

SERMON 10

1 TIMOTHY 1:15

“This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, That Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners; of whom I am Chief.”

THE CHIEF OF SINNERS, SAVED THRO' JESUS CHRIST A SERMON, OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF *MRS. ANNE WILDMAN*, WHO DIED JULY 12, 1747. PREACHED JULY 19.

THE Apostle, in some preceding verses expresses the grateful Sense he had of being called to the ministerial Work: *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the Ministry.* Next to his being a Subject of divine Grace, he esteemed it his Honor to be employed in the Work of Preaching the Gospel. *Unto me, who am less than the least of all Saints, is this Grace given; that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unsearchable Riches of Christ.* (Ephesians 3:8) The Consideration of his Behavior before Conversion, caused him to admire greatly at both. *Who was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained Mercy, for I did it ignorantly and in Unbelief and the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with Faith and Love, which is in Christ Jesus.* He is not content to say of that Grace by which he was called, that it was abundant; but he adds to it the Epithet exceeding. Grace exceedingly abounded towards him, in making him a Minister and a Saint, who had been so great an Offender.

In treating on the Words, I propose to shew,

I. That All Men are Sinners.

II. That the Apostle thought himself to be the *Chief*, or greatest of Sinners.

III. That Sinners are lost, miserable, and helpless and unworthy.

IV. That Christ Jesus came into the World, to save Sinners, the *chief*, or greatest of them.

V. That an Assurance of Salvation thro' Christ, is very consistent with an Apprehension of our being the *chief* of Sinners.

VI. That the Report of Christ's coming into the World to save the *chief* of Sinners is true, and worthy of the most grateful Reception.

I. All Men are Sinners. *By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin; and Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned. (Romans 5:12) Adam* was our Head and Representative, and, therefore, his Act of Disobedience is reckoned to us. *By one Man's Disobedience many were made Sinners. (Ver.39)* In Consequence of our sinning in him, and falling with him, in his first Transgression; we derive a corrupt Nature from him. We are shapen in Iniquity and Conceived in sin. (Psalm 51:5) *That which is born of the Flesh, is Flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit,*

is Spirit. We are naturally *Flesh*, the contrary of that which is produced by the Holy Spirit: And, therefore, we are the Subjects of *putrid and carnal* Lusts: which the Apostle distinguishes into Lusts of the *Flesh* and of the *Mind*. *Among whom also we all had our Conversation in Times past, in the Lusts of our Flesh fulfilling Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind.* (Ephesians 2:3) By the Lusts of the *Flesh*, he designs those corrupt Inclinations, which are agreeable to our animal Nature, or inferior Part; and by the Lusts or Desires of the *Mind*, he intends, those unlawful Inclinations, Whereof our superior and intellectual Part is the subject. So that our whole Nature is corrupt and vicious, even that Part of us, which distinguishes us from the Brute-Creation, and which we glory in. The truth is, we are the Subjects, not only of *brutal*, but also of *diabolical* Lusts; and have a larger Capacity of sinning than the apostate Spirits have. Besides all those vicious Lusts which are agreeable to our inferior Part, and which immaterial Beings cannot be the Subjects of, nor act; we are the Subjects of those abominable Lusts, which are the Depravation of impure Spirits. Such as Pride, Envy, Malice, Hatred and Revenge; and, therefore, Men are not only capable of sinning in those Ways the Devil is, but in a greater Variety also.

As our Nature is thus corrupt, our Conduct is criminal. We have a Disposition to what is evil, and Sin is the governing Principle in us. Duties we omit, or practice them in an improper Manner, neither from a right Principle, nor to a right End, nor under the Influence of spiritual Motives and Considerations; and, consequently, tho' they are materially good, they have the Nature of Sin in them. *Our carnal Mind is Enmity against God, and it is not subject to his Law, neither indeed can be.* Not so much as a spiritual and holy Desire can arise in our unsanctified Hearts; hence it necessarily follows, that those *who are in the Flesh cannot please God.* Until a divine Principle is wrought in our Souls, we cannot perform any Service in an acceptable Manner to our Maker: For *without Faith it is impossible to please God.* (Hebrews 11:6) So long, therefore, as Men are in a State of Unregeneracy, their Actions are either materially or circumstantially sinful. Those which the Law forbids, are materially evil, and those which it commands, are circumstantially so, or they have the Nature of Sin in them, and, consequently, our Guilt must be very great: But, some are more criminal than others. I confess, that I have no good Opinion of distinguishing upon Sins, or of calling some great and some little Sins. for no Sin is little; thus to distinguish upon sins; has no good Influence on our Minds; under various Circumstances, before and upon the Commission of Evil.

Yet some it must be allowed may justly be accounted greater Sinners than others; *viz.* who continue longer in a State of Rebellion, and indulge to the Gratification of a greater Variety of evil Lusts, and abide in a sinful Course against Knowledge, and sharp Remonstrances from the natural Conscience, improved in its Light by the Word of God. Such are great Offenders.

II. *The Apostle thought himself to be the Chief, or greatest of Sinners, 'Of whom I am chief'*

1. He was a virtuous Person before his Conversion to Christianity.

A Pharisee of *the* Pharisees, a Student in the Law, and strictly attended to the Duties it required, so far as he understood it, and *touching the Righteousness which is in the Law, he was blameless, living in all good Conscience before God.* He did not allow himself in the Omission of known Duties, nor in the Commission of known Sins. And yet,

2. He was guilty of very great Evils. This he confesses in these Words, *who was before a Blasphemer, and a Persecutor, and injurious.* Full of Rage and Fury against Christ, and all who adhered to his Interest. He was *exceedingly mad against the Saints, and punished them in every Synagogue, compelling them to blaspheme.* Not satisfied with blaspheming himself, he forced them to do the same. As he injured them in their Persons and Liberty and Property, he also. compelled them to act a Part contrary to their Persuasion and Conscience; at least, he attempted it, and they could not decline it, without increasing the violent Flame of his cruel Rage and Fury against them. But,

3. In all this he acted not against Knowledge, or a Conviction of Mind and Conscience. These his Sins were Sins of Ignorance. For what he did in Opposition to the Interest of Christ, he did *it ignorantly and in Unbelief. he verily thought with himself that he ought to do many Things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.* (Acts 26:9) And, therefore, he was sincere in perfecting the Church. This plainly shews us, that Sincerity, if it is not exercised about Truth and Duty, is of no Advantage to the Souls of Men. A Zeal of God, without Knowledge, will never profit any; and it is very likely to grow into a *furios Rage*, against the Interest of divine Truth, as it did in our Apostle and the carnal *Jews.*

4. He now considered himself the *Chief* of Sinners. *Grotius*, that great *Perverter* of the Word of God, in his *Annotations*, understands the Phrase hyperbolically. He conceits, that the Apostle uses an Hyperbole, or that his Language was much stronger than the Nature of the Thing he expresses would bear. But this was his *Figment* only. Our Apostle retains a Sense of what he was, before his Conversion, and the Consideration of it greatly humbled his Soul. Thus, he practiced what he exhorted others to do, *viz. to remember* what they were in their Nature, State, and Conduct before divine Calling. So he exhorts the *Ephesians* to remember, that they were *Gentiles, in the Flesh.* (Ephesians 2:11) We Ought never to forget, What was our deplorable Condition by Nature, and what was our Deportment, while Sin had the Dominion over us. The Apostle doth not say, I have been the *chief*; but I am the *chief* of Sinners: Every Saint in this World is a Sinner. It cannot be said of every Sinner, that he is a Saint; but it is true of every Saint in this *militant* State, that he is a Sinner; If not, he hath no Combat in him between *Flesh* and *Spirit.* In all Believers here, *the*

Flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh. There is not a just Man upon Earth that doeth Good, and sinneth not. I am not insensible, that some have pretended, and that some do pretend to great Degrees in Holiness; and a Freedom from the Power of Sin; that if they are not wholly clear of Sin, they are very near it. But I am persuaded, that none will think themselves more holy, than *Abraham, David, and Peter*, and other good Men, of whom we read in, the Scripture, except such, who have no Holiness at all, and know not what it is, nor wherein it consists. A fuller Evidence of being under the Dominion of Sin, cannot be given, than an Imagination of a Freedom from the Being and Working of it in the Heart is. *If we say that we have no Sin, we deceive ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.* Paul was very eminent in Holiness, and by the Grace of God, he was enabled to conduct himself in such a Manner, as that he could say, *I know nothing by myself, i.e.* I am not sensible, that in any Instance, I have acted unsuitably to my Character, as a Minister, or a Christian: And yet he thought himself the *chief* of Sinners. He found himself to be the Subject of Sin, as well as of Holiness, of Flesh, as well as of Spirit. He experienced to his Sorrow, that Sin was always present with him; that it attended him in the *Closet*, and in the *Pulpit*, and that, therefore, he could not *pray* without sinning, nor *preach* without sinning, nor discharge any Christian Duty without a sinful Defilement attending it. Persons *most eminent* in Holiness, have always had the *deepest* Sense of their Sinfulness. They look not upon themselves, nor on Sin, in the same Light, as others do. And, therefore, they think and know that to be Sin in itself, and in themselves, which others do not esteem to be so, nor accuse themselves of sinning on Account of. 'Tis not because they are *more* sinful, or *less* holy, than Others; but because they are more acquainted with themselves, and with what Sin is, that they esteem themselves the *chief* of Sinners. The Apostle's Sense of his Imperfection and Sins caused him to sigh and groan, and consider himself as wretched. *Oh! wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* It is an excellent Observation of one, *viz. that our Sense of Sin, is not according to what it is in itself, but according to what Impression God is pleased to make of it upon us.* Those who are most favored with heavenly Influences, as they above others aim at Spirituality in Obedience, they best discern their Carnality, and, therefore, think themselves less holy, and *more* vile than others. Besides, the peculiar Aggravations, which they discover in their Sins, greatly increase their Guilt, in itself, and in their View, and for that Reason, they think themselves the *chief* of Sinners.

III. Sinners are lost, miserable, helpless and unworthy.

1. They are condemned by the Law. Every Breach of the holy Law of God subjects us to a Curse. *Cursed is everyone, that continueth not in all Things, which are written in the Book of the law to do them* (Galatians 3:10). Which is not the Curse of a Creature, but of God himself. Every vain Imagination, every irregular and inordinate Desire, all disorderly Motions of our corrupt Affections, expose us to the

Condemnation of the Law, which requires perfect Purity of Heart. And, therefore, since our Hearts are a Fountain of Impurity, from which continually spring defiled and defiling Streams, how many must those penal Threatening's be, that the Law breathes out against us. *Multiplied* Transgressions bring us under *multiplied* Curses.

2. We are obnoxious to the Vengeance of God: Whose Wrath is as his Power, *i.e.* infinite. As we are not able to say what infinite Power is, so we cannot declare what infinite Wrath is: Both have no Measure or Limits. Our Obnoxiousness to the vindictive Displeasure of God, is a Misery not to be expressed. It far exceeds the Reach of Language and Thought too. This is our sad State by Nature. *What Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them, that are under the Law; that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God* (Romans 3:10). *We deserve to be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power.* Which includes the Loss of the Enjoyment of the highest Good, and suffering the extremist Torture and Pain, our Make can be supported under, and that forever.

3. We are absolutely helpless, and unworthy of Succor, in these our sad Circumstances. We cannot atone for a single Offence, much less are we capable or satisfying a violated Law and offended Justice, for our numerous Transgressions. The Weight of one Sin would sink us *deeply into* the infernal Pit; much more, therefore, must our *vast and accumulated* Guilt, press us down into *unfathomable* Depths of Misery. We are without Strength, and unable to do anything towards our Recovery from Ruin. *The Redemption of our Soul is precious, and ceases forever* (Psalm 49:8), with respect to what we are able to do towards it. We are irrecoverably lost as to ourselves. *We are wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked* (Revelation 3:17). And we are not more miserable, and unable to help ourselves, than we are undeserving of Succor from him, who alone can deliver us from this Ruin. For our Nature is corrupt, and vile, and our Conduct is a continued Provocation to the most high, and yet blessed be his Name, he has in infinite Goodness and Wisdom, effectually provided for our Recovery, and Happiness, in the Fruition of himself. This leads me to discourse of the next Thing proposed to be considered, that,

IV. Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, the chief of them,

1. He was before he came into this World. He existed in another and higher Nature, than that, in which he dwelt with Men, before his Entrance into the World. Hence he tells the Jews, *that Abraham rejoiced to see his Day; he saw it, and was glad: they answer, thou art not yet fifty Years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* Our Lord replies, *Before Abraham was, I .AM* (John 8:56,57). They were much displeased at this Reply, for they well understood him to assert *his Existence* in another Nature than what they conversed with, or would own him in, *viz.* a Nature truly divine. The Name I AM, they were sensible, belonged to God alone, who revealed himself to

Moses, under that Name, when he was about to deliver their Fathers out of *Egyptian Bondage: I AM hath lent me you* (Exodus 2:24). He al-ways was in the *Form of God*, and, therefore, thought it *no Robbery to be equal with God* (Philippians 2:4). *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All Things were made by him, and without him was not any Thing made, that was made* (John 1:1,2,3). He, himself, must therefore, be uncreated, and, consequently, he existed in that in created Nature, before he was made of a Woman, in another Nature infinitely inferior to that.

2. His coming into the World, includes his Assumption of our Nature into Union with himself, his Subjection to the Law, his Obedience, his low Estate, and Sufferings, and Death for us.

(1.) He assumed our Nature into Union with himself. *The Word that was in the Beginning with God, and was God, was made Flesh, and dwelt among us* (ver.14): This was not by a Conversion of the divine Nature into the human, for that was absolutely impossible: That which is infinite, can never become finite and limited, or other than it is. Nor was it by a Confusion or blending of these infinitely distant Natures together. They continue distinct, and neither Nature possesses those Properties, which are peculiar to the other. The divine Nature does not become finite and limited, nor the human become infinite and unlimited, by this Union: Some who lie in wait to deceive, or at least endeavor to Conceal their Disbelief of the Deity of our gracious Redeemer, say, that he exercises the divine Perfections for the Good of the Church, and that this is the Meaning of those Words, *I and my Father are one* (John 10:30). But can our Lord exercise Perfections which he don't possess? Or can his human Nature become the Subject of infinite Perfections? Some who seem to suppose this, charge us with holding absurd Notions; And cannot they discover the Absurdity of their Imaginations? that Christ, as Man, may exercise Perfections, he neither does, nor can possess; Or, that a finite Nature can become the Subject of infinite Perfections: I say, have they not Sense enough to know, that neither can possibly be? If they have not, they are very unfit Persons to determine what is, or what is not absurd. I question not, but they are capable enough of judging in so plain a Case; but they say, that Christ is so one with the Father, as to exercise his Perfections for, the Good of his People, that they may conceal from the View, of some, their Denial of his proper Deity. I can never be persuaded, that this *Art* will meet with Approbation in an *awful* Time, that is hastening, however Men may please themselves in this Disguise. This Assumption of our Nature by the Word is its personal Union therewith. And this is one principal Branch of the Mystery of Godliness. *Without Controversy great is the Mystery of Godliness, God was manifest the Flesh*. And this is the Foundation of the Merit which attended the Obedience and Sufferings of Christ. For my Part, I shall never contend about the *Dignity* and Use of his Obedience to the Law, nor concerning, the *End and Efficacy* of his Sufferings

and Death; if his proper Deity is not granted, and the Union of his human Nature with his divine, is not allowed; because the Obedience and Death of a *mere* Man, can never be of *saving use* to me, or any other poor Sinner in the World.

(2.) Christ became subject to the Law; And the Law is to be considered as a Law, *merely*, or as it is a Covenant. In the latter Sense, it requires Obedience in Order to Life; and threatens Death in Case of Disobedience. *Do this and live, sin and die*, are the Terms of it. As our Saviour was not a natural Descendant of *Adam*, and not included in him, nor represented by him, the Covenant of Works made with *Adam*, had no Concern with Christ, nor was he included in it, by Virtue of its original Constitution. And as he had a Right to Life and Glory in his human Nature, in Consequence of his Union with the Son of God, he could not become subject to the Law, as a Covenant; but by Virtue of a peculiar Appointment of the Father's, with his own free Consent. Nor could his Subjection to that Covenant, be upon his own Account, it must wholly be on Account of others, to redeem them from it, who, otherwise, inevitably would have perished under its Curse. Each of these Things is clearly expressed in these Words: *but when the Fulness of the Time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman; made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law* (Galatians 4:8). As the Manner of the Production of his human Nature, was extraordinary and peculiar, the Way of his coming under the Law was *peculiar* to himself, in order to a *special* End, wherein others are concerned, and not himself, *viz.* their Redemption from the Law, in the Form of a Covenant.

(3.) Our Redeemer obeyed the Law; or fulfilled the Terms of the Covenant. He was pure and holy in his Nature; *holy, harmless and undefiled, and separate from Sinners*. In his Conduct he was unblemished, *for he did no Sin, neither was Guile found in his Mouth* (Isaiah 53:9). And he is *the End of the Law for Righteousness* to every Believer: And the Father is *well pleased for his Righteousness sake*. We are *justified in him*, and in him we have a proper Foundation to *Glory*.

(4.) He submitted to a very low and mean Condition. Our Saviour was rich; but for *our Sakes he became poor, that we, thro' his Poverty might be made rich*. He was Lord of *Glory*, and *Heir of all Things*; but possessed Nothing, hence, he says: *The Foxes have Holes, and the Fowls of the Air have Nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head*. And this was one Part of that Curse our Sins demerited.

(5.) The blessed Jesus was the Object of the greatest Contempt, Scorn and Reproach. He was *despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grievs*. In a Way of Contempt he was called this *Fellow*, and *Deceiver*, and *a. gluttonous Man, and a Wine-bibber*, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners. On which Account he is represented, in Prophecy, as saying, *Reproach hath broken my Heart* (Psalms 69:20). Oh! the amazing Condescension of Christ, to endure *such Contradiction of Sinners, against himself*, with this kind View to save the *chief* of them.

(6.) His Sufferings and Death are included. *His Visage was so marred, more than any Man, and his Form more than the Sons of Men.* He suffered from Men, from Devils, from God himself, as a righteous Judge, taking vengeance on Sin in him; not his own, for he had none; but the Sins of others, which were imputed to him, or laid on him. He suffered in his Body the most acute Pains, and he suffered in his Soul: and those Sufferings of his Soul were far more grievous than his bodily Pains: *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto Death* (Matthew 26:38): *And, now is my Soul troubled, and what shall I say?* (John 12:27) was the mournful Language of the suffering Redeemer. The extremist Pain, the greater Shame, and the forest Vengeance, all met in the Death of our gracious Saviour. And he for that *Joy*, that was set before him, endured the Cross, and despised the Shame.

3. Salvation is affected by these Things. This Was not an unsuccessful and fruitless Attempt to save Sinners; but *real, full* and everlasting Salvation is secured by Christ's coming into the World. If he had not obtained eternal Redemption for us, he had never entered into Glory. To suppose that certain Salvation is not effected, by this astonishing Transaction, is to eclipse the Glory of divine Grace, to impeach divine Wisdom, and to arraign and censure divine Justice, in the most stupendous of all its Acts.

(1.) Sin is expiated. The Removal of the Guilt of Sin is a considerable Part of Salvation, and that is done by the Death of Christ. *When he had by himself purged our Sins* (Hebrews 1:3). *Once in the End of the World hath he appeared to put away Sin, by the Sacrifice of himself* (Hebrews 9:26). And therefore, Sin is not imputed to those Persons, for whom Christ died. *God was in Christ reconciling the World unto himself not imputing their Trespases unto them* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

(2.) Peace is made. One Branch of the Work of the Messiah was to make *Reconciliation for Iniquity*. And this he did by his Sufferings and Death. *Having made Peace by the Blood of his Cross* (Colossians 1:20). So that both Law and Justice are satisfied, and either hath any farther Demand to make. God as our righteous Judge is *pacified* towards us, for all that we have done: And there *is no fury in him*. It was not a procuring of Terms or Peace, that our Saviour died for us; but it was a making Peace. And Peace with God is a certain and immediate Effect of his Death, *and*, consequently, we are not obnoxious, to divine Wrath and Vengeance. *Being justified by his Blood, we shall be saved from Wrath thro' him* (Romans 5:9). The Chastisement of our Peace was upon *him, and with his Stripes we are healed* (Isaiah 53:5). There is now no Threatening of Punishment to the Saints, for *there is now no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*: And hereafter, Penalty will not be inflicted on them, because complete Atonement is made for all their Sins, by the penal Sufferings of their Surety in their Stead. His Death is a full Security to them, from all Condemnation. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died* (Romans 8:34.)

(3.) An everlasting Righteousness is brought in Christ's Subjection to the Law, as in Form of a Covenant, could not be on his own Account His Dignity, State and right to Glory, arising from the Union of his two Natures, rendered that impossible; and, therefore, it was *solely* on the Account of others, whose Surety he was. His Obedience to the Covenant was commensurate to its Commands. And that Obedience he yielded to that Covenant, wholly for the sake of his People. The Father accepts it for them, imputes it to their Persons, and this Imputation of that, Obedience makes them righteous: *By one Man's Obedience shall many be made righteous* (Romans 5:19). These Particulars the *Messiah* was to do for his People. According to divine Promise and Prophecy he was *to finish Transgression, to make an End of Sin, to bring in an everlasting Righteousness, and to make Reconciliation Iniquity* (Daniel 9:24). *He has finished the Work* which the Father gave him to do, and, therefore, all these Things are done. And these Things being accomplished, *real, full, and certain* Salvation is obtained for all those Persons, on whose Account he was made under the Law; and, they all shall certainly receive the Adoption of Sons. This leads me to observe, farther,

(4.) Christ has a Right to demand Grace and Glory of the Father, in Behalf of all those Persons, for whom he obeyed and died. This Right arises from his punctual Performance of what was required of him to do, on Condition of which, the Father promised him, that he should *see his Seed, prolong his Days, and that his Pleasure should prosper in his Hand*. The fulfilling of the Conditions, whereon Benefits are promised, gives Right to those Benefits. And, therefore, since our Lord has exactly fulfilled the Conditions, on which these Promises were made to him, he has a Right to demand the Benefits those Promises express; and accordingly he does: *Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me* (2 Corinthians 5:19). This not *merely* a Request, it is a *Demand*. I will. And this is comprehensive of Grace, by Which we are *made meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: And of such Supplies of Grace, as are necessary to preserve us safe to the heavenly Kingdom and Glory. It includes the Whole of that Perfection and Blessedness whereof the Saints will eternally be possessed in their entire Persons. Their Bodies will be made like to Christ's *most glorious Body*, fit Receptacles of their perfected Spirits, and capable of beholding the Glory of their exalted Redeemer at the Father's Right Hand. It is the *Will* of the Father, *that of all which he hath given to Christ he should loose nothing; but that he should raise it up again at the last Day*. This is an Obligation upon our Saviour, to take care, *even* of the Bodies of the Saints; Nor will he fail of executing the Will of the Father, in raising them from the State of the dead, with unspeakable Advantage. Besides, their Bodies are a Part of his Purchase, as Well as their Souls, and what he bought, at the Expense of his Blood, he certainly will take *especial* Care of: And, therefore, he will gather the scattered Particles of their precious Dust, and

form their Bodies, which are now corruptible, and often dreadfully emaciated, by wasting Sickness, before their Dissolution, *immortal, spiritual*, and inconceivably glorious. Christ will collect them all together, and bestow upon them all that Glory designed for them: And the View he will then have of his Seed, will fill him with the highest Pleasure. Then will he present them to the Father, saying, *Behold, I and the Children whom thou hast given me*. And this Presentation of them, will be made, with exceeding Joy (Jude 1:24). Then will be accomplished fully, the glorious Contrivances of eternal Love and infinite Wisdom concerning the Person of Christ and all his Members, wherein the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Church, and Angels will eternally rejoice. This Salvation is not only a Deliverance from the lowest Depths of Misery; but it is an Advancement to the greatest Heights of Glory, our Nature is capable of enjoying. It is a Glory suitable to the Relation of Sons, and is called the Adoption, *i.e.* the *Dignity, Honor, and Blessedness* of sons. It is a Glory suitable to the conjugal Relation between Christ and the Church, and that certainly must be very great. It is reasonable to think, that the Glory of the Saints, will exceed in Greatness that of the Angels. Because their Relation to God and Christ is nearer, than that those blessed Spirits enjoy. They are Sons to God, by Creation; but Believers are his Sons by Adoption, which constitutes them Heirs of God, and Fellow-Heirs with Christ, which Creation doth not. Besides, as the Church is the Bride of Christ, and Angels are not taken into so near a Relation to him, there is Reason to conclude, that a Glory superior to that which Angels enjoy, will be conferred upon her, corresponding with her nearer Relation to the glorious Mediator. The *more close and intimate* the *Union* is, which is enjoyed with Christ, the Glory arising from it, doubtless, is the more abundant. It is proper, that the Spouse should be favored with greater Nearness to her Husband, than Servants: Angels are Servants to Christ; but the Church is the *Lamb's Wife*; and, therefore, shall she be nearer to him, and enjoy his kinder Embraces, while the Angels will keep at a *respectful and humble* Distance both from *him* and *her*. And what adds much to the Wonder, and is a proper Ground of Encouragement, under a Sense of our Unworthiness, is this:

(5.) The chief of Sinners share in, or are the Subjects of this *great* Salvation. Christ came, not only to save such who were lost; but to save those who are guilty of the *foulest* Crimes, whose Offences are attended with the *most aggravating Circumstances*, and who have *long continued* in Rebellion against God. Publicans and Sinners, *i.e.* *notorious* Offenders, are the Objects of his Compassion, and obtain the Remission of their Sins thro' his Blood. He never did refuse, he never will refuse to receive kindly, the *greatest* Criminal, applying to him for Pardon, Peace, Grace, and eternal Salvation. *Whosoever will may take the Water of Life freely* (Revelation 22:17). The *greatest Unworthiness* is no Objection with Christ, to a *most welcome* Reception of those, who come unto him, on a Conviction of the Necessity of an Interest in him. Nothing is required to a Participation of his Benefits, but a Sense of

Our Need of them, and a Will to receive them, as he communicates them, *viz.* freely, *without Money and without Price* (Isaiah 55:1). The Salvation of the *Chief of Sinners* is agreeable to the impulsive, the meritorious, and final Causes of it.

1. It well suits with the impulsive Cause, and is a glorious Display of it. That is no other than the free and rich Goodness, Grace and Mercy of God: *By Grace are we saved.* And the Pardon of Sin and *Redemption thro' the Blood of Christ, is according to the Riches of the Grace of God* (Ephesians 1:7). Infinite Compassion alone, could so far extend itself, as to forgive the *Worst of Sinners*. The abounding Sinfulness and Sins of notorious Offenders require the Exercise of super abounding Grace. What but the exceeding Riches of the Grace of God could raise and cherish in the Breast of a Sinner, conscious of *heinous, repeated, and highly aggravated Crimes*, the least Hope of Forgiveness? Nothing. This was *David's* Ground of Hope, and the Matter of his Plea. *Have Mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving Kindness: According unto the Multitude of thy tender Mercies blot out my Transgressions* (Psalms 51:1). Since we are required to forgive an offending Brother, not only *until seven Times*, but *until seventy Times Seven*, who are too backward thro' the *Scantiness* of our Compassion to a forgiving Temper; surely God, whose Mercy is *immense*, will extend Pardon to the *greatest Sinners*. *Where Sin has abounded, Grace will much more abound; that as Sin has reigned unto Death, even so Grace may reign thro' Righteousness unto eternal Life, by Jesus Christ our Lord* (Romans 5:20,21). God will stand as much distinguished from all his Creatures in *Acts of Pardon*, as in *Acts of Power*. If the *Chief of Sinners* should not be saved, it might be thought that divine Grace hath its Limits which it can't exceed; but no Room shall be left to Men to admit a Thought so *derogatory* to its Glory, which appears as much in its extensive Exercise in pardoning, as it does, in its Freedom and Sovereignty.

2. The Salvation of the *Chief of Sinners* is to the Glory of the meritorious Cause. That is the Blood of Christ. The infinite Dignity of his Person gives infinite Worth to his Sufferings; and, therefore, they were as sufficient to discharge a Debt of *ten thousand Talents*, as of *ffty Pence*. 'Tis not the *Nature* of our Sins, nor their *Number*, nor their *Aggravations*, can hinder our Pardon and Salvation, since a Sacrifice of *immense* Value has been offered to God for their Atonement. He who is the *mighty God, is mighty to save; able to save even to the uttermost*; so that no Guilt is so great; but the Death of the Son of God is sufficient to atone for it. *The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin.*

3. This suits with the final Cause of our Salvation. (1.) Respecting God. His supreme End in the Scheme of our Recovery is his own Glory. The Glory of all his infinite Perfections. His Wisdom, Holiness and Justice, and Truth and Faithfulness; but he peculiarly aimed at the Display of *the Glory of his Grace and Mercy*. The Salvation of any sinner, as to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace; but the Salvation of the *Chief of Sinners* is *eminently* to the Praise of that Glory.

(2.) The End relating to Christ is his Honor, in the Character of a Redeemer. *His Glory is great in our Salvation* (Psalms 21:5) The Remission of the worst and most aggravated Offences thro' his Sufferings, is a full Proof of their infinite Merit and extensive Efficacy. And, that the meritorious Cause of our Salvation is not below the impulsive Cause of it.

(3.) The final Cause respecting us, was our Abasement in. our own Sight, and a holy Trust in and Admiration of the infinitely rich Grace and Mercy of God, as acting in our Saviour thro' Christ. These Ends are fully secured by the Salvation of the *Chief* of Sinners, thro' his Obedience and Sacrifice. For upon this View, we take Shame to ourselves, and adore the Riches of divine Grace, and the infinite Merit of our most merciful Redeemer. Our adoring Language to God is: *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name give Glory* (Psalms 115:1). And to *Christ: Unto him, that hath loved and washed us from our Sins in his own Blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and his Father; be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever, Amen* (Revelation 1:5,6). These Ends are all brought about; by the Salvation of the *Chief* of Sinners, and they are such as it became the Wisdom of God to design in this wonderful Transaction.

V. An Assurance of Salvation thro' Christ is very consistent with an Apprehension of our being the Chief of Sinners. The Apostle accounted himself the Chief, or greatest of Sinners, and yet, the Life lived, it was by the Faith of the Son of God. He doubted not of an Interest in a Saviour, under the deep Sense he had of his Sins and Sinfulness. It is not unusual with those, who enjoy the clearest Evidence of an Interest in divine Favor to consider themselves most deserving. of divine Vengeance. The strongest Faith may very well consist with a Sense of the greatest Unworthiness; because it is founded on infinite Grace, and infinite Merit, to which no Difficulties are insurmountable. This Assurance is not essential to Faith. True Faith may be where that is not.

1. Faith is a Dependence on Christ alone for Salvation, upon a Conviction of our Misery. A Conviction and Sense of our Misery necessarily precedes the Act of Faith on Christ, as a Savior. Until we are sensible of our being miserable and helpless in ourselves, we shall not be persuaded, of the Necessity of a sole Trust in another for Help and Succor. *They that be whole need not the Physician, but they that are sick* This Conviction is becoming *dead to the Law*, and it, is affected by a Work of the Law upon the Heart, in the Hand of the blessed Spirit. *I thro' the Law, am dead to the Law*, The Mind of a Sinner is impressed with a. wounding Sense of his Guilt. His Sins *are ft in order before him*. And he clearly discerns, that he stands righteously condemned by the holy Law of God, for his numerous Violations of it. Upon which he acknowledges, that it would be just with God to *punish him, in particular*, with everlasting Destruction from his Presence, and from the Glory of his Power. In this Work upon him he is convinced *the Plague of his Heart*, as well

as of the Transgressions of his Life. In that divine Light which is communicated to the Soul, he discovers the exceeding Sinfulness of Sin, and the exceeding Sinfulness of his Heart; and the Spirituality, Purity, and Extent of the Law; whereupon, he concludes, that it is absolutely impossible, that one so vile as he is, should ever be able to recommend himself to, or interest himself in, the Approbation of God his righteous Judge, Thus he sees his lost and miserable, and helpless Condition in himself, and dies to all Hope of Life, by his own Righteousness and Works. When the holy Spirit hath in this Manner, convinced a Man of his deplorable State by Nature; and his *Heart is overwhelmed*, he leads him to *the Rock that is higher than he*. He makes a gracious Discovery of Christ to the Soul, in his Blood, Righteousness, and in the Fulness of his Grace. And, then the Language of a poor trembling Sinner is: My Sins are many, great, and dreadfully aggravated; but the Blood of Christ hath a Sufficiency of Merit in it to atone for them all. In myself I have no Righteousness, nor can have, whereby I may be Justified in the Sight of God; but the Righteousness of Christ, is every way sufficient to justify me before God, and to give me a Right to Life, who am worthy of Death. My Heart is impure, and *without Holiness* I shall never *see the Lord*. That Treasure of Grace which is in Christ, it is sufficient to make me holy, and *meet to be a Partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. Besides, in the Light of this Grace, a Person discerns, in some Measure, how God is glorified; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all the divine Perfections, Goodness, Grace, Mercy, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice, Truth and Faithfulness, in this Way of Salvation; and herein he rejoices, even though' *himself should not be a Sharer in it*. The holy Resolution of the Soul upon this View of Things, is, to renounce, all other Ways of Relief, which may be proposed to its Consideration, and to cleave to Christ alone, as the only proper Object of his Hope; this it is to flee to him for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before us. And this is that Faith, which is of the Operation of God and is peculiar to the Objects of a divine Choice to eternal Salvation, for which Reason, it is called *the Faith of God's Elect*. And, therefore, we observe,

2. Where there is this Dependence, there is a proper Foundation for Assurance. Persons thus wrought upon, and influenced to such holy Acting's of Soul towards Christ, as a Saviour, have that in them, which is in itself, a clear and sufficient Evidence of an Interest in him, and in his Salvation, though' they may not discern that Evidence; nor be so ready to allow it an Evidence, as they ought to be, thro' Darkness, Jealousy of themselves, and Fears of being mistaken, in an Affair of so great Importance. This solemn and humble Application to Christ, for Pardon, Peace, Righteousness, Grace and Holiness, under a Sense of our Misery and Helplessness, is the Effect of a super-natural Work upon us: Coming to Christ follows upon divine Drawing. *For no Man can come to Christ, except the Father draw him*. And this heavenly Attraction is a Fruit of everlasting Love: *Yea, I have loved thee with an*

everlasting Love, and, therefore, with loving Kindness have I drawn thee. If we are drawn *with the Cords of Love; with the Bands of a Man,* 'tis because we are Objects of Love. If we come to Christ, approve of him and cleave to him, it is a certain Consequence of our having *seen, and heard, and learned of the Father.* And, therefore, it must necessarily be an Evidence, that we are passed *from Death to Life, and that we shall not come into Condemnation.* Besides, Christ has declared expressly, that he *will in no wise, i.e.* upon no Consideration, on any Accounts, *cast out those* who come to him. If therefore, he should not receive and save us, his Veracity would be impeached. With Reverence, I desire to speak it, If any one Soul, at the last Day, shall be able to stand up and say to him, upon a Conviction of my Sins; Sinfulness, and Inability to help myself, I applied to thee for Salvation, being encouraged so to do, by thy Declaration, that thou wouldest not cast out him that comes to thee; but I am now lost forever, because thou hast refused to receive and save me, Christ would be proved guilty of a Breach of Truth in the View of Angels and Men. But this can never be, we are confident. And, consequently; this gracious Work upon the Soul, is in itself, a full and certain Evidence of an Interest in his Love, Care, Tenderness and Compassion, and is a proper Foundation of Assurance of Salvation by and thro' him.

3. Faith sometimes rises up to this Assurance of Salvation. Some lately risen up among us, who have had the *Vanity* to take to themselves the Name of *Reformers*, assert that it is of the Essence of Faith, and that there is nothing of Faith, or Holiness, where there is not a Confidence of being saved. And many of them make large Pretensions to such an Assurance. But ask them what Convictions of Sin, what a Sense of their Misery and Helplessness, what Views of Christ and spiritual Things have preceded this their Confidence? And they can give you but a very slender Account of either of these Things. Ask them how they came by this Assurance? By what Means it was begotten in them, and what is the Foundation of it? They are not able to return you any solid Answer. Assured and confident of being saved they are, but they cannot tell how they came to be so assured. Ask them what Effects this their Assurance has produced in them? They are at a stand, and can make you no Reply; which ought to be satisfactory to a Christian. This among many other Things, make it evident, that we are referred to live in Times, wherein Errors of all Kinds abound. I make no Question, but that some Saints are favored with this full Assurance of Faith, and are able to say with the Apostle, concerning their dear Redeemer, *who loved me and gave himself for me,* and as the Church *my beloved is mine and I am his.* The Happiness they desire, they see to be theirs. And, that Christ has *set them as a Seal upon his Heart, and as a Signet upon his Arm.* That he neither will, nor can forget them, nor cease to employ his Power in their Protection and Defense. *They know and believe the Love that God hath to them. They dwell in his Love, and in him, and are persuaded, that nothing shall separate them, from the Love of God,*

which is in Christ Jesus. Thus, the Holy Spirit bears witness with their Spirits, that they are Sons of God. And, therefore, they enjoy much of Heaven in their Way thither. But this is not the Case of all the Saints; and Faith of the Operation of God, often is, where this Assurance is not. Though', as I have said, there is a proper Foundation for it, in the Souls of all those whose Dependence is on Christ for Salvation, upon a Sense of their Misery, a View of his Glory and Suitableness, as a Saviour, to the Wants of their Souls in particular. Farther, frequent Acting's of the Faith of Recumbency on Christ, usually raise in the Mind, some Degree of this Assurance, or a comfortable Hope of obtaining Salvation thro' him.

VI. The Report is true, πισὸν ὁ Λογὸς, a true Saying, and worthy of the most grateful Reception, that Christ came into the World, to save the Chief, or greater of Sinners.

1. This Report is true, and may safely be depended on. Abundant Proof is given of its Verity, and in a Variety of Ways.

(1.) By the Testimony of Angels. A Multitude of those blessed Spirits, descended from Heaven, at the Birth of our Saviour, and celebrated, with an holy Adoration, the gracious Design of his Incarnation, and declare that it was to render sinful Men happy, as an Effect of the good Pleasure of God towards them. *And suddenly there was with the Angel, a Multitude of the heavenly Host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on the Earth Peace, and Good-Will towards Men (Luke 2:13,14).*

(2.) The Truth of this most astonishing Report is fully proved by Divine Promises. Remission of Sin is promised in the most full and explicit Manner, by God himself, who cannot lye. And not only Pardon but multiplied Pardon. God so expresses himself upon this Subject, as is sufficient to convince us, if we are to be convinced, that his Design in the Exercise of forgiving Mercy, far transcends those limited Thoughts, we are apt to form and cherish concerning it. *Let the wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts: Let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither are your Ways my Ways, saith the Lord. For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts (Isaiah 55:7,8,9).* When we have stretched our Conceptions as far as we can, concerning the pardoning Grace of God, we are as much below its real Extent, as the Distance of the Heavens is from the Earth: So he plainly tells us, who will not, nor can deceive us. And, therefore, there is not the least Room left us, to admit a Scruple concerning the Pardon and Salvation of the *chief* of Sinners. His Promise is a sufficient Security, for he cannot violate it; but he has confirmed it, *with his Oath, that by two immutable Things, wherein it is impossible for him to lye, we. might have strong Consolation, who have fled for*

Refuge, to lay bold on the Hope set before us. This is amazing Condescension and Goodness!

(3.) Divine Predictions may be offered in Confirmation of this Truth. The Prophet *Isaiah* not only describes in a very particular Manner the Sufferings of the Messiah, when he should appear; but he gives the Character of the Persons, for whom he was to suffer, and for whom he would intercede with God. *And made Intercession for the Transgressors* (Isaiah 53:12). פ ע, *i.e.* for the rebellious. For such who were his Murderers, and imbrued their Hands in his Blood. According unto this Prediction of the Prophet, our Saviour, when on the Cross, put up this Request to *God: Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (Luke 23:24).

(4.) Many stupendous Miracles were wrought to confirm this Truth. That great Salvation whereof the Gospel is a Report, so far exceeds our Imagination, that we are very slow in giving Credit to it. To the End, that the Truth of this Report might be established, beyond all modest Contradiction, the holy Spirit hath given his Witness to it, by a Multitude of miraculous Operations. *God also bearing them witness both with Signs and Wonders, and with diverse Miracles, and Gifts of the holy Ghost, according to his own Will* (Hebrews 2:4).

(5.) The Author of this Salvation has not been wanting to give in his Testimony to this most precious Truth. And we know that his Witness is true; for he is *the Truth*, and, therefore, his Testimony cannot be false: *He is the faithful Witness* (Revelation 1:5). Christ has plainly and fully informed us, that the *largest Debts* are forgiven: Or that Pardon is extended to the greatest Sinners; And, that in Consequence of *much* being forgiven; *much* Love is ingenerated in the Hearts of pardoned ones. *Five Hundred Pence* are as *freely forgiven as fifty*, our Lord assures us (Luke 8:41). And, consequently, Pardon is not limited to *smaller* Offenders; but it is extended to the greatest Transgressors. He certainly knew, whole Sins are remitted, thro' whole Blood Remission is obtained. Shall we then admit the least Doubt of the Salvation of the Chief of Sinners? Surely not; since we cannot do it, without invalidating the Testimony of him, thro' whom Salvation is enjoyed.

(6.) The State and Work of Christ when he was here, give the fuller Evidence, that his coming was to accomplish such a Design. He was constituted *Heir of all Things*, and was *Lord of Glory*, when he possessed nothing; and became the Object of Scorn, Reproach and Shame among Men. His Subjection and Obedience to the Covenant of Works, which we have violated, were not on his own Account; to imagine, that he came under that Covenant, upon his own Account, divests him of that Right to Life, Happiness, and Glory, which is inseparable from his Person, as God and Man; and subverts all our Hope of Salvation, by any Thing he did or suffered. He was made under the Law, not only to obey it, but also to suffer its Curse; or to endure the Penalty it threatens upon a Breach of its Precepts. This could not have been with a View to himself, if he had been no more than a Man, since he was innocent. For it is

contrary to Justice to make Innocency subject to a Curse, and, therefore, his being made a Curse, is in itself a clear Demonstration, that so he was made for Sinners, in order to their Redemption from it.

(7.) The Exaltation of Christ, and the Glory which followed upon it, is a pregnant Proof of this Truth. When he had completed the Work of our Redemption on Earth, he ascended to Heaven, and took Possession of that Glory which was his due. And he is to be considered as our *Fore-runner* in his Entrance into the World above, and as the public Head and Representative of all those for whom he had offered himself as a Sacrifice to God, Hence, we are laid to sit *together in heavenly Places in Christ. He is entered not into the holy Places made with Hands, which were the Figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the Presence of God for us* (Hebrews 9:24). This Admission of Christ to Heaven, and his taking the Possession of Glory in the Name, and as the Forerunner of Sinners, is an undeniable Proof of his having obtained Salvation for them. For which Reason the Apostle *Peter* makes it a Ground of Christian Trust and Confidence. *Who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead and gave him Glory that your Faith and Hope might be in God* (1 Peter 1:22)? Consequent upon this Exaltation of our Saviour, an eminent Glory attended his Church below. The Holy Spirit was poured forth in an extraordinary Manner, both in his Graces and Gifts, which was a clear Proof, that he had done everything requisite to the Salvation of Sinners. And, that the Father highly approved of his executing his Will, in the Redemption of the Objects of his Favor from Misery. What an admirable Concurrence of the most cogent Proofs are given of this glorious Truth, that Jesus Christ came into the World to save the *chief* of Sinners? If therefore we disbelieve it, we must be exceedingly culpable, for we shall make God himself a *Liar*, who has in such a Variety of Ways given his Testimony in Confirmation of this most precious Truth. And this is an Instance of his infinite Condescension, Goodness, Compassion and tender Care of his People! that their Souls may have Support, Relief, and Consolation, under a Sense of what above all Things occasions their Minds the greatest Distress, *viz.* their Guilt and Sinfulness.

2. This Report is worthy of the most grateful Reception. It consists of Principles, which are calculated to promote the Glory of God, in a most eminent Manner. The Glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And the Glory of all the divine Perfections, far above any other of the Designs of God. Besides, it is the Foundation of all the spiritual Peace, Rest, Consolation and Joy, which the Saints are favored with, in this World, and it is the Ground of their Hopes of the Enjoyment of future Blessedness; and, therefore, it is highly deserving of the most grateful Reception. But,

(1.) Some reject it, yea the most, the Generality. Christ as crucified, *is a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of Offence*, to many who make Pretensions to Christianity. The *Mysteries* relating to his Person, Work, and the admirable Effects of his Mediation, are accounted *unintelligible* and *absurd* Notions. And the Saints

Experience of Consolation, Peace and Joy, in believing in him, as the Gospel represents him, as pronounced a fond Imagination and Enthusiasm, by Multitudes, who yet would be esteemed Christians. No unregenerate Man receives the Things of the Spirit of God, nor is he able to understand them. Without supernatural Light Men may know the Truth of the sublime Doctrines of the Christian Revelation; but that greatly differs from an Understanding of the Things themselves. The Truth of the Things of the Spirit hath such Evidence in the Scripture, as is suited and sufficient to procure an Assent to it from all Minds, which are free from Prejudice, and, therefore, unregenerate Persons may, and it is reasonable to require and expect them to yield an Assent to the Truth of those Things. But the Things themselves they can never understand. No, not the most *intelligent* and *knowing* Part of Mankind. The Things themselves often *are hid from the wise and prudent*, while they *are revealed unto Babes*, *i.e.* Persons of mean Capacities, and of little Improvement. The *most learned* among Mankind are not more capable of understanding heavenly Things, than the *weakest, silliest Creatures* in the World are. Nor is any Branch of what we call *Learning*, possessed in how great Eminency so ever, suited to increase our Knowledge of this Kind. A Consideration sufficient this is, one would think, to humble the Pride of Men's Hearts, which springs up in them on Account of their *learned* Accomplishments. He must be an absolute Stranger to the *theological* Writings of *learned* Men, or not exercise his *Reason* in reading them, who does not discern, that *Learning* is not a sufficient Preservative, even from *Dotage*, *Childishness* and *Absurdity* in the Things of God. They deliver themselves so *foolishly*, on many of those Subjects, that if they were not had in Repute for Learning, what they say would be despised, and themselves would fall under Contempt, and not unjustly, for, not to say, reasoning, but caviling, as they do. If we have no supernatural Principle in us, we shall not, we will not, we cannot approve, embrace, adhere to, nor take the least Delight in Spiritual Things themselves. *The natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* The *learned*, therefore, have no Advantage above the *unlearned*, as to the understanding of the Mysteries of the *Kingdom*. And, consequently, the rude and unpolished, may know those *Mysteries*, and such, who on Account of their Superior Talents are greatly admired, may be as *blind* to those Things, as *Bats*, or *Moles*. *An highway shall be there, and a Way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it; it shall be for those, way-faring Men, though' Fools, shall not err therein.*

(2.) A few receive this Report most joyfully, with the highest Gratitude, approve of it, admire and adore it. By a Communication of divine Light to our Understanding, we become capable of seeing our true State by Nature; the Excellency and Glory of this Way of Salvation by Christ. And that gracious Work upon us, which furnishes

our Minds with spiritual Knowledge, sanctifies our Wills to choose, and causes our Affections to cleave to, and delight in those Things, which our Minds discern the Excellency and Glory of. For Grace conveyed in Regeneration, is a sanctifying Principle, to our whole Souls, and, therefore, every Faculty acts in a spiritual Manner, about, towards, and upon spiritual Things, in Consequence of this Work in us. That which is Light in the understanding, is Holiness in the Will, and it is Spirituality in the Affections. If this had been duly attended to, some unprofitable Disputes concerning Faith, would never have taken place among *learned Men*. Those Truths which many; yea the Generality of such who are called Christians, esteem *Foolishness*, Persons spiritually enlightened, account most sacred. They discover the infinite Riches of divine Grace, the unfathomable Depths of divine Wisdom, and the Holiness, Justice, and Truth, and Faithfulness of God, which have a most illustrious Display therein, and, therefore, their holy Souls approve of, admire and adore those *blessed* Truths, which they plainly see are incomprehensible. Some there are, I dare say, who take the highest Satisfaction in there Things, because of that peculiar Glory, Which arises to God from them; and will still continue so to do, let a Generation of *formal and nominal* Christians, call them by what Names they shall please, on Account of this their Faith and Hope, in God and Christ. Of this Number was the Person whose Death occasioned this Discourse. She was many Years a Member of this Community. Her Character was ornamental to her Profession, without any Fear of being charged with a Breach of Truth, I may say, that her *Conversation was as it becometh the Gospel of Christ*. It is, If I remember right, now near nine Years since she had a very fore Fit of Sickness, which in the Apprehension of others, and in her own, was likely to have issued in her Dissolution. It was the Pleasure of God, at that Time, to favor her With extraordinary Discoveries of *his Love*, and with an Assurance of everlasting Salvation thro' Christ, under a most humble Sense of her own great Unworthiness, The Words on which I have been discoursing, she then pronounced with *a very striking Accent*, and declared her Desire, that they might be preached from on the Occasion of her Death, if she was removed; and this has been her Desire ever since. She never lost the Sweetness and Savour of those gracious Visits she then enjoyed. She had not a great Deal of Conversation, nor did she desire much; because, but *little* which is *spiritual* to be met with. She would often say, *I am the chief of Sinners, and have the greatest Reason to admire at the Grace of God, in saving me. And my Praises in Heaven will have the highest Note of any there*. Her Soul was frequently filled with an adoring Sense of distinguishing Favor, and she expressed it in the Language of the inspired Writer. *He takes One of a Family, Two of a Tribe, and brings them to Zion*. Her last Illness Was long and heavy, in which she was very comfortable. In a Visit I made her some time before her Death, I found her filled with Joy, at the Thoughts of its being near. *I am going*, said *she*, *I hope, in a few Hours. It might be* (that is the

Sentence) depart from me, thou Worker of Iniquity; but it will be, Come thou blessed of my Father. Strike, Death, strike; not that I want to be out of my Pain, but I want to be praising my Lord. Glory to the Father, Glory to the Son, Glory to the Holy Spirit, three Persons but one God. She said again thus, Glory to the Father, Glory to the Son, Glory to the Holy Spirit, three Persons but one God. And now I must deliver what may not improperly be called her dying Request; it was this: *Do you tell the Saints, that the Sweet Doctrine of the free Grace of God, which you have preached has been the Comfort of my Soul, and is now on a Death-bed: and, while you are preaching, I shall be singing. It can't be otherwise, for his Covenant he will not break. He cannot deny himself. I have nothing to carry, not a Thought, but Sin, and that I shall drop.* Thus, she exulted, when she thought Death to be very near. I saw her several Times after this, and though' she was not so full of Triumph, she enjoyed solid Peace and Comfort; and declared, *that she did not desire in the least a Return.* Taking Notice of her poor emaciated Body, she sometimes said, *it is the Purchase of Christ, and he will change this vile Body, and fashion it like unto his most glorious Body.* Thus, she lived by Faith, and departed in the steady and vigorous Exercise of that Grace. Oh! the Happiness of those pious Souls, whose whole Trust is in Christ, thro' him they are *more than Conquerors* over all their Spiritual Enemies. And in the Exercise of Faith upon him, they can triumph in the Views, and at the nearest Approach of Death. May we be enabled through divine Grace, to follow those, who thro' *Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.*