac Penington and George Fox both explain this in detail.

There is an exception: Heard from the Lord by a reader of this site, as loud as someone standing next to him, and there is scripture to prove it, "I only hear a prayer of a righteous man and a prayer of **a sinner who comes to repent.**"

In reference to Crisp's suggestion of a question to God about one's spiritual condition: a humble, sincere question to God about one's condition is totally dependent on their willingness to accept an answer that requires repentance; therefore that person had come to repent when prompted. However, if you come to God, (by waiting on Him: listening and watching), with an exalted opinion of yourself, you will probably not get an answer.]

Many, in our days, have put up their petitions and prayers to God, that he would reveal to them *the state and condition of their souls*. The Lord has answered them, and despite all the profession that they have past made of his name, and of their faith in his Son Jesus Christ, and of the work of redemption, yet he has often declared: you are still unredeemed, you are still in your sin, and lusts, and sexual desires prevail over you; you are still in bondage. This is God's answer to many; but there is something arises in their minds, that they are not willing to believe this; they think they are better that God has told them. What if you do think better of yourself? You are never the better, for the word of the Lord stands sure [perfect, and true]. There is no avoiding it; there is no denial of the truth. If this truth condemns you, all the world cannot justify you; and this truth by which God condemns

the sinner is in the sinner's own heart. What will he do with it? It is in the sinner's conscience; it not only condemns him by a book, out of this chapter and that verse, out of this author and the other author, but he is condemned by God's true and faithful witness, in his own conscience. You will not believe it; but if you haven't believed this, then you have remained in your unbelief of the truth; and nothing else but believing it can save you; no other counsel can deliver or redeem you.

So that the best advice and counsel that I can give a people in this case, is this: that when they come to such a religious meeting as this is, they should come with a mind prepared and fitted to think upon the Lord; to think upon his name, and the way by which he brings people to himself; for no man can be called a child of God, who does not partake of his nature. If a man is ever so wise, and rich, and great in the world; if he is a prince or an emperor, without being a partaker of the divine nature, he is a *child of wrath*. Now if these children of wrath meet with something that convinces them; if they are touched and become a sensible people, then crowns and diadems are nothing to them. Such a one will say, "if I am a child of wrath, a captive to sin and my own lusts and sexual desires, yet for all that I will go to a religious meeting, where I hope the word of God will be preached; I hope to meet with something there that will do me good; and I have a desire that I may be translated out of a natural state, from being a child of wrath, to be brought into the kingdom of God. If I have this desire in me, God who made me, wrought it in me; for by nature we cannot so much as think a good thought." When men think of being better, and of amending their ways, and doing their souls good, these are very good thoughts in themselves. When such thoughts are begotten in any men's hearts, I would have them to ascribe them to the grace of God, and nothing else. Preachers may do much where these desires are begotten, but it is not in their power to beget these desires.

Many have come to a meeting with loose, profane and wandering minds; and though many good things have been spoken to them, it has not reached

so far as to beget good desires; their hearts have been so alienated from the grace of God in themselves, which is the great superior worker, to which we are but servants and ministers; there is none can that beget anything, but **he in whom all power is**. Those who are under the power of darkness, the devil besets in them immorality and vanity, profaneness and hardness of heart. Some go away from a meeting without being touched and persuaded, and they have no good hope of being better. But where people are really touched in their spirits, with a desire after something that will do them good, they must come to the fountain of good, the God that made them, and **they must think upon him**; if they cannot see his glory and hear his voice, yet they can think upon him. **This is the least duty of a Christian, to think upon the name of the Lord**, when their minds are exercised about divine matters, about the state and condition of their poor souls. If I die this night, what will become of me? This and that sin I have committed; how shall I be able to answer to God for one of a thousand of all my loose thoughts, words and actions? Those who come to a consideration of this, and a due sense of their state and condition, though it is such a state that they do not like, though it is not such as it ought to be, yet notwithstanding it may be better; they may be brought out of it into a better condition.

Now this is the duty of all, to wait upon God, the fountain of all good, that they may receive something from God, *for every good and perfect gift comes from above, from the Father of lights*, the Father of your light and my light, that light comes to us from the Father of lights. If we have any perfect gift bestowed upon us, it is bestowed by God; therefore you will grant that we are all obliged, from the greatest to the least, to wait upon him, if we have the least expectation from God, by meeting, otherwise we had better keep away.

But I am apt to judge that the most here have come with some desire, that if it pleases God they may receive benefit by their meeting. Where shall they have it? They say, if such a man preaches, then I can be edified much by him. This is a great mistake, for, let who will preach, nobody can receive any

benefit unless it is from the Lord, as the fountain of good; for the best preachers in the world are only instruments in the hands of God. If God does not bless his labors, the preacher can do nothing to the souls of people; he can sound the truth in their ears outwardly, but he can reach no further. Only God speaks to the heart. If you mind the preacher and not God that made you, all his preaching will do you no good; it may indeed help you to a notion or speculation, but that comes not to the inside, which does not result in any improvement, so the inside lacks mending.

There are great deformities, fears, spots, stains, wounds and laments upon the souls of men, by reason of their sins, lusts and corruptions; and a remedy lacks, and there is no physician of value except God who made us after his own image. The devil has brought in deformity; he has made one proud, another cruel, another wanton, another an oppressor, another malicious; this is all the devil's work. And for this purpose Christ Jesus was manifested (revealed) that he might destroy the works of the devil [sin in us]. He came to destroy pride, malice and lust; there are the devil's works that Christ was revealed to destroy. Why does he not do it? He will destroy all the devil has wrought in every man who will be subject to him. Can a surgeon set a bone, if the patient is not subject to his hand?

But this is far beyond all comparison; Christ has received all power in Heaven and Earth, yet he always looks for a willing people; he sends the day [light] of his power upon such a people, and he works upon their hearts by an invincible power; he makes them willing to be helped, and mended, and healed, and cured, and then he cures them. I dare say, there is not one here that is willing to be reformed, and to submit to Christ to be saved and redeemed by him, but that he will do it; *he that is willing and obedient shall eat of the good of the land*, and shall know the good of redemption. See whether it has come to a state of redemption; here is universal grace offered; for the light of Christ Jesus enlightens every one of you; it shows you your lost state and condition. When we see our condition bad, that it is not as it ought to be, who would not have it better?

[From the Word of the Lord within: "The Spirit of Grace both charges and removes, just like Jesus said 'repent,' and also healed. I stand with those freed from sin. We go to him, and he rains help on us; well does this exercise of God purify those who do. Blessed are those who are set free from the bonds of imprisonment. People have not heard of the grace of God, which separates from sin."]

What does the Christian duty of prayer mean? What shall we pray for? Must not people be sensible in themselves what they should pray for, before they come to pray? And what is it that will make them sensible but the light and grace of God? They see their own deficiencies when God works faith in their hearts, and they believe that God can supply those needs. Why should I go to a beggar, to pray him to give me a hundred pounds? I do not believe he can do it, therefore I will not pray to him for it. Now necessity brings people to prayer, but there must be faith in him to whom we pray, that he is able to supply our wants, and relieve our necessities. Upon this account the apostle said: he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, Heb 11:6. He must first know that there is a God to seek, and then that he is a rewarder of those who seek him.

Teach us what we shall say to Him; for we cannot order our speech by reason of darkness. Job 37:19

Here is the foundation of all true religion and true worship; those who go to God and say their prayers, and join with others in saying their prayers; if they have no sense of God, they might as well have held their tongues, for their praying is to no purpose. The belief of those who pretend to believe in God, without an experiential power of God working upon their hearts, is not worth a straw; without their respect to the power of God, all their belief is nothing; but if they know that God has such an operation upon them, that no man or woman in the world can reveal that to them, which God reveals,

then they know that God is the searcher of hearts and the trier of the reins.

Jer 17:10.

Suppose I know that there is a God, and at the same time I believe that he will never hear me; that I am a reprobate creature, and that he has cast me off forever, and that he has sealed condemnation upon me to all eternity. What reason has such a one to pray? This is a desperate condition. But while we believe there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him, it is not in vain to pray; yet there is also a prerequisite to prayer; there is knowledge, and faith by reason of that knowledge, that God is a rewarder of those who seek him. He that has this, let him pray in God's name. But what must he pray for? He must not offer the sacrifice of fools; he must have regard to his lips; if it is mental prayer, he must pray for what he stands in need of; it is for something he prays, that God has revealed by his Holy Spirit,* that he stands in need of; it is something that he needs; it is power to overcome corruption, and power to overcome temptation, that he stands in need of; he stands in need of a Mediator to procure for him the pardon of his sins. These things he stands in need of, then let him pray; he that is afflicted, let him pray.

[*Do not confuse the *needs* that Crisp speaks of, with a man's *wants*. **Crisp is speaking of spiritual needs** that a man recognizes, not material needs; **AND he is speaking of a need to overcome a spiritual deficiency, which the Holy Spirit has shown him.** Until a man has been changed by God to be without lusts, God will not bless him materially because the man would only consume his blessing on his lusts. Further, remember, God knows what you need before you can ask, and before you can form the words of your prayer, he already knows your thoughts and feelings; that is why, most all of your time in prayer should be spent in silence, listening and watching. When you are sufficiently spiritually mature to pray with words supplied by the Holy Spirit, then of course you pray those words.

The scripture does not say, he is the rewarder of those who *pray* to him, rather it says God is the rewarder of those who *seek* him. To pray to God, babbling like the heathens with all your wants and needs, is not seeking God. To go to God expecting him to give you some gift, is not seeking God; seek the giver, not the gift. To go to God with questions that you think must be answered is like going to class and stopping the teacher to demand he answer your particular questions, which may have nothing to do with what he wants to teach you that day. Before you can express your questions on words, he has already sensed your desire to know. If you go with a specific question, as a demand to know, you are never likely to hear. You must go to God in *humility*, with no agenda, other than to become pleasing to him, to be shown how to become pleasing to him, and to be helped in that regard. You must go to God with hopes of hearing him speak to you by his word, or show you things by the light of his word; he knows what you need to hear, you don't. He has all the wisdom in the heavens, you have none. He speaks perfectly, gently, humbly, purely, kindly, lovingly, and wisely; and his words to you are the only true treasures of this life to be had.]

So that if a man or woman goes to prayer, they must pray to God in the belief of his goodness and mercy, that he will bestow some blessing upon them, that may be for the better, that may be for their good. When they come to a meeting, to worship God, and hear the word spoken outwardly, they must pray for something that may be for their good; Lord give me something that may support my soul, and something that may enable me to withstand temptation. People should have their minds thus exercised, and they should think upon the name of the Lord according to their particular necessity; they should pour out their supplication to the Lord. This is such worship as God looks for, and such as he is pleased with; he will deliver those who thus pray to him out of temptations, so that they shall not prevail

over them. One man's temptation is of one sort, and another's of another sort, but they are all delivered by the grace of God, and helped over them, upon their prayer to God, for they find by experience that he is a God hearing prayers.

Now, when we have prayed, what is the next work? It is to wait for an answer of our prayer. I prayed the other day to God for power to withstand such a temptation; when that temptation comes again I do expect that God will answer my prayer. Do you so? Then I pray you have an eye to the same grace of God that convinced you, and shown you the temptation; and have your faith exercised upon that grace of God, and you will find it sufficient for you, I will warrant you. Let the devil come with a temptation ever so suitable and subtle, keep your eye upon the grace of God, and it will deliver you. This was the case of Paul; when a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet him; he pleaded with the Lord three times. The temptation did leave him, and God gave him an answer of his prayer: my grace is sufficient for you. As if he had said, let the devil come with ever so much power, he shall never overcome you.

I speak to those who are well skilled in this kind of work,* and have met with sharp temptations, and sometimes perhaps they have been overcome by them, and at other times they have withstood them. What is the difference? Why, one while they are loose and careless, and did not pray for the assistance of divine grace; another while they kept close to it, and were delivered.

[*Crisp is speaking to *those "well skilled" in overcoming temptations*. Do not read this and assume God is going to deliver you from any temptation that you pray to overcome; a classic example of where you would not have his assistance is this:

Let's suppose you are addicted to some act of sexual immorality: fornication, adultery, etc.; and you pray

to have His help in conquering that addiction. Now in the course of your day, you watch something in a movie, DVD, Video, YouTube, TV, (or worse, porn sites). Now you are burning; now your mind is on sex. You will not be able to resist your addiction; you have probably even committed sexual immorality acts in your imagination while watching scenes of sexual immorality.

If you have such addictions, you must give up the triggers that lead to the sin. If you are in an adulterous relationship, you have to stop seeing that person; you can't maintain a social relationship with them and expect to refrain from adultery, and you are probably continuing adultery in your mind as you associate with them.

Or suppose you have a problem drinking or smoking. You can't continue to associate with your drinking or smoking friends and expect to have help in overcoming that addiction.

In all likelihood, the Lord will tell you to give up the acts that lead to sexual immorality or some other addiction, and you will be tempted to think they are trivial; but it is obedience to the little things He tells you that is the key to success in conquering any immoral act.]

Therefore when you come to meeting, with a desire to receive benefit from God, with your expectations towards God, to receive comfort from the hands of the Lord, let your eye be upon him, and the working of his grace in your own hearts; and hearken to that voice that is within you, and it will be more effective than mine. If you find the work of grace in you to be the same thing that I speak of, then believe me for the truth's-sake; believe me because you find the same work and testimony within yourselves. And I am persuaded

there is no one here, but sometime or other have withstood that temptation which they have met with. Pray tell me how they did it? Why, the temptation came unto me, and it pleased God to show me the evil of it, that it was a bad thing if I yielded to it. How did you resist it? Did the devil not have a coercive power over you, to force you to it, whether you would or not? That God showed me the evil of it, delivered me from the evil; I was not judged and condemned in myself, because I found myself delivered from it; there are none of you, if you would not be lazy and idle, but you might be delivered every day, and have experience in your own souls, that when the devil comes and tempts, the Lord is at hand to deliver you by his grace and power.

So that the only way for people to be preserved from sin and iniquity, is to have a reverent respect to that grace of God, which they have already received. I would have that vain conceit that has long reigned in the world, taken out of your head. When you see a wicked husband, wife, or child, you say, if they had grace they would be better. I say they have some degree of grace already; God has sent forth his grace and truth, to teach men to deny ungodliness; so that I would not pray that God would give my husband, wife, or child, or friend, grace; but that he would break their hard hearts so they may submit to the grace of God that has already been bestowed upon them. I believe there is not a person here that is utterly void of all grace; but they do not walk according to it; they trample upon it. For everyone being endued with a measure of grace, through Christ, our duty therefore is to have a reverential regard to the grace of God, which we have received.

[And those who believe what Christendom teaches about grace, (being an excuse for life-long sin and being a saved sinner), do spite the spirit of grace, do count the blood of Jesus an unholy thing, and do trample on the Son of God.]

What grace have I received from God, may some say? I have received so much grace from God, (you may truly say), that I can tell when the devil

brings a temptation to me; when he tempts me to uncleanness, theft, wrath, malice, or to deceive my neighbor, I have so much grace that I can tell I am tempted in such a respect; the grace of God shows me this is a temptation of the devil. But the question is, whether I am subject to the grace of God, and love his grace better than the profit or pleasure of a temptation? It comes as a bait, but the devil cannot make me do what he tempts me to; it is not in the power of all the devils in hell, or of his servants on earth, to make me do this evil thing. The light of my own conscience shows it to be a temptation. Now I am free and at my choice, whether I will love the profit and pleasure that comes with the temptation more than the grace of God. I believe there is no one that has been tried by a temptation, but they can say so. I leave it to him who searches and tries all your hearts, and knows your thoughts, to judge whether you joined with the temptation, that you might have the profit and pleasure of it, or joined with his grace, that thereby you might have resisted the temptation. You that have done the one and the other, tell me which is the best bargain; when you have joined with the temptation, that you might have the profit and pleasure that came along with it; or when you joined with the grace of God that showed you the evil and danger of the temptation. The same God speaks to you that spoke to Cain: *if you do well, shall you not be accepted? and if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.* If you have yielded to a temptation, sin lies at the door; there is a breach made between God and your soul.

The same man at another time, having suffered so deeply for it, being judged by his own conscience, when he meets the temptation again, he says, let the profit or pleasure go where it will, if I yield to this temptation I cannot go to God but as a criminal to a judge; let the profit or pleasure be what it will, I will not join with this temptation. Can the devil force you to comply with this temptation? No, if you are true to the grace of God in your own heart, it will make you able to resist the strongest devil in hell. Christ has purchased for the sons and daughters of men a power to withstand the devil's power, and all his devices and temptations, and you shall obtain victory, and have dominion over them. If you have a mind to grow in this

dominion, when the devil comes to tempt you, resist him, and you shall, through the power of Christ, be enabled to overcome.

[For no temptation has overtaken you but what is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it. 1 Cor 10:13]

Therefore, submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. James 4:7]

If Satan tells you of the profits and pleasures of this world, remember that the *world passes away, and the lust of it*, but peace with God endures forever. By the grace of God you will be able to overcome the devil and all his angels. This power is given to all that believe and obey the gospel. If you would have benefit by it, you must be exercised in resisting of temptation, and have regard to the grace of God, and the workings of it in your own hearts; and then you will be able to say, when a temptation comes, promising profit and pleasure, how can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? Turn your eye to God's favor, which is better than life, and you will be more than conquerors; you will say the fear of God seized upon my soul, and the grace of God came to my assistance, and was as a bulwark against temptation. Here praises will go up to God; here will be occasion for you to speak good of his name. Remember what David said, *my soul, praise the Lord, that has delivered me from the horrible pit*. Thus David and the saints of old praised God in their day, and why should not we? They breathed forth living praises and thanksgivings for the deliverances wrought for them; and shall not we do it?

Now this cannot be done without thinking upon his name, the name of that God that made us. Here I live in the world, I live and breathe still, I have health, and strength, and an estate, how did I come by all this? Did I make myself? No, there is a God that gave me life, and breath, and being; he holds

forth the hand of mercy to gather me to himself, and *to redeem me from all iniquity, that I might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness, all the days of my life.* If I believe this, I shall rejoice in him, and love and praise him, and daily wait upon him for the accomplishment of his work. He desires not the death of sinners. If you believe the Almighty, it is impossible for him to lie, all things are possible to him except that; he said, he does not wish the death of him who dies. What would he have then? He would have you turn and live. What means does he use? What I would have done I would use means to accomplish it. You would say, what means has he not used? What is it that God does more wish for than for men to repent, return and live, and be happy forever? He has created them, and given them life and breath, and continued his grace to them, that they might have time to prepare for eternity; and he has given his good spirit to instruct them, but they have rebelled against him. He has sent forth his word, the gospel of salvation, which has been preached to them, and he has waited to be gracious and exercised much patience and long-suffering towards them; so that I may say, what means has he omitted? *He has planted them as a vineyard, in a very fruitful hill; and he has fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and made a wine-press in it, and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought wild grapes. Judge, I pray you said the Lord, between me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?*

But notwithstanding all your unfruitfulness, the day of your visitation is continued; the Lord is willing to show mercy to your souls. This is all the Lord your God requires of you, that you would think upon his name, believe in him and trust in him, and wait upon him for the operations of his grace in the use of his ordinances, and your attendance upon them, and hearkening to his voice, and obeying it, and *so to hear that your souls may live.*

I will affirm, that there is none of you here present, whether you are Quakers or not, but you may meet with the divine operations of the power of God in

your own hearts, if you will regard it, and when you meet with these operations and regard them not, I cannot help it. If you will resist the good things of the Spirit of God, I cannot help it. If you will to be of that mind, always to resist the Holy Ghost; if as your fathers did, so do you, then you must all perish, both you and your fathers. There is no escaping but by being subject to Christ Jesus, and his quickening Spirit; if there are any divine operations that you meet with in your own hearts, let me persuade you to submit and have regard to them; for I know the devil is near at hand; and when people meet with divine operations in their souls, which humbles them, brings down their pride, and convinces them of the danger of their condition, he lies in the way and suggests some poisonous thing that takes off the edge of these operations, that they may dislike them. It is true, they meet with the convictions of sin; but they reason they have that faith and belief in Christ, which in the sight of God excuses all their sins that can be laid to their charge, both past and to come.* If I would look, say they, to the divine operation, or anything wrought in me, it were enough to make me mad; I look wholly to the merits of Christ; my mind is wholly fixed upon him who is the author of eternal salvation; his meritorious sufferings and obedience can obliterate and blot out all my sins.

[*This is the license to sin that grace supposedly supplies: just believe in Jesus and you can live your life in sin until you die and still go to heaven. From the Word of the Lord within: **"It is twisted, pernicious lies; a fatal flaw that turns aside the just."**

Christendom looks at a tiny subset of the scriptures, creates and then worships an image — their god who saves sinners and leaves them sinners. They ignore the scriptures that don't support their created god; they ignore the exclusions, the requirements, and the qualifying conditions, plainly stated throughout the Bible. There are 45,000 different sects within Christendom, each with a different Jesus, each with a different gospel, each with the image

of their collective conscience.]

My friends, I tell you, many a poor soul has split upon this rock by undervaluing the divine operations of the Spirit upon their hearts; they make a false and wrong application of the merits of Christ, which indeed are so great that nobody can overvalue them; but we must not make a false application of them, for this purpose was the Son of God manifest, that he might destroy the works of the devil; he takes away the guilt of sin, not that you might live in it still. Whoever believes in Christ, shall have power over their sins and not be under the dominion and power of sin; sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law, but under grace. But thanks be to God that though you were previously the slaves of sin, you have obeyed from the heart the fullness of teaching given to you. Having then been set free from sin, you became the slaves of righteousness. Rom 6:17-18.

Objection: But you will say, I am guilty of a great deal of sin already, what shall become of me for the guilt I have contracted?

If we do not deny our sins, [when he reproves us] he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness; and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin, 1 John 1:7,9; [and "If you will repent at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you," Pro 1:23; and Jesus told us that **we had to repent.**] Here is a true application of Christ, his merits and righteousness; **when there is an agreement with God's accusations of our sin, and a forsaking of it,*** here is an offering and a sacrifice made to God by our Lord Jesus Christ for the expiation of sin; he has by his precious blood purchased the pardon of all my sins, that he might present me to God without spot or blemish; here is a true application of the righteousness of Christ, but how can I apply it to myself while I live in sin?

[* In the beginning if you turn from evil as best you can, those things you: 1) have remorse for having done, and 2) stop doing,

are forgiven. From the Word of the Lord within: "Turn from evil as best you can and set your sight on heaven." Then as you wait on God, the Lord will order your further repentance and show more of what are your sins. Note! Crisp, who writes with the authority of a man in the kingdom of God, has just discredited the linchpin of Christianity's false doctrines, and defined **the prerequisites of God's "*forgiveness*": 1) remorse* for your sin, and 2) a forsaking of it**. So, if no forsaking of sin, (no repentance, no change of behavior) — **then no forgiveness!!**

*To have remorse is not to confess. From the Word of the Lord within: "My true friends take no thought of confessional; don't take the time when you get a clear view." When clearly shown an evil practice or desire in your heart by the light, you may think you need to start apologizing or confessing the sin shown; but that will only draw you out of the light and inhibit your progress. It is enough that you do not deny what you see as true, and the Lord knows that you believe what he is showing you to be true without your taking the time to confess; your remorse will be noticed by him without a single thought being formed in words.

Christianity's doctrine of false grace has fostered *forgiveness without repentance* and these man-made distortions then encourage continual repeat of deliberate sin in their members, which results in their great destruction. The Lord describes this repeat of sin—sacraments, sin again—sacraments again,..... as a *conflagration*: a great fire or great destruction. From the Word of the Lord within:

- "Sacraments: conflagration — to continue to do what you are not supposed to do, and afterwards be overcome with

grief as to what you have done."

(a *conflagration* is a great fire or great destruction.)

- "Church: forever sorry for what you have done, while at the same time turning right around and doing it again; it feeds itself."
- "Great is the destruction of those places of worship."
- "The Christian medium itself is conformable to death."
- "Truly these people call on me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."
- "Those with the mark of the beast will be given thirty days to repent."
- "Come out of her my love."
- "There is no church in the world that Christ set up specifically."
- "Like Daniel, you are captive of the Chaldeans."
- "Your place of worship is filled with unclean birds."
- "Come out of her my people; you are defiled."

The churches have become the killing ground for the seed of God. This deliberate sin, forgiveness, deliberate sin, forgiveness,... crucifies the Son of God within them. However, until they have killed their conscience through repeated sin, they can still hear and possibly be motivated to renew their efforts to exercise their faith; but for every act of disobedience they committed, after being convicted of some particular sin in the light, they must first effect the same number of acts of obedience before that sin is taken out of their heart. From the Word of the Lord within: "When the light shows you something to do, every act of disobedience has to be carried away by an act of obedience. Whatever you overcome and go back into is far harder the second time to overcome."]

Here God's witness in the conscience of a sinner pleads against the sinner;

when he endeavors to believe that his guilt is taken away, and all his sins, past, present, and future, are pardoned, while he continues to live in sin, and sin has yet dominion over him. Take heed you are not split upon this rock; if you are humble Christians, you will think upon the name of the Lord; and when you find the operation of God's power creating good desires in you to hate sin and love righteousness, you will then believe; you will then pray to the God of all grace; for the prayer of the faithful is acceptable to him. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much, James 5:16.

[Heard from the Lord by a reader of this site, "I only hear a prayer of a righteous man and a prayer of a sinner who comes to repent." A righteous man is under full control of the Lord in thought, word, and deed; his prayers come from the Spirit. From the Word of the Lord within: "If told what to pray for, they can be extremely effective; to pray as heard — righteous expectation." Those still sinning are not heard by the Lord unless it is a prayer of one that comes to repent. Prayers that are "answered" from those still sinning that have not prayed to repent are either coincidences or answered by the god of this world.]

Let your supplication therefore be poured forth unto God, to endow you with power and wisdom to subdue all your spiritual enemies, and to conquer your sexual desires, and the inordinate desires and affections of your own hearts, that you may take up the cross of Christ and follow him as your great pattern, and in his name, and by the help and assistance of his Holy Spirit, you may know how to overcome all temptations.

His Prayer after Sermon

MOST glorious Lord God! Wonderful is your grace; power over, all, which you have revealed and made manifest in this your blessed day. Your arm, O

Almighty God! is stretched forth; you have touched a remnant with a sense of your divine love, whom you have gathered unto your name; you have revealed your great salvation, and therewith you have made glad the souls of your children; you have endeared yourself unto us by the discovery and manifestation of your abounding love, who loved us when we were strangers and preserved us when we were enemies, and brought a glorious day of visitation upon us, and opened our eyes to behold the light of it, so that we were a people engaged to speak good of your name. You have declared and manifested to the sons and daughters of men your good will and your universal grace that you are daily extending to them, that all may be made partakers of the riches of your house, and of your great salvation which by the Lord Jesus Christ you have ordained.

And, O you powerful God of Life! Since the day that you first gathered us, you have been with us, you have been our guide, and our eyes have been towards you for instruction; you have taught us and led us in the way in which you would have us to walk; you have led us, Lord, in the way everlasting with the poor, the humble, and the meek of the earth; and you have placed our feet, O Lord, near the everlasting mountain, which you have exalted upon the high hills of the earth, and you have revealed the glory and the splendor of your house, your holy dwelling place, and have raised breathings in the hearts of your people, that they may dwell in your courts forever. And now, Holy Father! You have gathered a remnant and brought a peculiar people to trust in your name; but still we do all that we do by you; you must be our keeper, you must be our preserver, therefore we wait upon you; we expect all from your hand, therefore our applications are unto you, that from day to day, and from time to time, we may find your living presence in the midst of us,

And O living God of Life! You have given your children great experience that you are a God near at hand to us, in our trials, in all our exercises; as our eyes have been turned to you, you have preserved us, and revealed your heavenly power, O Lord, in preserving and delivering your church and

people, that they may bear a testimony in their generation for your great love, and the great salvation that you have wrought for them and made them partakers of.

Now blessed God of Life! The desires and supplications of your people are unto you, for the glorifying of your power, and the exalting of your glorious name.

O Lord! Let the mighty operation of your power bow down all stout and stubborn ones, that have rebelled against you, and that have withstood the tenders of your grace, and the notions and strivings of your Holy Spirit. You are able to bow them, and to break their stony hearts; you are able to speak effectually to their souls, and to make them submit themselves to you.

Holy and living Father! Let the progress of your word and gospel be great in our day; let it have a free course and spread itself mightily to those who believe not, to beget a seed of faith in their souls, that they may believe in your name and trust in your power, and wait to see the great work of redemption wrought for the salvation of their immortal souls, before the day of their visitation goes over.

Powerful God of Life! Your little remnant which you have redeemed, keep them by your power, and preserve them in uprightness and cleanliness of mind; preserve them in the places and stations where you have appointed them to dwell, that so in all the trials, and tribulations, and distresses, that may come upon them, they may be quiet and still, and in patience possess their souls; and let them have strong consolation in that everlasting covenant that in your Son you have made with them and revealed to them; and let them be not moved and tossed with the hurries of this world, with the tumults and disorders that evil men make in it, and through storms and tempests that are raised; but let their hearts and minds be stayed upon you, that they may know how to behave themselves towards you and one another, and towards all that are without; and thereby glorify and magnify

your great name by the beauty of holiness shining in their conversations, which may reach the consciences of men, that all that see them may say, these are the plants that the right hand of God has planted, and see the fruits that are brought forth from that root of life revealed in Christ Jesus.

Powerful God of Life! Carry on your own work in this city and the whole nation, and in other places among the people which you have chosen and gathered to yourself out of this world.

Powerful God of Life! Remember those who groan in sin by making their moan to you, that they cannot lay hold of consolation for their souls. Prepare them for that consolation that their souls are longing after. They are night and day wrestling with you in earnest prayer, but what will all their wrestling signify, except your word and the power of your grace assist them, and teach them to lay hold of your strength, that they may fight the good fight of faith, that they may get the victory, and rejoice in your salvation, and see the glory of it? You see how the children of men are working and contriving many ways for their own salvation; make them to know that all their own ways and inventions are in vain.

Blessed God of Life! Confound the devices of the ungodly that seek to lay waste your heritage; and all those who you have gathered by your word, preserve them that they may serve you with sincere and upright minds all the days of their lives; and offer up daily thanksgivings and living praises to you, the true and living God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent, through your eternal Spirit, who alone are worthy, God over all, blessed forever and ever. Amen.

The End