

# John Johnson

{1706 – 1791}

**PREFACE to these WRITINGS**

## **Contending for the True Gospel of God's Grace in Christ**

*The author of these pages does not expect that this or anything he can publish will be acceptable to the religious world; for the time is come, when they will not endure sound doctrine. Religion is become a mere ceremony among all denominations, governed by custom and fashion, as much as dress, behavior, or any other worldly thing; and in general it does not appear, as if God is in all their thoughts; for if any man pays due attention to the Word of the God of Truth, so as to tread in the steps of Christ and his Apostles, he makes himself the object of their derision, detestation and utter rejection. If any man shows so much regard to the Word of the living God, as to disregard the traditions of men, and not to pay deference to their pious teachers, famous doctors, and celebrated authors; they accuse him of pride and self-conceit. If he cannot leave the testimony of God to follow the multitude, and walk in the common beaten path of empty professors; they will cry out. If he cannot relinquish Divine Truth which the Holy Ghost has clearly testified in the Holy Scriptures; they will cry out. If he maintains the true Gospel, in the riches of its excellency, grace and glory; they will cry out. If he keeps close to the Doctrine of Christ, in spirit and truth, life and power, they will cry out. If he points out any of the innovations, or anti-Christian doctrines commonly held among professors, and shows them to be of men and not of God; they will cry out. If he cannot acknowledge any doctrines, practices, or imaginary experiences to be of God, which have no foundation in the Word of the Gospel of Grace, they will cry out. If he cannot address sinners in general as if they were all believers, and encourage them to go forward in the kingdom of God, even when they have never received the Gospel, to introduce them into that kingdom, and call upon them, and exhort them {whilst dead in trespasses and sins} to perform works of spirit and life; they sound it abroad, that he cannot preach to sinners, has nothing to say to sinners, &c, and thus, cry out. If he attempts to distinguish between the faith of the operation of God, held forth in the Gospel, and the counterfeits of Satan upon the carnal mind, commonly encouraged by ministers; they say, that he makes the hearts of the righteous sad, and stumbles weak minds by distinctions of his own. If he cannot soothe persons in their own vain imaginations, to think, that every strike of fancy that comes into their heads, or world wind of passion that agitates the mind, is a spiritual operation from whence they may conclude themselves to be Christians, they accuse him, that he tramples on the work of the Spirit, and denies the experience of the children of God. If he cannot allow any to be in a state of salvation unless they have been called by the Gospel of the grace of God, are born of God, live by the faith of the Son of God; they cry out. If he cannot admit that regeneration, or the heavenly calling consists in an imaginary dream, produced by some unintelligible operation, ecstatic agitation, or sudden impulse on the mind; but insists that the soul is born of God by the clear distinct light of the Gospel of Christ, under the special Power of the Spirit of Life; whereby the understanding is opened, the affections quickened, and the will melted into an humble submission to drink in the fullness of the life of Christ; and all the faculties of the soul are spiritually united to the Son of God, and all the intellectual powers are filled with the light, life, love and truth as it is in Christ; then they cry out. But forasmuch as the testimony of the Spirit of Truth in the Oracles of Divine Grace, makes a*

*clear distinction between the young breathings of the newborn babe in Christ, and the old swelling imaginations of the carnal mind, it is to be humbly hoped that there are a few to be found, who are willing to attend to the distinction between the language of the Christ of God, and the delusive teachings of men. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}*

### **Antichrist**

The next matter to be attended to is the blessings that are kept in store, promised unto, and waited for by all that believe on the Son of God, and these are to be considered in general as they relate to the whole Church, and in particular, as they shall be to every individual believer. In the first place, respecting the Church of God; many of the promises are already fulfilled, such as the coming of the Messiah; all his performances on earth; his ascension into glory; the sending down of the Holy Spirit; the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles; the deliverance of the Christian Church from the anti-Christian national Church, by her flight into the wilderness; and now, the prohibition of the holy Scriptures taken out of the way; but the matter is to be considered, as it now stands, and what yet remains, and is to be accomplished in its season. First: The destruction of antichrist; the false Church, called, the beast of the bottomless pit; or in plain speech, the religion of this world, fictitiously called Christian religion. This beast or antichrist is not the Pope of Rome; though he is once called, the second beast, coming up out of the earth. {Rev.13:11} But this is only a servant to the first beast, rising out of the sea, with seven heads and ten horns. {Rev.13:1,8} It is a deep contrivance of the bottomless pit to call the Pope antichrist; like the fable of the thieves, crying out, "thieves, thieves," to set the people a gazing after some other object, while they made their escape. For by this device, people are made to believe that if they keep clear of open Popery, they are free from antichrist; when at the same time, antichrist reigns as powerful in every other denomination, as in the Church of Rome. And in many, his deceptions are much more; for the Church of Rome is become so gross in her errors that none can be deceived by her, but such as willfully deceive themselves. But the great deceivers are those that counterfeit the doctrine of Christ with more delusive art, and bring their inventions to a more apparent resemblance, to make them pass for realities. Howbeit, the Church of Rome, having usurped authority over the nations, beyond what any other hath done, we may expect her cup to be filled in a different manner; but we have no reason to expect the Church of Rome, to be the instrument, to kill the testimony of the Son of God and the Spirit of Truth, who are the two witnesses; but the more subtle imposters, who pretend to faith in Christ, salvation by Grace, the operation of the Holy Spirit, &c., yet represent these things in the light so loose and flimsy, that they contain nothing but the empty husk; and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple, making a show of the truth of Christ, but dressing it in such a garb, as suits the carnal taste. This is the very thing that pleases the religious world, to fancy that they enjoy the things of the Spirit, and at the same time to have their rejoicing in the flesh. This is the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, who in the most delusive mode makes war with the true Christ; and by his deep deceptions shall draw all the world after him, until the testimony of Christ and the Holy Ghost shall be so disregarded, that they shall appear to men, only as dead bodies. John Johnson {Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures}

### **Assurance & Faith**

With respect to the soul's arrival, by faith, to a state of justification; or how he comes to that enjoyment is a matter that requires very serious attention, and mature deliberation. It is not a chimera, a bubble, a trifling affair, as religious people fancy it to be. For professors in general have no ideas of justification; but as a mere bauble, a child's play or some

unintelligible dream. If they find their minds agitated with some uncommon passion; or some peculiar warm vertigo in their heads; they imagine these to be tokens of their justification. Others, if they find, what they call, some good dispositions in their hearts, they then fancy they have the marks and signs of a justified person. All this while, they do not pretend to enjoy the blessing; nor have they any real knowledge, what it is; but conceive it to be some occult existence, which is only to be known, or guest at by symptoms; or found out by some conjectural signs. And so long as they can ferment in themselves, those delusive tokens; they go on pleasing themselves that they are, {or at least, it is probable they are,} in a state of grace and justification. And thus they delude themselves, with empty imaginations; until the bubble breaks, and the phantasm flies away. But every soul that is justified indeed, ascends by regular gradations upon steps which the eternal God has laid, solid as adamant, firm as rock; until he arrives at the strong consolation and infallible enjoyment of the righteousness of God in Christ, which is like the great mountains, where he stands, absolutely above all fear of wrath or condemnation. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord; and who shall stand in his holy place." - If the foundation were not in the very essence of the Godhead, it might possibly fail; but as it is God himself, it stands immutable forever. Therefore all that believe are built impregnable upon the Rock of Ages; having the immutability of his Counsel confirmed by an oath; "that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, you might have a strong consolation." If thus we can believe in the Father, there can be no ground to doubt the grace and truth that is revealed in the Son. "Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee." - Thus, he that believes in the full virtue, and perfect efficacy of the sufferings of Christ; and that his blood, being shed on the behalf of his people was a complete propitiation for their sins; an adequate satisfaction to all the demands of the holy Law of God; to remove the curse, to cancel all condemnation, to bring in everlasting righteousness; forever, to justify the ungodly. "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." For Jesus Christ being truly the Son of Man, was capable of suffering in the very same kind, as the Law required us to suffer; or as our transgressions justly deserved; he being, by the appointment of God, constituted our Mediator and Representative, was properly adapted to answer for our faults, and to suffer in our stead. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." And being very God, was perfectly qualified to give a sufficiency to those sufferings; that his death should be an undeniable Ransom for our sins. "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." And forasmuch as he came from God, proceeding from the bosom of the Father, in the fullness of the Divine Essence; and all his works, active and passive, were performed according to the will, by the power, and in the spirit of his Father, there could be no mistake, or defect; but as himself is, so all his works were, perfectly well pleasing in his Father's sight. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake." Therefore it is said, "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor." Here the soul beholds the righteousness of God displayed in our eternal redemption. There needs no more! "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Thus, he believes in the seal which God hath set, to the validity of the Ransom paid, and the Redemption wrought by our Great High Priest; in that he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand; it being a clear demonstration, that all his work was amply performed, and perfectly accepted of his Father; and that no condemnation could ever appear against his chosen. "Who by him do believe in God that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God." For the Lord is risen indeed; and as the Father had given him for a covenant of the people, he could not be raised from the dead, so long as any branch of their redemption remained incomplete; or until the last mite was paid; otherwise, the covenant had been broken, which was impossible; for God had said, "my covenant shall stand fast with Him." Had not the redemption of his elect been absolutely perfect, there would have been a tarnish in his

glory; and the Father could not have invested him with the true glory, so long as the least flaw had remained. "As for God, his way is perfect." Nothing could have been a more ample proof of the preciousness, and virtue of the blood of Christ; or the perfect atonement made thereby. Therefore he challenges, and defies all his foes to point out any defect. "He is near that justifieth me, who will contend with me; let us stand together; who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me." This gives solid rest to the believing soul; and he can truly say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." – Thus, he believes, "to the saving of the soul." He believes these great things which the Gospel declares, relating to the Righteousness of Christ, and the Salvation of God; and receives them as they are, the truth of the very heart and soul of the living God; and sees them to be a foundation absolutely immovable; that is, a foundation of God. And beholding them in the light of the Spirit of God, they appear to him in their true excellency; and viewing them by the power of the Holy Ghost, his soul is effectually attracted, and his heart united; he receives strength to believe, and embrace them for himself; and that without reserve, to commit himself into the everlasting arms of this great Redeemer. With the heart he believes unto righteousness; so as he can trust in the everlasting righteousness of Christ to justify him from all sin before the all searching eye of God; and with the mouth he makes confession unto salvation; for he can freely declare, that his soul looks to none but Christ for salvation! "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." He sees the whole Gospel perfectly replete with blessings; he knows it is the opening of the bosom of the Father; and the wisdom, the love, and the power of God shining with such clearness, and effulgent glory into his soul, that it overcomes all his darkness, enmity and unbelief. All his powers acquiesce, his soul melts in love, and his heart become strong in faith; he believes the testimony of the Spirit of truth; who says, "these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name." Therefore he believes, and lives by the faith of the Son of God. For the Gospel comes not unto him in word only, "but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." Thus the believer ascends to the strong consolation of Justification upon the basis which the eternal God has laid; every step being as a mountain of brass; and is established in the Infallible Truth of Jehovah; being built thereupon by the Power of the Almighty Spirit. John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Assurance of Gospel Grace**

The Gospel of the Grace of God maintains the Essential Perfection, and All Sufficiency of God; his Infinite Wisdom, his Eternal Power, his Invariable Truth, his Unchanging Love, his Inexhaustible Fullness, his Everlasting Mercy, his Sovereign Grace, and his Immovable Faithfulness. So that whosoever is blessed with that Divine Testimony, in the spirit and life thereof is thereby enabled to trust in God with unshaken confidence and invincible stability. "They that know thy Name will put their trust in thee." For if they know his name, they must understand what his name contains; not as it were the fictitious name of a creature; but the very identical Name of Him who calls himself I AM. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower." Whatsoever is expressed in his name, is in perfection contained in his nature; and his children, who have learned his name from his Word, can neither doubt his essential perfection, nor his superlative goodness. Their hearts are fortified by the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth; which they receive, not as the words of men, but as the truth of God; for he speaks to their hearts, saying, "trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength." Some people tell us of the trembling saint, the fearful Christian, the doubting believer, &c. Such phrases as these might indeed be used in a good sense to express a contrite trembling at the heavenly Word, a reverent godly fear, and a humble jealousy over a man's self. But the way they are commonly used is quite otherwise; to represent saints, Christians, believers, &c., in contradictory characters; and are only invented to salve the minds of hypocrites; to whom they are very salutary; for

persons who are not built upon the Rock, nor have any solid rest in Christ, they love to be told, that doubts and fears are natural and common to believers; and they hate to hear of the composed rest, and strong consolation of those that are in Christ, because they are strangers thereto themselves. But the Scripture knows no such unintelligible jargon; but ranks the "fearful and unbelieving" among the vilest of characters; and dooms them to perdition, and gives the character of Christians quite different. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." The matter is not, whether souls may be full of doubts and fears at their first awakening out of the sleep of sin, and before their eyes are open to behold the pure light? Nor whether, through a degree of darkness remaining in the minds of Christians, they may long continue unsatisfied concerning some particular branches of Divine Truth? But the question is, whether the truth of God, so far as it is received with life and power, does not fortify the mind with firm confidence, free from doubts and fears? Or, whether the soul who has, in very deed, received and believed the record which God gave of his Son, is not thereby strengthened to commit himself to the Lord, and rely upon his faithfulness without reserve? When any man hears, reads, or meditates any of the doctrines, comforts, blessings, testimonies or promises contained in the Gospel of Christ; and finds in his heart some difference, suspicion, or misgiving of mind; so as he cannot, without wavering, venture all his concerns for time and eternity upon the truth thereof; the thing is then self-evident, and his own experience tells him, that his heart does not receive that Word as the Truth of the infallible God that cannot lie, or as the very God himself. It is absolutely impossible for any man to have the truth of God in his heart, and at the same time to distrust that very truth. If any man distrusts the truth of the immutable Jehovah, it is because he never did possess it. For those that have his word dwelling in them, can express their confidence in him, without the least shadow of uncertainty. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Baptism**

Baptism is a representation of our putting on the Lord Jesus Christ; passing through the water in his name is a figure and a profession of our passing away from all other things to Christ alone; to embrace him as our salvation, our life, and the fountain of all our blessedness; to submit to his will in whatsoever he is pleased to command to lay upon us, or to do with us; and to acknowledge him in all things as our Lord and our God. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." All that are baptized into the Son of God, do thereby confess themselves, in everything, to be given to Him, as sons and daughters, servants and handmaids, disciples, followers, and worshipers. They put on his name as the height of their glory; they put on his Righteousness as their peace with God; they put on the Doctrine of his Word as their light; they put on the Promises in his Word as their hope; they put on his ordinances in the appointed order as their distinguishing character among men; they put on the worship and order of his house for edification and comfortable communion one with another; and they put on such a conversation as becomes the Gospel, that it may be manifest that they have learned of Him in truth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Baptism**

If we hear a baptized person speak of his views it is commonly in such expressions as these: "It is a Scripture ordinance and we ought to comply with it." "It is the command of Christ and we ought to obey it." "Christ led the way and we ought to follow him." "If Christ

himself submitted to it, well may we submit to it." "I found of the love of Christ constrained me to conform to his example." "I thought it my duty to conform to such a pattern." "I ought not to scruple to condescend to that which my Lord condescended to, etc. etc." Thus they talk as dry as dust, as if it had neither life, nor savor; an insignificant rite done for doings sake. Baptism is a lively figure of the things pertaining to the Son of God and to his Church. His being overwhelmed in deep sufferings - his death - his burial - his resurrection. Our dying to everything to put on Christ. Our sins forever buried with Christ, and rising with him by faith to a resurrected life in Him. Passing out of our old state into his kingdom. The washing away of the whole body of sin, {Acts 22:16,} ample salvation, {I Pet.3:21,} the baptism of the Holy Ghost, {Lk.3:16,} and the resurrection of the dead. He that believes experiences the power and waits for the completion of these things, and with all his heart confesses them and ratifies this confession by setting his seal to the truth of God by baptism in his name as a fit member of the Gospel Church. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Baptism of Repentance**

It is called "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;" therefore, everyone that is baptized according to the primitive institution, is one that has been truly convinced of his sinful state, and confesses his wretchedness; that his whole life has been a life of sin, and alienation from God; and that, so long as he remained without Christ, whatever he thought to be his best works, were done in a carnal principle, which being enmity against God, those works have all been unholy before God; and that he now comes to the Great Redeemer for deliverance from the whole body of his sinfulness, depending alone on the virtue of the blood of the Lamb for remission of his sins; and declaring his sincere repentance from his dead works, and that he now yields himself to God, to be refined from all his pollutions, through the special Grace that is in Christ Jesus the Lord, by the powerful influence of the spirit of holiness, in the effectual application of the Gospel of the Grace of God; and that he now submits to the teachings of the Word of Christ, under the guidance of the Spirit of truth, to direct him how to walk to the glory of God the remaining part of his earthly pilgrimage; and that his heart's desire is to keep the Commandments of the Lord; and that he is now waiting for the wisdom and power from Christ the Fountain of life, that he may live to the glory of the Father, till God shall please to call him out of the body. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Beast & False Prophet**

"And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet." {Rev.16:13} We can form no conceptions of spirits flying in the air, floating in the water, or reposing in the earth; they must have some residences, or receptacles, suited to their nature; and these vehicles are mental; as the spirit of God dwells in the children of God, and the spirit of the devil dwells in the children of the devil; so these soul spirits dwell in the children of darkness. They bear a resemblance to frogs, which are amphibious creatures, breeding in fens, bogs, marines, lakes, ditches, and mud; and though they sometimes come forth upon the land, into the open air, they cannot bear the sun, but always retreat to their old habitation, or natural element, mire and dirt. So these spirits are a confused mixture, and spring from the filthiness of the fleshly mind, the malignity of sin, and enmity against God; yet under presence of sanctity, but it is only a trick, as they cannot bear the true light; their element is contempt of God, a false Christ, and inducing imaginations; and as everything partakes of the nature of that from whence it is produced, so do these; they bear the very image of that from whence they came. The dragon, the old serpent, his nature is deceit and

violence; his work, from the beginning, was to alienate men from God, by inspiring them with pride, ambition, and vain desires, and suggesting false and contemptible ideas of God; and, being naturally a liar, he is perpetually bent to oppose the truth of God, wherever it makes its appearance; and the spirit that proceeds from him into the hearts of his seed is the very life and breath of himself. The beast is the counterfeit Christ; or idolatry, superstition, enthusiasm, and inventions of men, in doctrine and worship, substituted instead of the truth as it is in Jesus, and the spirit that proceeds from thence fills men with the same principles. The false prophet is the band of false teachers, who endeavor to infatuate men's minds with the doctrines of devils; and having led them into the dark, that they know not whither they go, then they amuse them with a false light, that men may have them in admiration, as their spiritual guides, though they are only leading them into the ditch; and their devotees imbibe the same spirit, infatuated to enthusiasm, in admiration of their holy leaders; some admiring them for their learning, and earthly wisdom, some for their zeal and piety, some for the power inverted in them, by papal, episcopal, or synodical authority, some imagining them to be inspired with some peculiar wisdom, visions or monitions from heaven, some secret intimacy or intercourse with God, whereby they know the Divine Will, or some supernatural occult power, beyond other men, to perform miraculous operations; and all that receive this spirit, are led into a state of mental deterioration, and adoring these men for their extraordinary sanctity, think it sufficient if they follow them, and pay no sincere regard to the truth of God. But we are not to imagine, that these spirits went forth only at the time of the pouring out of the vials; but they are described in this place, because this is the time of their greatest conflict; otherwise, they are going forth at this very day, and have been, ever since the dragon gave his seat to the beast; but at present, they find very little opposition, their possessions are in peace. - Remember therefore that Satan is a calumniator and a deceiver; his work is to degrade, contemn, reproach, or to represent in a false light the God of truth, and to beguile, to ensnare, to entangle, and seduce men; and to accomplish this, his spirits go forth in so many various forms, and in different bands. It is in the power of devils, working in the minds of wicked men, so artfully to invent lies, as to make them pass for truth; and to perform acts of legerdemain with so much cunning, as to pass for supernatural operations; as also to persuade, that such are men of so much holiness, as to be possessed of the key of the kingdom, or the cabinet of divine counsel; and all these, in every mode, are calculated to invert the gospel of the Holy God. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Beast of Revelation**

"And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them." {Rev.11:7} But who is this beast? It is not men, kingdoms, or states; for however these may be corrupted with the stench of the bottomless pit, yet as men, or as powers, they did not proceed from thence. This is no other than the false Christ, or the darkness, false doctrines, false worship, false ideas of God, and false objects set up with a pompous appearance of devotion, religious zeal and formality, to stand in the place of the true Christ. {II Thes.2:4} But how shall the witnesses be killed? They can no otherwise be killed than in their testimony, nor by any other power than that of religion; profaneness may slay its thousands, but it is religion that slays its ten thousands. The delusions of the devil, with the delusive wisdom and sophistical traditions of men, presenting such pleasing images, with such enchanting seductions to the carnal mind, that the deception shall universally prevail in the hearts of men, and the truth of Christ shall totally be despised, and, at least to the view of the enemies, shall be entirely banished out of the world. And in this, not only Protestants, but Dissenters of every denomination may be expected to have as high a hand as Papists, Mahometans, or any people whatsoever. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

## **Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ**

The glorious Lord having revealed by the prophets the coming of his Anointed, and the riches of grace and glory that should then appear; and their predictions being fulfilled in the Person of the Son of God, and in the Preaching of the Gospel of his Grace; and the transactions of his Life, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into Glory, with the acts of his apostles, and the success of the Gospel in their days, being faithfully recorded for our comfort and instruction; it was his pleasure, in one book, entitled the Revelation of Jesus Christ to finish his testimony; wherein he is pleased to instruct his church of all things necessary for them to know, reflecting all the dispensations that should come upon them, to the end of the world. It is to the elect body, the chosen, the redeemed, the called, the sanctified of the Lord, this prophecy is directed, as it relates to them alone; and if any mention be made of the state of the nations, the powers of this world, national churches, or anything civil or religious that hath a dependence on worldly influence, it is only occasionally introduced to illustrate those things which immediately concern the Church of the First-born, which is written in heaven. So far as the children of light might be affected by such things as prevailed in the world, they are noted in the general, that they might not think the trials strange; that they might be upon their watch, to escape the snares; that they might humbly submit to the afflictions, and patiently wait the times appointed of the Lord; and that they might rejoice to see the words of God fulfilled, &c. But if we look for the fulfilling of these visions in the reign of such an emperor, such a pope, such a king, or in such a particular nation, we shall wander into a wild maze, and utterly lose the clue whereby the Holy Spirit deigns to lead us. The Church of Christ was never designed for worldly empire; and for a few ages she was in her proper place, in subjection to the powers of this world in civil matters. And out of this position the true church of God never did remove, for the real followers of Christ never sought for earthly dominion; nor is it possible they ever should, so long as their Lord declares, "My kingdom is not of this world." But when false professors became numerous, the spirit of the world prevailed among them, and they set up an emperor of their own. This was the foundation of the greatest mischief that ever came to the Gospel Church, in any external dispensation; the persecutions under the heathen emperors were only whips, but this proved a deadly scorpion. Not that this was the first introduction of the beast of Antichrist, for he began to prevail in the days of the Apostles, {I Jn.2:18,} and had made a great progress before this time, otherwise he had never had such sway in the world; for it was not the real Christians, but the Anti-Christians, that set up Constantine. However, this stroke was a great augmentation of the power of Antichrist; and from this time he continued increasing in power, till he advanced himself to sovereign dominion over the nation; for when he had power to set up his deputy-king, the pope, and the nations willingly submitted to his government, it was then undeniable, that the reign of Antichrist {whose servant the Pope is} was arrived to its height. {It is true, that the pope is Antichrist's generalissimo, the first peer in his realm; but he is not Antichrist himself, nor does he command his whole kingdom; for Antichrist is the carnal principle, false doctrines, and traditions of men, set up in the place of the truth of Christ.} Now it is very difficult to know the real situation of the true disciples of Jesus in these times, because those that are called ecclesiastical writers do not seem to have known anything of the true life and spirit of the gospel, nor of the real lambs of Christ, but only give us an account how religion went on in the world, and how things were approved or disapproved among the nations, and in the worldly church. {Dispensationalist writer J.N. Darby went on to say many years later that, "the yearbooks of Christianity are the yearbooks of hell."} But how things have been in every age with the children of light, nothing can be particularly known, only what may be gathered from the prophecies in the Scripture; and according to the best that I can gather, I think, from the time that formality and the spirit of the world began to make great advances in the visible church, till the time that false doctrine, false worship, superstition and idolatry became universal, this to me appears to be a time of the greatest difficulty that ever the

New Testament Church has been tried with; for in the days of the Apostles there was some degree of purity, and since the beast of Anti-Christ obtained full dominion, the church has had a safe retreat in the wilderness, and the Dragon and his angels cast out into the earth; but while the true Christians continued embodied with the false, and the dragon and his angels maintained war in heaven, we may well suppose it a dreadful conflict, the believers endeavoring to maintain the truth of Christ against a superior number, who were endeavoring to corrupt it, yet retaining some hopes of prevailing, and not seeing their way clear to quit the worldly church, until it was evident the Lord had utterly left the main body of professors, and then it was high time for all those individuals that feared God to leave them also. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." After this separation, the Dragon being cast out of heaven, and the True Church taken into the protection of her Lord and Saviour, still the dragon remained in the earth; the saints having left him and his seed together, there was none to molest or oppose his ravage. Then we have given us in this prophecy, a general hint of the progress of Popery, in the darkness of the bottomless pit, the devouring locusts, and the king they had over them; but no particular account what should be transacted by any of their popes, forasmuch as whatever was done among them could not affect the children of God, who have no connection with them. Then there is a general hint of the outrages of the Mohammedan powers, under the similitude of four angels loosed; these appear to be raised up as a punishment upon the false professors of Christ. These are not much spoken of as deceivers; as they do not profess to believe in Christ, they are not of Antichrist, whatever other deception may be among them; they are rather spoken of as destroyers, to lay the earth waste by an external plague, or overspreading of armies; and nothing appears pointed out distinctly of their particular empires or governments, either of any particular acts of the immediate successors of Mohammad, the Caliphs of Babylon, the Saracens, or the Turks, but all considered as one body. After these, the papists having to the utmost of their power shut up the Holy Scriptures from the people, we have a representation of Christ holding his Testament open in his hand, to give light to the world; this was accomplished at the time called the Reformation, when many stood up against that imposition of the church of Rome, and maintained, that it was the right of all men to have the free perusal of the Word of God; and since that time the blessing has been enjoyed in many nations; this has been, and is, a matter of rejoicing to the children of God. Notwithstanding I make no doubt, that wherever any of the children of God were, in any age or nation, the Lord would grant them his Word, for he has bound himself by Covenant, to give it to all the true seed. {Is.59:21} But perhaps they might obtain it with greater difficulty; beside, it is now laid open to the world, that if any does not pay attention to it, they are left without excuse. Not that the Reformation is of much signification to the nations, only delivering them from popish tyranny; but as to the benefit of the word of truth, the people in general appear as ignorant of it, and as unconcerned about it, as if they had never seen the Scriptures; and those that profess to follow it seldom pay any regard to it further than they imagine it speaks, or they can construe it to speak, according to the traditions they have already imbibed; for they fancy there was no church but the church of Rome, before the Reformation. It is true, there was no other church in this part of the earth that made a show in the world; neither is there yet, for all the Protestant churches are no other than branches of the church of Rome reformed; and reformation only alters the mode, it never changes the substance; therefore, if the church of Rome be a false church, no church reformed from her can be a true church. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, not an old creature reformed; the children of God are spiritually gathered one by one, not brought in bodies together formed from the old rubbish. The Lord has had a church in all ages, but she has long been, and still is in the wilderness; therefore, in those days she was unknown to Papists, and to this day is as much unknown to Protestants. For the seven thunders uttered by the reformers, after the mighty angel {Jesus Christ} had cried with a loud voice, were forbidden to be written, because they were of man, and not of the Spirit of God; for had those men been true followers of the

Lamb, they would have obeyed his voice; "Come out of her, my people;" but they did not come out as Lot came out of Sodom, but stayed to reform the city Babylon, for which God had never given direction; and the nations they reformed only changed the mode, but continued still upon the same foundation of national churches, or at least they retained many of the old traditions, like the nations whom the king of Assyria placed in the cities of Samaria. {II Kgs.17:32-34} The children of light eat the word of life, and it is in their mouth sweet as honey, but their bellies are made bitter to see the Holy Testimony so disregarded by the professors of the nations and in the same position as they were before, they must prophecy again, the peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings, being governed by the same carnal principles as they were. And it is by these bodies of people and nations we may expect the two witnesses of God to be killed, which are no other than the testimony of the Son of God and of the Spirit of truth; for among the Papists the testimony is so far banished already, that there appears very little left to be killed, nor even do they retain the dead bodies, or empty form of gospel truth; but those by whom these witnesses shall be killed, will still retain something of the dead form of doctrine and worship; and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And we may observe, the Holy One swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, "That there should be time no longer;" or, that this should be the last time of trial to the world, and that there shall be no other general revolution or manifestation of God to the nations, till the seventh angel shall sound; therefore we may conclude, that the Protestants of all denominations will be the people, who, in the spirit of the beast of Antichrist, by their dull and dry forms, and their carnal winds of doctrine, shall make war, and shall overcome, and kill the truth of the Son of God, and the testimony of the Spirit of holiness. Upon the whole we may observe, that every part of this prophecy is entirely directed to the saints of the Most High, and nothing is contained therein, but what is for their benefit to know; and the facts represented relate either to the blessings of the gospel, or the oppositions which Satan makes against the gospel; or else to the destruction of the enemies, and the happy consummation of the saints. And the war so much spoken of is of a spiritual or mystical nature, Satan going about in a religious dress, to undermine or confound the truth of Christ, to decoy the young lambs of Jesus, and deceive the world with a false Christ. The malignant beast has no respect to kingdoms, empires, and worldly powers; those do not affect the children of light; for all the monarchs upon earth cannot bring one soul to Jesus Christ, nor prevent one from coming to him. All the concern the saints have with them, is only to submit to every ordinance of man, in civil matters; and pray for those in authority, that we, under them, may lead peaceable and quiet lives; for it may be in their power to molest and persecute, or it may be in their power to grant peace and liberty; and they may countenance and support false worship, but in the things of the kingdom of God it is impossible they should have any influence; for Christ hath said, "My kingdom is not of this world." Therefore nothing in the Book of the Revelation is intended as a description of any earthly powers or states, otherwise than as some hints might be necessary to illustrate the things relative to the spiritual warfare of the church. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Christ our Altar**

"And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." {Rev.8:3} This angel could be no other but the Lord Jesus Christ; called an angel, as he was the great Messenger of the Lord of hosts. For he is represented executing the priest's office; and the gospel church knows no priest, but the Son of God. He came from God, and stood at the altar, to execute the high priest's office, to which he was appointed. {Ps.104:10} When the altar is simply mentioned without any distinguishing epithet, we understand the great brazen altar for burnt offerings and sacrifices; this is a representation of the Son of God, in taking away sin by the sacrifice of

himself. The human nature being the sacrifice, the Eternal Spirit is the altar whereby it is sanctified. {Heb.9:14} Here stood the holy one, when he gave his life a ransom for us; himself being both altar, sacrifice, and priest. {Heb.13:10} Upon this altar of brass, he stood the fiery trial; and he still stands by it, not offering sacrifice, for this he did once when he offered up himself, but as our Advocate, pleading before the throne, the virtue of that one perfect sacrifice. {Heb.9:12, 10:14} But now, having made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness, he is represented in his own perfection, by the golden altar before the throne, where he is about to offer the holy incense; but the fire to burn the incense, must be taken from the great altar of the fire which came down from heaven. And thus every believer by faith beholds him first standing at the altar of the great sacrifice, and then approaching the altar of sweet savor. The golden altar is Christ himself; the incense is the fullness which the Father pleased should dwell in him; the censer is his human nature, in which that fullness dwells, {Col.1:19, 2:9,} and the fire is the vital flame of the Eternal Spirit; and this incense is offered with the prayers of all saints. {The golden altar before the throne of God was a clear representation of Christ in his ascended glory, the priest that approached the altar was a representation of Christ in his high office; and the incense offered thereon was a representation of Christ in his essential preciousness, as the delight of God, ascending in his effectual intercession to give access to the prayers of his people. This altar was of shittim wood, a figure of the human nature, it was entirely covered with gold, to show that the man Christ Jesus is perfectly enfolded in the Divine Essence and the horns were of the very same, which were both for ornament and defense, and might resemble the love, the truth, the wisdom, and the power of Christ; going forth towards his church. - As Christ is the altar, with all its appurtenances, the sacrifice, the fire, the incense, &c., so we must take heed that we embrace nothing as matter of redemption, righteousness, peace, purification, or acceptance with God, but what is of Christ alone, for nothing can come before God acceptably, but alone in his Holy One.} This holy fire of the altar {Christ} must diffuse the sweet savor through their whole souls, as the experience of every believer testifies. For he beholds the extirpation of sin by the great atonement; then he beholds the golden altar, Christ in his absolute perfection, before the Father; then he beholds the fullness of grace and truth which dwells in Jesus, offered in his intercession; and in the golden bowl, the word of truth, the sweet savor is brought to his conscience, where it is kindled into a vital flame by the Spirit of Holiness. And in this spirit, he comes by prayer and supplication to his Father which is in heaven, and finds access to the throne of grace. "And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." {vs.4} Christ offered himself to God for a sweet smelling savor; and forasmuch as he is the ultimate delight of God, whatever he does is well pleasing to the Father; and whatever soul he presents to the Father, is accepted. Incense made according to the direction of the Lord, is the richest composition, sends the most delightful perfume, and is the most precious odor that can be produced by the hands of man. The man Christ, in the essential perfection of the Divine Nature, is the glory of all excellency; the object of the highest delight that God could possibly bring forth. Therefore, this is the height of all blessedness, that the saints are presented before the throne of God, in this most pleasant odor; their persons having access to God, and their prayers made acceptable in him that is the brightness of all glory; for whatever delight the Father has in his beloved Son, he has the same in them; his incense and their prayers ascend in perfect conjunction, directly before God, out of the hand of the great High Priest, from whose hand nothing ever was rejected of the Father. Therefore, as the excellency of the riches and fullness of the glory of the Son of God, is presented to his Father in behalf of his saints, and their souls offered therewith, in the living fire of the spirit of holiness, they are incontestably as perfectly accepted in the sight of the Father, as the Son of God himself is, {Is.45:7, Ez.20:41, Jn.17:23,} and their prayers presented in the faith of the Son of God, and in the breathing of the spirit of grace, are as certain to be heard, and their petitions granted, as

that the God of truth exists. {Mt.21:22, Jn.15:7, I Jn.3:22} John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Christ our Prophet**

Christ is made known to us by his Word, and in no other way; consequently no man can know him, or confess him, who does not, with all his heart and soul attend to the Word of the Gospel of Christ. But whosoever does in meekness and sincerity, as moved upon by the Spirit of truth, apply his whole mind to the Word of God, in order to obtain the knowledge of the truth, without looking for it in any other way, or from any other source, the same confesses the Lord Jesus Christ as the true Prophet of God; by whose Spirit all Scripture was given. That soul is certain to find the knowledge of God; {PV.2:1-5;} and he that does, with all his intellectual powers, confess Christ as the Great Prophet; the same will confess him, in all his other offices and characters. For he that believes the Word indeed and in truth, will believe whatsoever that Word relates, so far as he is given understanding, and the Lord has opened his heart to attend to the things that are spoken therein. {PV.8:17, Jer.29:13, Jn.8:31,32} That soul cannot be left to walk in darkness, but the true similitude of the Lord shall he behold, and will confess him with all his heart. The Word of God is Christ himself in the openings of all the councils of God, the love of the Father, the fullness of the Son, and the power of the Holy Ghost. Therefore if we duly attend to the Scripture Record, we shall see the Lord of glory in all his offices, characters, excellencies, and perfections which shine in this word of Life. In this word the saints behold the glory of the Lord, whereby they are changed into the same image. {II Cor.3:18} And in this attention to the Word of Christ, implies a diligent searching of the Scriptures, wherein all the will of God is contained; that we may be grounded in the truth of the Sacred Record; and that we may behold the excellency that shines in the Holy One, whereby our souls may be enlightened, enlarged, and enriched into the boundless blessings of the Lord, Emmanuel; and in this search the soul is quite alert, as if searching for gold and seeking for hidden treasure; for, knowing that all the Scriptures testify of Christ, he compares the words of one Prophet, with another; the words of one Apostle, with another; and the true import of the Old Testament, with the clear manifestation in the New; yea, he diligently ponders the historical parts with the Prophecies and Epistles, until he sees the harmony, and consistency of the whole; and till he sees Christ to be the Light and Truth, the Life and Power, the Alpha and Omega of all the Divine Oracles. Thus he comes to understand the true fear of the Lord, and finds the knowledge of God in Christ. He beholds the Gospel of the Son of God, as a perfect mirror of the Divine will; and there he beholds the shining forth of the glory of the Lord. Thus obeying the direction given by the Son of God, {Jn.5:39,} he confesses Christ the great Prophet, to be all in all. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Christ the Bread of Life**

The high priest attended in all the feasts appointed to the children of Israel. {Lev.23:10,11, 20, Deut.26:4} The Son of God, our great High Priest, prepares for his people a perpetual feast, so plenteous, so rich, so well adapted, and so satisfying, that he hath proclaimed unto us, "he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." This feast, for its richness, elegance, and extensiveness, is thus described by the prophet. "And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." {Is.25:6} And David, thus expresses his satisfaction and joy in this heavenly feast, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters." "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." And again, "they shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of

thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures." But the excellency thereof is not to be described by any but Himself; nor to be understood by any but those that have tasted his bounty. Christ declares its Divine original. "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." He explains what it is. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven." He testifies of its effects. "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." But to conceive of its perfection, we must with the utmost deliberation, pursue the whole relation of this vital provision. "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed." {Jn.6:27} "This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead; he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." {Jn.6:58} This, his flesh and blood, is real meat and drink to every believing soul. Not corporeally fed upon as papists dream; nor chimerically fed upon as enthusiasts vainly fancy; nor insensibly received, as formal professors endeavor to impose upon themselves; for the believer distinctly understands the nature of the food that he lives upon, and the life he enjoys thereby, very intelligible and familiar as the Lord has expressed it, so it is to their souls. "My flesh is meat indeed." Christ flesh contains all the fullness that dwells in him. "The Word was made flesh." "God was manifest in the flesh." "It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Thus, his flesh is his essence; all that he is; all the perfection that exists in the Person, Nature and Being of Emmanuel; this is meat indeed, and gives life indeed to every believing soul. "And my blood is drink indeed." That is, his sufferings, the laying down of his life, or all that he wrought in the form of a servant, and performed for the redemption of his Church. "This cup is the New Testament in my blood." His death, with the virtues, and effects thereof is what the believer receives into his soul, and finds it true cordial receiving drink indeed. The intellectual powers are revived, strengthened, comforted and enlarged, with peace, joy, hope, and strong consolation, through spiritual believing views, in humble serene contemplations of the Son of God, by faith beholding, and in love enjoying, with the faculties of the believing mind, what Christ is in Himself, and what he has done for his people; the inner man as sensibly eats and drinks, and is as sensibly nourished with this spiritual aliment, as ever any person was in the outward man, by feeding on bodily substance. There is no such thing as persons receiving Christ in an imperceptible manner, by some unintelligible conveyance; for the feast is so rich, and the food so lively, that to everyone that receives it, it is very manifestly, sensibly, and experimentally - life from the dead. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." John Johnson {Christ - the Great High Priest, 1776}

### **Christ the Faithful & True Witness**

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." {Rev.1:8} These two characters, Alpha and Omega, being the first and last letters in the alphabet of that language, in which this book, and the chief of the New Testament was written, were intentionally mentioned, both in this, and divers other places, to direct us to the fullness of the written word. For all that is written in the holy volume, relates to the Son of God; and all that can be known of Jesus Christ, is contained in the sacred word. He is the beginning and the ending of all the counsels, works and ways of God, of everything that does, or ever did, or ever shall proceed from God; and of all the blessings that are, or ever were, or ever shall be enjoyed by men. For he is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty; possessing all the perfections of the Father. For the Father dwells in the Son, and the Son in the Father; so as they are absolutely, indivisibly, and essentially one. Whatever is ascribed to the Father, whether essence, attributes, will, words, or works, the same is ascribed to the Son. What the one is, the other is; and this is the foundation of our faith. - "These things saith the Amen; the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God." {Rev.3:14} Our Lord Jesus

Christ is the beginning of the creation of God, as he was the First of all, in the Divine Counsel, Sovereign Will, and Delight of the Father. {Prov.8:22-30} And by the going forth of the same perfect wisdom, power, and goodness which now goes forth in the Man Christ Jesus, all the beings in the creation were made. {Jn.1:1-3, 14} For all the works of nature, in the creation, and all the manifestations of grace, in the word of truth, which were before the actual appearing of the Lord of glory, were no other than signals of his approach; and proceeded immediately from Himself, as the rays of light in the morning dawn proceed from the sun, and betoken his appearing. He was not the first born of every creature, with respect to the actual coming forth of the man in time; but in that he was first, for excellency and dignity, in the Eternal Purpose; the ultimate perfection of all things, in the all-comprehending mind of his Father, and that nothing in the creation of God ever had any existence but in Himself. {Col.1:15-18} And next in place, his church was formed for his delight; {Prov.8:31, Eph.1:22,23;} and then, for his pleasure, and as servants to his church, all the rest of beings were created. {Deut.32:8,9, Heb.1:14, Rev.4:11} He is the faithful and true witness, in that he testifies of his Father's love, and opens his eternal counsels towards his church; in taking his everlasting residence in our nature, and manifesting the mystery of divine wisdom and love; {I Tim.3:16;} in opening to us the depths of the bosom of the eternal mind; {Jn.1:18;} sealing this love with his blood; {Rom.5:8;} in his appearing now as our Representative before the throne; {Heb.7:25, 9:12, 24;} in giving us the word of his grace; {Jn.17:14;} and in anointing us with his Holy Spirit. {II Cor.1:21,22} As he also stands our Witness, in the presence of the Father, to maintain our cause; {Rom.8:34;} and will be a faithful witness in the day of judgment. {Mt.25:34-40} He also is the Amen, the perfect Truth of God, the Ratifier of all his revealed will, the Accomplisher of all the promises of God. {II Cor.1:20} Whatever grace he begins, he completes; {Phil.1:6;} whom he saves, can never be lost. {Jn.10:28,29} Where he gives his Spirit, he never takes it away. {Jn.14:16, Hag.2:5} He will complete his work in the resurrection; {Phil.3:21;} and establish it in eternal glory. {Jn.17:24} John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Christ the Wisdom of God**

"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth. I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me." {Pro.8:15-16} All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God and is the voice of the Spirit of Truth; but who the Holy Ghost is pleased to personate in the Sacred Oracles it behooves us diligently to attend to, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual; or by comparing one part of the Divine testimony with another. For, without understanding by whom, or in whose name a sentence is uttered, we cannot know the mind of God therein contained; and consequently, we cannot be edified or enjoy the benefit of such a part of the heavenly council. The author of the words before us is called Wisdom; not as a quality or endowment; for, as such, wisdom may exist in creatures, and be applied to many things; but as a personal proper name, in which sense it belongs to none but the Son of God. "I Wisdom dwell with prudence;" {8:12;} and, in another place, the Holy Ghost calls him, "Christ the wisdom of God;" {I Cor.1:24;} and the characters which he bears, and the works ascribed to him, through the first part of the book of Proverbs, and particularly in this chapter are such as cannot be true of any other but the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He says, "I lead in the way of righteousness," "that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance, &c." {vs.20,21} None but Emmanuel can lead in the way of righteousness, for he only is the LORD our Righteousness; and God has given him for a "leader and commander to the people." {Is.54:4} Neither can any other cause to inherit substance; seeing he is "heir of all things," and that it "pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Again, speaking of his eternity with God, he says "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, &c." {vs.30} But God never did express any delight in any being, but his beloved Son;

and if he has expressed any delight in any of his works or creatures, it is only as they stand in relation or subordination to the Son of his love, in whom he expresses the highest pleasure and satisfaction. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth." {Is.42:1} And, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." {Mt.3:17} Further, speaking of the sons of men, he says "whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the LORD." {vs.35} But no soul ever found life in any but the Christ of God; for he only is the life. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." {I Jn.5:11,12} Thus, I am well assured that it is the Lord Redeemer, and no other, who hath pronounced these words, "by me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." The Lord Jesus is Sovereign Lord of all the creation of God and therefore he disposes of all government as he pleases; and neither his honor, nor his goodness to his subjects, can admit him to suffer any power to usurp his Absolute Dominion, or wrest his Authority out of his hand. Nor can any created wisdom elude his Omniscience or any force resist his Omnipotence; neither can neglect or disregard give opportunity for any to intrude upon the property of Him who neither slumbers nor sleeps. John Johnson {Jesus the King of Kings, 1761}

### **Church in the Wilderness**

"And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." {Rev.12:6} The travail of the saints to see Christ brought forth in the glory of his gospel in the world, and the riches of his grace in his church, in the abundance of life in their souls and in their communities, was not a period of a few days; nor was the bringing forth, one transient act; for it continued several hundred years. For her flight into the wilderness does not appear to be fully completed, till Antichrist was grown so powerful that he actually took the throne in the nominal church, {II Thes.2:4,} not when he first began to appear, for that he did in the days of the apostles, {I Jn.2:18,} but when he obtained despotic power, so as the voice of truth could be no longer heard. And this absolute dominion he openly proclaimed, in setting up a viceroy, or lord lieutenant, the pope, to govern in his name, and put his laws in execution. The pope, or popish power, is not the Antichrist, nor did the pope ever govern all the kingdom of Antichrist, but being one of his chief captains, he ruled with arrogance, so far as his jurisdiction extended, with such arbitrary and uncontrolled dominion, as showed his master to be an absolute despotic monarch. And now it was high time for the subjects of the King of glory to quit the camp, and speed their flight, going forth after their Lord, bearing his reproach. {Heb.13:13} This flight was a great victory, like that of the departure of Israel out of Egypt; for now it did appear, that all the wiles of Satan could no longer deceive, nor was all his power able to hold them in bondage. How long the saints had been in removing, or preparing for their removal, before their total departure, or whether they all fled together at the same time, we cannot tell; for all the writers of church history give us no intelligence respecting the real children of light; all they inform us relates only to the outer court, and the worldly sanctuary. But a safe retreat was actually prepared for the Lord's hidden ones, and thither their God carried them; and there they dwell unto this day, sequestered from the religious professing world; and so shall remain, till the time of the reign of the beast shall be fulfilled. The Holy Ghost has given us to understand the time of the total flight of the church, from the habitation of false worshippers, in that he has stated it as coeval with the unresisted usurpation of the beast of Antichrist; and that her continuance in the wilderness, and his dominion, shall be of the same duration, and they shall both terminate at the same period. For a time, times, and half a time, forty and two months, and a thousand two hundred and threescore days, all come to the same measure; and so long as the beast reigns, the Gentiles shall tread underfoot the holy city, and so long as the church is in the wilderness, the two witnesses shall prophecy in sackcloth. At this

day, the children of God are unknown to the world, but hid and fed in the wilderness. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Confessing Christ**

When the Lord was pleased to call any man to his Kingdom, his usual speech to him was, "follow me;" and his general direction is the same to all, "if any man serve me, let him follow me;" and the description of his select disciples, is this, "these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." But no man can be a follower of the Christ of God, who does not openly confess his Name. Christ was an Ensign lifted up; "in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious;" and his disciples are a city set on a hill; and appointed to be a light to the world. But whatever show people make, or however strict they be in external conversation; they bring no glory to Christ, so long as they do not boldly confess Him, as their Lord and their God, to make it manifest, to whom their lives are completely devoted. To confess the Son of God is to acknowledge him according to the Record which the Father hath given of him; to ascribe glory to him, in the most strong and pointed manner; so as to express the deepest impressions of the heart; or that our souls are perfectly devoted to him; in firm persuasion of mind, trust, love, submission, obedience, hope, delight, &c., and that all our intellectual powers embrace him as our all in all; and this is both to God, and before men. For the believing soul cannot keep silent. These confess him by a free and open declaration of their faith in the Holy One of God; whereby they acknowledge him, verily to be what he is; {as set forth in Holy Scripture and invariably inscribed upon the heart by the testimony of the Holy Spirit;} that he is, the Son of the living God. Mt.16:16, Jn.1:49. That he came from the Father, in all the Divine fullness. Jn.6:57, Col.1:19. That he is the true God and eternal life. Jn.20:28, I Jn.5:20. That he is Emmanuel, very God in our nature. Jn.1:14, I Jn.4:2,15. That he is the one Mediator between God and man. I Tim.2:5, Heb.8:6. That he is the Redeemer, Sanctifier, and Savior of his people. Eph.1:7, Heb.2:11, I Jn.4:14. That he is the true Prophet, Priest and King in his Church. Deut.18:18, Ps.110:4. Mk.11:10. That he is the Righteousness of all his Saints. Jer.23:6, II Cor.5:21. That he is the only way to the Father. Jn.14:6, Eph.2:18. That he is the brightness of all glory. II Cor.4:6, Heb.1:3. That he is the life their souls now enjoy; Gal.2:20, Col.3:3,4; and that he is their hope of eternal glory. Col.1:27, Tit.2:13. They confess the Lord of glory, when they present praise and thanksgiving to God by him; ascribing glory and blessing to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ. Heb.13:15, Eph.3:21. That which by the psalmist is called, giving thanks; Ps.18:49; is by the Apostle called, confession. Rom.15:9. If we ascribe praise to the Father, with understanding, by Jesus Christ, we give equal glory to the Son, as to the Father; forasmuch as all the glory of the Father shines in Him. Jn.5:23, Acts 3:13. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Contending for the True Gospel of God's Grace in Christ**

To the genuine disciples of the true Messiah; the ensuing lines are devoutly dedicated. To them who utterly explode all human tradition; and entirely relinquish all manner of doctrines {respecting heavenly things} but that alone, which is contained in the written oracles of God; which may be depended on, as the very truth of the Lord of Glory; being the Infallible Record of the Spirit of Holiness. To them whose hearts are devoted, to learn, understand, and embrace the truth and the life of that sacred Word, in its whole extent, as it relates to the Council and Glory of God; and in its true intent, as it is directed to our very heart and soul, and as it is adapted to guide our minds into the excellency of the Knowledge of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. To them that cry day and night, to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to bless them with the spirit of his beloved Son, to open

their understanding, to take away the veil of carnal mindedness from their hearts, and guide them into the light and life, spirit and truth, power and glory of the Gospel of his Grace, that they may be replenished with the special blessings of his love; and all their mental powers may enter into the abundant fullness of the Kingdom of God, and of his Christ. Without these things, no man can be a true disciple of Christ, nor can he enter into the kingdom of heaven, nor attend to the commandments of the Lord, nor confess the Son of God in truth. The vain world, who seek their portion in the things of this present life, whether they be great or little, learned or unlearned, polite or vulgar, wise or unwise, active or indolent, sober or drunken, they pay no regard to these heavenly things. The moralists who trust in the uprightness of their lives, whether it be the regularity, order, and decency of their behavior; or it be their negative righteousness, as innocency, or having done no hurt; or their positive righteousness, as virtue, or having done good, these do not seek the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The religious, who think to please God with their devotion; whether zealously following human superstitions, fervently attending to some particular precepts, or favorite points, as gathered from the Scriptures; devoutly performing some tasks, which they have devised and imposed upon themselves, or taking satisfaction from some pathetic agitations, ecstatic raptures, or energy of the mind in their devotion, these are not seeking the Holy One of God in truth. They that imagine they know God, either from the common notions and sentiments of men in general, from the acuteness of their own wit, from the wisdom learned in schools, or handed to them in traditions; or in any visionary or enthusiastic way, none of these know the true God. They that pretend to faith, either as a natural operation, wrought by their own endeavors; who join good works with faith in the matter of justification; whose faith lives upon frames, feelings, and good dispositions; whose faith receives its life from their works; whose faith depends upon impulses, sudden impressions, or something immediately darted into the mind; whose faith is only a strong presumption fermented through the power of imagination; or whose faith is only a dead faith, consisting in opinion or speculation, without the living fruits of love, humility, repentance, obedience, and holy conversation in Christ; none of these knows or truly believes on the Son of God. The mystic, who under pretense of spiritualizing, turns all the Word of God into fancy and conjecture, paying more attention to the imaginations of his own brain, than to the true Concord of Divine Revelation, or to the light which one part of Scripture gives to another, so confounding the natural things with the spiritual, that the truth of both is lost, for the natural things being perverted, the spiritual things which those natural things were intended to illustrate are obscured; these never did behold the Gospel in spirit and life. The sophist, who goes about to invent, or propagate new doctrines or systems in divinity, or to maintain some peculiar opinions by forcing his own natural glosses on the sacred truths contained in the Scripture; these do not seek the truth, as it is in Christ. The Arminians, who represent the Gospel as a new or mitigated Law; proposing grace upon certain terms, or conditions to be performed by the creature; or to be obtained by the power, and free will of man; and his grace, when thus obtained, having its dependence on the creature's virtue, is liable to be lost any day; so that God not being all in all, it neither brings true glory to God, nor true consolation to the soul; these are all strangers to the riches of sovereign grace, and to the Glory of God in Christ. - Now my dearly beloved brethren, whosoever you are; or wheresoever you may be found; "which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh;" to you I write these things, to stir you up by way of remembrance, and to awake your attention, that you may not sleep as others, but that you may watch against the strong delusions which the sons of antichrist have introduced, and are introducing to pervert the Gospel and beguile unstable souls. That you may be fortified against all the policy of the gates of hell, the stratagems of the Prince of darkness, and assaults of the wicked one. That you be not tossed to and fro, nor carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. For antichrist never was more formidable, than he is in this day; and the only weapon to be used against the beast

of the bottomless pit is the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Counterfeit Christianity**

"And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast; and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast; who is able to make war with him?" {Rev.13:4} The dragon is the devil, and the beast is his offspring. Now, if we duly observe, we do not find gross outward abominable practices, and wretched filthy communications charged upon the devil, called works of the flesh. The things imputed to the devil, are such as tend to give false ideas of God; to degrade his excellency, or fix some false conception of his perfection, his works, his word, his worship, &c., to draw men aside to some idolatry, which they call religion. It is true, the word religion may be applied to things that are just; and once in Scripture, I find it used in a good sense; {James 1:27;} but in that place, it is not applied to the worship of God, but to an upright conversation among men; but through vain custom, the word is now become so corrupted, that it is seldom heard, but what it naturally conveys some corrupt idea. I do not understand this beast to intend all the religion in the world; as Heathen, Mahometanism, &c., for though these are of the devil, they are not his masterpiece, as the Antichristian beast is; so when I read of this beast, I neither conceive it to be anything more, nor anything less, than what is commonly meant, and commonly understood, by the word Christian religion. In worshipping this beast, they, of consequence, worshipped the dragon, the devil, from whom the beast received life. All idolatry is of the devil; and whosoever worships any idol, is a worshipper of the devil; in whose name and place, and by whose power, that idol is set up. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils." {I Cor.10:20} And all that follow a Christ, as he is described, or set up, by the wisdom of men; these, under pretense of being worshippers of Christ, are only worshippers of a false Christ, a being which has its existence from the suggestions of devils, and the phantasms of men's brains. It is impossible to worship the true God, if they do not know him, and it is impossible to know the true God by the teachings of any man, without receiving it from the pure word of truth. {Acts 17:11} Therefore that image which is impressed upon their brains, by these false representations, presented by men, but coming originally from Satan {and whose picture soever he pretends to draw, he never paints any real image but his own} this is the thing they worship. Yet, forasmuch as they are ignorant of the true Christ, they have no conception of any other, but the false image which floats in their bewitched brain; and they fancy that delusive religion which they follow, is superior to everything, and that they can challenge and defy any being in heaven or earth to overthrow it. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Deceptions of Antichrist**

"And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven." {Rev.13:6} The spirit of falsehood and delusion opens his mouth in the mouths of them in whom he dwells; and the most religious people are the most detestable blasphemers; for while the abominable wretches of the profane world blaspheme the name of God in derision, and bid him open defiance, these blaspheme his name with serious grimace, as if they did it by sanction, and maintain their blasphemous assertions as if they were heavenly doctrines; which is much more bewitching, and tends more to establish base ideas of God in the minds of men, than those of the most abominable conversation, or the openly wicked in the street. They {like Arminians, and all who tread in their unhallowed paths} blaspheme the name of God, and make it contemptible, by the mean, base, low, degrading light in which they represent the God of

glory, in all his ways and works, even when they pretend to praise and magnify him. In like manner they blaspheme his tabernacle; the Son of his love, the delight of his soul, in whom the Godhead dwells. Yea, they blaspheme them that dwell in heaven; even the God of all grace, in all his glorious characters, relations, and manifestations; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, the Three that bear record in heaven, which Three are One, by the most dishonorable and inglorious representations, when they mock them with feigned adoration, they make them the scorn of fools. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." {Rev.13:8} The deceptions of a false Christ, and a false profession, are certain to prevail over them whose dwelling, and portion, and names are written in the earth. Some exceptions may be; but in general, it is not at all a difficult matter to persuade persons to be religious; for in all religion, in common, there is something adapted to the fleshly mind, to gratify the carnal principle. {Note: Religion is the element of false professors; but the truth, as it is in Jesus, is the element of believers. The word religion is seldom heard in a believer's mouth; the meaning of it is so general and so vague, it conveys no determinate idea; only it supposes some kind of duty, homage, or devotion, paid to some being, either to the true God, or the devil. But they that seek truth choose to avoid ambiguity, and use such expressions as are peculiar to the thing intended; as, the faith of Christ; to be born again; to worship God in spirit & truth; to keep the ordinances as they were delivered, &c., and the saints are certain to rejoice, when they gain the victory over the world's idol, religion; leaving it to them that feed upon husks with the swine, that themselves may enjoy the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free, to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.} For as it is of men's own invention, they are sure to form the image to please themselves; and they order it so suitable to their own taste, that they worship it, and give it such an alluring aspect, that those who know not the true God, are easily induced to join with them in the devotion; for what Jesus Christ is to the believer, that religion is in the imagination of the carnal professor; they adore it, fancying it to be divine, and trust in it for salvation; they admire and serve it with zeal and fervency, and are all in a flame if it be opposed; for men are strongly addicted to worship the works of their own hands, and the imaginations of their own hearts. I never yet knew any denomination of professors, taking them as a denomination in a body, but more than nine tenths of their religion was the tradition of men; notwithstanding the great noise they make about the Holy Scripture and pretending to make it their standard. And indeed they are very tenacious of some parts of Scripture, the sound whereof seems to please them; and dropping the spirit and life, with a little of their own comment upon the letter, they set them up for posts and boundaries; but they are commonly so mutilated, and set up in such a straggling manner, that they signify very little, only as cyphers. So that all the dwellers upon earth are worshippers of the beast, except the elect few. In the fore-ordination of God, the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, the Son of his love, was slain from the foundation of the world, {I Pet.1:20,} and in the same everlasting appointment, all God's elect were secured in his book of life, engraven in the bosom of the Father's love, before the world began. {Jn.17:23,24, Eph.1:4, Tit.1:2} These the Father sent the Son to redeem, and to bring them to God; the Son brings them, presents them to the Father, and commends them to his care; the Father seals them with his Holy Spirit, and establishes them secure upon the Rock, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. "My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Divine Authority of Holy Scripture**

Concerning the Holy Scriptures, our antagonist says, "but I hope that I may safely say, as was wrote of John the Baptist; they are not that light, but sent to bear witness of that light." This is a sophistical artifice, by making use of a Scripture expression to impose upon

the unwary. But his design plainly appears, to degrade the sacred record that God gave of his Son. Jesus Christ is the true light, "in whom is hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." And as the knowledge of the Father cannot be revealed any other way than through the Son, so the knowledge of Christ is no way manifested to any man, but alone in the Word of Truth. Therefore the Scriptures are that light to us; forasmuch as the light, fullness, wisdom, power, truth, life, love, grace, glory, and all the perfections of Christ shine therein. Neither is there any other vehicle, whereby the light which dwells in the Son of God can be conveyed to us; nor can we behold his glory through any other medium. Some persons tell us that the Scriptures are not God; the Scriptures are not Christ; the Scriptures are not the Holy Ghost, &c., but he whose word they are, and whose will is therein revealed, is God; he whose light and truth shines therein is Christ; and he whose wisdom and power is therein displayed is the Holy Ghost. But they say that the Scripture is paper and ink, the writing of men, a dead letter, &c., but this is a most base insult upon that God whose record it is, whose truth it contains, and whose stamp it bears. The Holy Ghost does not speak of it as paper and ink, or as the handiwork of the scribes that wrote it, or as a dead letter; but as the power of God, the Testament of his Christ, and the Word of life. It is true, that these blessings are communicated by means of paper and ink, &c., and so are all the edicts of the king, statutes of the realm, deeds of conveyance or a person's last will and testament. But the matters therein contained are wisdom, counsel, sacred determinations and authoritative decrees; and it would be great contempt cast upon the authors of those acts to treat them as inconsiderable or diminish their virtue. They are the very will, truth, spirit and mind of him that published them; the intentions of his heart, represented in those certain modes; and those representations bear a sacred stamp; and wherever they come, they carry the same authority as the authors own presence. Our Lord directs us to the Scriptures alone for instruction concerning Himself; for he has promised his Holy Spirit to guide his disciples into all truth; and says, "he shall teach you all things;" {but he points out the way of his teaching,} "and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." His work therefore is to open the heart to receive those precious truths which Christ hath spoken, and which the Spirit of Truth himself hath inspired his servants to write in the oracles of God; and to cause those Divine testimonies to make a spiritual impression upon the mind; not as an empty sound to the ears, but as life to the soul. And thus, through the power of the Holy Ghost, the Gospel is made unto all that believe, what, in itself, it truly is; "the power of God unto Salvation." So long as the vision and prophecy were incomplete, the Holy Ghost continued, from time to time to manifest his will to his servants in visions and revelations, which he directed them to write, for the use of his Church, until he had revealed his whole will, and given us a perfect system of Divine Truth in the Holy Scriptures; and then he sealed up the vision and prophecy, and pronounced the heaviest of curses upon whosoever should presume to add or diminish thereto. These are therefore the days of blessedness; because "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." There is no want of spiritual knowledge, only by so much as we fall short of understanding, in this word of Truth. Nor can there be any need of any other way of communication of Divine light, seeing that the Scripture contains perfection of spiritual wisdom; and the Spirit of Truth, by whom this light is made to shine, has promised to abide forever with them that believe. By his power and special influence, the Truth of this gracious revelation is blessed to his people; so that they receive it, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." This word is called a lamp and a light; for as a lamp gives light, by reason of the oil and fire, which burns and shines therein; so the Scripture is a perfect light, by reason of that Grace and Truth which it contains; and it is the alone light that is in the world, inasmuch as Christ, the true light, manifests all his excellency therein, and in no other way. The Holy Ghost speaks of the Scripture as containing the fullness of Him who is the essential and eternal word of God; calling it "a light that shineth in a dark place;" and a just character it is; for,

our Savior Jesus Christ, "hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." John Johnson {An Occasional Review, in a Letter to a Friend, 1762}

### **Divine Authority of Holy Scripture**

Some persons cannot acknowledge the Scriptures to be the Infallible word of God; then there is no difficulty, without hesitation to pronounce that soul to be one that God cannot acknowledge as an Object of his love; for God never had any way of acknowledging anyone as a belonging to himself, but by giving them his word. "For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them." {Jn.17:8} "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." {Jn.17:14} "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God; for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." {I Thes.1:4,5} Whosoever denies his word denies God himself; and it evidences a desperately wicked heart, thus to deny the God in whose hand their life and breath is; for it always proceeds from a insensible stupidity, like the beasts that perish, that they will not lift up their rational powers to attend to the knowledge of God; or else it proceeds from dint of imaginary wit, they thinking themselves so acute in the wisdom of this world as to overthrow the wisdom of God; and they set themselves to find something in the Scripture to animadvert upon, and to tell us what is fit and what is unfit, for that God {of whom they nothing know} to reveal to his creatures. ---- It never is worth the while of anyone to reason or dispute with these persons; for their hearts are so deep involved in enmity against God, and their eyes are so determinedly closed against the light, that they will not see, and their ears are so stopped against the Truth, that they will not hearken; for they despise instruction, "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God;" they hate knowledge, therefore, "they set their mouth against the heavens;" and having no desire, but an aversion to the knowledge of God, it is vain to reason with them against the determined bias of their own minds. The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, "will not seek after God, for God is not in all his thoughts." But it may be objected that, "some of these are not wicked men; and though they deny the Scriptures to proceed from God, they are not atheists; for they do not deny the Being of God." I reply, he that rejects, despises, and tramples on all the laws, edicts and manifestoes of rightful Prince is a wicked rebel; notwithstanding he may behave cordially among his associates, who are in the same predicament with himself. So every man that despises the Word of the Living God is an avowed rebel against the King of Kings, notwithstanding he may behave with decorum amongst men; and as to their being atheists, they can be no other; for every one that is destitute of the true knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God {which it is impossible for these men to have} is an atheist in the full sense of the word; which is, to be in enmity, alienation, opposition and without God. John Johnson {Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures}

### **Divine Authority of Holy Scripture**

If we acknowledge the Most High to be a Being of such order and perfection, to grant to mankind a revelation of himself; or to give him the certain knowledge of an Object, to exercise his mental powers upon, suitable to the excellent faculties with which he has been pleased to endow him; then to inquire, where this revelation is to be found. Bring the two Testaments to the test, and let all the religious systems, all the productions of human wisdom that ever were in the world stand forth; the strained intellectuals of all the Jewish scribes and rabbis; the exquisite learning of all the heathen poets and philosophers; the soaring imaginations of Mohammed and his followers; the infallibility of the Pope and all his blinded adherents; compare them all together, and see if any of these bears any proportion

in a concordant chain, from the creation to the fullness of time, in majesty, in perspicuity, in goodness, in harmonious consistency, in depth of penetration, in adaptness to the condition of man, and in laying a foundation for eternal felicity. Nay, examine whether any of the others arise any higher than perfect childish romantic stories compared with the Scriptures of the Prophets and Apostles? If any soul be impressed with seriousness and with reverence of the God that made him, he will find no difficulty to determine where God is revealed. But I do not wonder that persons of good sense, who are yet destitute of due reverence of the Divine Majesty, that they should become deists; for they only judge of things, from what they observe in the religious world; and hearing doctrines propagated so nugatory, so indigested, so unsavory; and seeing worship so loose, so inconsistent, and so formal; they inconsiderably judge of the glorious testimony of the Divine Being, by the contradictions they view in the pretended followers thereof. But had these persons any serious desires after the knowledge of the true God, they would not suffer their minds to be prejudiced by the empty noise of common professors, but would pay deliberate attention to the word of God itself, whereby they might be convinced that these defects do not proceed from the oracles of God, but from the hypocrisy of those who falsely pretend to be guided by them, when at the same time, they pay no sincere regard to the Scripture record, but vainly follow the traditions of men, and are carried away with every empty custom that prevails in the world. Their doctrines and their worship are only taught by the precepts of men. This certainly is the fact with the greatest part of the people who profess to be directed by the Truth of God; that they have so little regard to the Divine testimony, and are so wedded to the traditions of men, that to urge anything upon them from the Scriptures, unless they think it speaks the same, as they have already learned from human teachings, one might as well present colors to a blind man, or cast feathers against the wind, or attempt to break a bar of steel with a straw. For alas, they commonly have already sucked in so many traditions of men, and have their heads so full of preconceived notions of one kind or other, that they only read the Bible to establish them in the opinions they have already imbibed. So whatever they read in the Scriptures, they fancy it favors of the same sentiments, which were their favorite ideas before. These are mere dupes to tradition, and under strong deception, for they are very positive, they have read such and such things in the Bible, when no such things were ever therein contained. There is scarce a person to be found who can be prevailed upon to give due attention to the sacred word, according to the Majestic excellency thereof. Yet some persons, instead of attending to the Sacred Testimony as the standard whereby to judge of themselves and others, they look at the common run of professors, and make them the standard whereby to judge of the record of the living God, which is as far above anything that is to be seen amongst religious people in common, as heaven is above the earth; and while this is the case, that they give no sincere attention to search for themselves, but let their minds be imposed upon, by what they observe amongst the crowd, I make no wonder they turned deists, and deny the Gospel of Salvation, and seal upon themselves eternal damnation. John Johnson {Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures}

### **Divine Authority of Holy Scripture**

To attend to any doctrines of human wisdom in things pertaining to God is to despise the goodness of God in giving us his Infallible Word and to trample on his authority in commanding us to attend to his Word alone. It is to pour contempt on God's Holy One, the great Prophet, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world to teach us all things, saying, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him." {Deut.18:18} If all that God commands be taught by Jesus Christ in his pure Gospel, then it must be a very high affront to the Son of God for us to pay any regard to the teachings of men; but some object, "that we are so weak and ignorant that we cannot understand the words of Christ without the expositions of learned men to instruct us therein;" but may I

ask this objector, did Christ direct thee to apply to learned men to tell the meaning of his word? If he did not, you do but insult Him to the last degree by suggesting that he has only mocked thee in pretending to give thee his word, when it is only given in a sealed book, which thou canst not look into; or delivered in terms so abstruse and unintelligible, as he hath not given thee a capacity to understand; but thou art reduced to the necessity of seeking instruction from that wisdom which God has declared he has made foolishness. {Is.29:14, Rom.1:22, I Cor.1:19} ---- To ascribe the knowledge of Divine things to the learning of this world would be to give the lie to the Son of God, who said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." So then, to pretend to come to any knowledge of God, any other way than by the Sacred Oracles alone, {opened unto our understanding by the same Spirit that gave them,} is such a disparagement to the Father and the Son, as no man can be guilty of, who has the true love of God in his heart. John Johnson {Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures}

### **Divine Authority of Holy Scripture**

Whatsoever is set up in the name of Christ which is not according to his direction is Antichrist; and every follower thereof is following the son of perdition. {II Thes.2:3,4,11,12} And how shall they escape if they be led by a false light? For the more light they fancy that they see, the greater the darkness is. {Mt.6:23} If anyone should say, he does not believe that any person under heaven can be saved whose faith is not built upon the infallible word of the living God, abstracted from the teaching of the very best of men, I know that it would cause an hideous outcry among the sons of antichrist. They would make the arches of hell ring with exclamations against pride, arrogance, assumption, self-conceit, dogmatical censoring, un-charitableness, rash judgment, &c., but let the noise a little subside, and I would seriously declare, that I am ready to give attention to any of them that shall point out a possibility of any man upon earth being saved from the damnation of hell, whose faith is not built upon Christ according to the record that God gave of his Son in the pure word of life, without any dependence on the wisdom or authority of man. John Johnson {Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures}

### **Divine Authority of Holy Scripture**

That light in which the wisdom of men represents the most High God is always more adapted to the carnal mind, than the light in which the word of Truth represents him. The Divine Testimony holds forth the true character of him that IS in such a light as is discustful to the carnal man, for he cannot receive it, it is foolishness to him, because it is life and truth, spirit and power. The learning of men always holds forth the great God in a sordid show of empty unmeaning words to amuse the unseasoned mind, but still leaves an idea of a mean, low, inconsiderable Being, much such an one as themselves, just suiting the carnal taste. They use great swelling words of flimsy panegyric eloquence, but it all ends in the force of rhetoric to persuade men that he is such a being as is worthy the carnal mind to approve. Yet, every sentiment is flat and diminutive; for the true life and spirit of the Divine Character has no place in all their pompous expressions. This will please fools, though there be no appearance of true majesty; or as the heathens praised and extolled their idols, with all the arts of speech, and when they had wasted their wit in bombast encomiums, they left them perfect dung gods as contemptible as brute beasts. Thus the wisdom of men does in describing the true God, for they fall as far short of the truth as the images and baubles in a puppet show fall short of the majesty of the king's court. This is the thing that makes it pleasing to man, because it is adapted to a base, earthly and carnal mind. But what is it that influences men to give delightful attention to the word of the living God? For certain it

is that all that are born of God delight in his Word as the very life of their souls, and in comparison thereof, they account all the wisdom of men as chaff and dung. The Word of his Grace they esteem above all riches, they hide it in their hearts, it is their strongest desire, their trust and hope, it is their joy and delight, and it is their life. {Psalm 119, Jer.15:16, Mt.4:4} Every soul that has true delight in the word of God does very well know by what {and whom; that is, the Spirit in giving infallible testimony to the Person & Work of Christ} he was thereto induced; that it is the majesty, the excellency, the truth and glory of God; with the loving kindness, grace, mercy, peace and goodwill to men that shines so clear in that sacred word, which is the attractive cord that first did and still does unite his heart to the Divine revelation, and the way that this strong band took hold of his affection was the Lord opening his heart to attend to it, and opening the eyes of his understanding to behold the true light, life, riches and blessedness contained in the holy oracles; and the more he attends to the sacred record, the more he beholds of the boundless fullness therein contained; and the more he delights in the salvation, righteousness, peace, and comfort that shines therein, until it becomes the very life of his soul, and he finds this word to be no other than God himself; that is, in the vital manifestations, outgoings, overflowings and gracious communications of his will; his wisdom, power and infinite riches; and hence, all the intellectual powers of that soul cleave to this Divine testimony, for here he finds the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and all the blessings of eternal glory clearly revealed. Therefore, everyone that is taught of God explodes every other mode of instruction, and rejects every show of wisdom but that alone, that is contained in the word of life. And with Peter he cries out, "Lord to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life." In this pure infallible record we have the true character of God; free from those blasphemous reproaches and calumnies cast upon him by wicked men. Here he is represented as a Being of absolute perfection, majestic glory, order and sovereign dominion; and all his works, and all his government, performed in perfect wisdom, righteousness, goodness, and truth. Forbidding all heathen traditions and fables, such as signs, tokens, dreams, omens, presages of good or ill fortune, good or bad luck, &c.; of which there be such numbers of old tales that there is scarce a creature or thing to be seen, but some diabolical divination is to be drawn from it, which are hated of every true believer, because they represent the God of perfect glory as a mere trifling, whimsical being, as if he was acting a child's play with his creatures, or as if he had left the government of the world to the foolish petty deities of the heathen. This majesty of God equally forbids all antichristian superstitions; or anything of human invention in the worship of God. For be the thing what it will, and be introduced with ever so much gravity and solemnity, he must be an avowed rebel against God that dares presume to set up anything in the worship of God which God has not appointed; for whatever is of human invention always detracts from the glory of God, representing the Most High in a very contemptible light, as they suppose him to be pleased with mere parade or empty baubles. John Johnson {Divine Authority of the Holy Scriptures}

### **Duty Faith**

The celebrated sentiment to which many in public character are so partial; namely, that of exhorting the subjects of Grace to act faith on Christ, and the promises in him, I pronounce in the Spirit of the Gospel to be heterodox and fallacious, and an insult to the wisdom of Christ, who has said, "without me you can do nothing." Faith is a gift from the ascended Savior, it is conveyed into the redeemed soul by the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration, consequently being a supernatural blessing can only act and move under supernatural influence. – The true Object of faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, is not discoverable by the light of nature; but is made known to men, only by the supernatural light of Divine Revelation. {Is.64:4, Mt.16:17, I Cor.2:9,14, 3:11, Eph.1:17, 3:8,9,10, Tit.1:3, I Pet.1:10-12} This acknowledgment is clearly proved by these texts; but let the reader closely examine them, and see how deep and glorious a mystery the Gospel is, and then judge, if the Gospel

Revelation be so far above the sphere of all created beings, as these Scriptures represent it, how should it be thought that the special Grace published in the Gospel should be required of men? It is here pointed out, as it is the work of God alone to reveal Christ, and as a thing which was not known to men, nor even the angels, from the foundation of the world; how then should the Divine blessings which proceed from this unfathomable Mystery and sublime Glory, which utterly dazzles all created eyes, be the duty of men; yea, of men under the power of a carnal mind! How can the Righteousness of God be by faith, without the Law, {Rom.3:20-22,} and yet the very same faith be a duty of the Law? For the Apostle concludes that argument thus, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law;" {vs.28;} that is, being justified before God, by the blood of Christ, {5:9,} he receives the evidence and application of Justification in his conscience through faith in that blood. – Wherefore, if this precious faith be a creature's duty, it is his duty to be, what God never made him. To enjoy, what God never bestowed upon him; and to behold a glory which God never discovered to him. For if it be required of the creature as his performance, then a natural man is required to make himself a spiritual man; a servant is bound to make himself a son; an earthy creature is obliged to make himself a heavenly being; a creature whom God fixed in the center of natural enjoyments is required to translate himself into the kingdom of Grace and Glory; and a creature in whom God never planted anything, or a higher quality than mere nature, nor ever gave him a capacity to understand or receive any blessing of a superior kind is commanded to fill himself with the fullness of God. – All the duties that God ever required or creatures performed were matter of pure gratitude for favors already received. God never required a duty from any creature as a condition of favor to be given afterward; but the blessing is first given, and then the duty required as a grateful return; and wherever there is a reward promised in Scripture to the performance of any duty, it never extends any further than the continuance of some benefit which God had freely given before; and which would be forfeited by ingratitude; for no blessing was ever enjoyed by any creature, but as a free gift from God. Whenever men perform services in expectation to merit, procure favors or obtain rewards from God, those services cease to be duties and become insults; for that is to treat Jehovah as he were an Idol, and needed something from them. Yea, to speak strictly and properly, Christ merited his Church from under the hand of Divine Justice; for as he paid the debt, their freedom was due; but he did not merit any blessing from God, either for his own or his people's enjoyment by paying their debt, or bearing their sin; he delivered them from condemnation, but every blessing which they enjoy, in time or in eternity is the free gift of God. Christ, and all the blessings dwelling in him, is the gift of the Father; and it is impossible, in the nature of things, that any being should merit anything from God. John Johnson {Faith of God's Elect, 1754}

### **Duty Faith**

Objection – "But faith is frequently expressed as the work of the believer; taking the shield of faith; putting on the breastplate of faith and love; striving together for the faith of the Gospel; holding faith and a good conscience; fight the good fight of faith; I have kept the faith, &c." Reply: Expressions of this kind do not prove that faith is of any lower extractions than sovereign Grace. The shield of faith is the chief of the armor of God, or above all; therefore it is God himself and our Lord Jesus Christ, who is in Scripture so often called a shield; and the saints experience Him to be the shield of faith, inasmuch as it is through faith that they behold and enjoy him as their Strength and Tower of defense; his boundless grace, almighty power, unchanging love and faithful promises are their help and their shield against all the fiery temptations of Satan; and to take the shield of faith is the same with looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; to run to his Name as to a strong tower for safety under all trials; to fly to him for refuge in all dangers; to wrestle with him by prayer and supplication; to meditate on his attributes, his grace, his covenant, his works, &c., thus taking hold of his strength to fortify our minds against all the power of the enemy.

To put on the breastplate of faith and love is the same as to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; put on the armor of light; put on the whole armor of God. Practically to apply our minds to Jesus Christ in a vigorous close attention, that we may obtain a more intimate acquaintance with him, and may be made more conformable to him; to stand firm in the profession of faith in Christ Jesus; to walk steady in love to all our Christian brethren; and to persevere in all holiness of conversation. To strive together for the faith of the Gospel is to be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment, and to keep the unity of the Spirit, with one consent pressing forward after further attainments in the knowledge of Christ, and stability therein; and to maintain the purity of the Gospel in doctrine, order, worship and holiness of conversation. {Note: There appears a great deal of sweetness in these words, namely, what our Lord said unto his disciples, "let not your heart," which I think points out that Union oneness that there is in real saints, as of one heart possessed them all; so in Luke 24:32, "and they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us;" the life and love of Christ in heaven born souls makes them one.} To hold the faith, to keep the faith, to fight the good fight of faith, &c., is to earnestly contend for the Faith, or to stand up boldly for the Truth of the Gospel; to withstand the adversaries of our precious faith, and practically to manifest the integrity of our hearts in a diligent walking with God. But these things do not prove faith to be the work of a believer, any more than my natural vigor and activity proves my natural life to be my own work. It is not common, upon some occasions, to excite persons in expressions to this effect, "be wise, be strong, be alive, &c.," but does this imply that wisdom, power, and life are their works? No, it intends no more than to manifest in a proper manner what blessings God has endured them with. So these admonitions are only some branches of the great commandment that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. Faith is not a principle which the soul can act, or exercise, any more than it could produce it at first. It is not everything that is spoken with an active sound, that is the act of the creature in a proper sense; for to live and breathe are actively expressed, and so is believing; but to live and breathe are not in a proper sense the acts of the man, for they are the nature of the man, when life and breath are given; and it is the nature of the heaven-born soul to live in Christ, and breathe in the Spirit; it is his nature to cleave to God with delight, as it is the nature of the impregnated needle to cleave to the magnet. It is the soul that believes, that thinks, desires, delights and enjoys by faith, and these may be called acts of faith, when they proceed therefrom, or are under the influence thereof. I affirm that whatsoever is absolutely beyond the line of created beings, peculiar to God alone, that cannot possibly be touched by any hand, but by Jehovah himself, depending alone on his sovereign will and almighty power; this, I say, never was required by any Law; neither is, nor ever was, or ever will be the duty of any man; and as the faith whereby we enjoy eternal life in Christ is of so high and heavenly in nature, I'm not afraid to deny that it could ever come within the compass of a duty. John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, 1758}

### **Duty Faith**

Only this would I learn of you, {experienced believers in Christ,} do you receive the Spirit of love and holiness by the preaching of the faith of duties, law requirements, obligations, commands, acts, works, performances, &c., enforced with threatenings and denunciations of wrath; or by the Gospel of the Grace of God proclaiming everlasting Salvation by the blood of Christ, and faith as a Divine blessing flowing from the Fountain of life, to the filling of the soul with all the fullness of God? I'm very sensible, that whatever fermentations of passion may be raised by crying up the duty of faith, the necessity of believing, and the damning sin of not believing, calling upon persons to come to Christ, close in with the tenders of mercy, accept the offers of grace and embrace the opportunity, and the sin and danger of neglecting, &c., but can those souls who experience the faith of the operation of God declare that it was by this kind of doctrine that they were called out of darkness into

the light of life; or by the word of Grace, distilling like dew and dropping like rain upon their souls, in a simple declaration of the fullness of Grace and Salvation in Christ? I do ask, whether God was ever pleased to bless his word of Grace to a soul from the mouths of those ministers who frequently mix and confound the Gospel with the Law? Can such souls whom God hath brought into true Gospel liberty declare that they received this blessing by a doctrine which gendereth unto bondage? Is it not more naturally produced by the pure streams of Gospel Grace flowing through the blood of Christ by the power of the Spirit of life to the soul? I therefore ask, what is the benefit of preaching faith as a moral duty to unregenerate souls who cannot possibly perform it? Where is the usefulness of preaching it to the regenerate, where God by sovereign Grace has wrought it already? And what is the advantage of laying this task upon souls weary and heavy laden, thirsting for grace, and crying out, "Lord, help thou mine unbelief?" Furthermore, how does 'duty faith' answer to your past and present experience? Can you declare, that this is the way, whereby you were delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the light of the kingdom of God? Or, can you declare, that moral duty is the actual way whereby you draw water out of the wells of Salvation? That it is the stamp, whereby you bear the image of the Son of God; that it is the moving engine, whereby you walk with God and glorify your heavenly Father? When you first received the blessing of faith in the Son of God, was it wrought in your souls by a commanding Law, laying upon you as an obligation, urging it as a duty, pressing and exhorting you thereunto and admonishing you to perform it or neglect it at your own peril? Or, was it by the glad tidings of the Gospel of the Grace of God, opening to you the bowels of the love of Christ, the preciousness of his blood, the unsearchable riches of his Grace, his perfect Righteousness, his plenteous Redemption, his ever prevailing Intercession and the free streams of Life and Salvation that proceed from his immense Fullness? For I am persuaded that whosoever is blessed with a lively faith in Christ Jesus and enabled to savingly believe, can tell by what means this was wrought. I do not say, that everyone can point out the day in which it was begun; or tell, that it was by reading such a particular portion of Scripture, or hearing such a sermon, by such a conference or such a particular meditation, &.; but every one that is brought out of darkness to behold the glory of God's Salvation in Christ must know by what light his eyes were opened; whether it was by a discovery of those things which God required in his Law; or by a spiritual manifestation of those things which he freely gives in the Gospel of Christ. When you first enjoyed the work of faith with power and did believe spiritually in Christ, was it performed by your activity, as an act or work done by yourselves; or was it by a communication of spiritual life unto, a Divine operation upon and an effectual display of Grace in your souls? For your understandings must be enlightened to behold, your affections melted and attracted to desire, and your heart strengthened to embrace and trust in Christ Jesus; to cleave to him as your life, portion, salvation and everlasting righteousness; to enjoy peace in your conscience through his precious blood, and comfort in your souls through his intercession; your souls must receive a principle of true Gospel sanctification, be wrought into sincere repentance from sin, and made to delight in the Gospel of Christ, with a cheerful readiness to deny yourselves, to take up your cross for Christ's sake and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. Now, were you blessed with these things, and your hearts wrought into this position by the works of the Law; or was it by the eternal streams of God's love, overcoming all enmity and unbelief in your souls, and ravishing your hearts into a sweet surrender of all your powers, into the bosom of Christ and to the will of God? When under any trials and temptations, do you find your faith increased, your hearts enlarged, and your souls comforted by your acts and performances, or by the special in-flowings of Grace from Christ, communicated by the great Comforter? When you have been under the siftings of Satan, has your faith been preserved from failing by your own duties, performances and compliance with legal requirements; or through a view of Christ in his Intercession, praying for you, that your faith fail not? When under the buffetings of Satan, pierced with thorns in your flesh, to the wounding of your souls; do you find your heart

sustained, and the power of Christ resting upon you, by hearing of the obligations to believe and the duty of trusting in God, of the sin of unbelief, and the dreadful end that awaits it; or by the gracious word of Christ, "my Grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness?" When you find declinations and witherings in your soul, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, do you find quickenings and revivings by your duties and works; or by special enlargements and communications of Grace, streaming into your hearts from the Father, through Christ, by the Holy Ghost? When your minds are beset with carnality, lukewarmness and backwardness in the ways of God, do you find yourselves driven into a spiritual frame by commands and threatenings, and exhortations to act faith; or drawn by cords of love, through the vivifying influence of the love of God to delight in the paths of holiness? Correspondingly; which way do you {sinners who are convinced of their sin and misery} expect to obtain peace in your souls? Or, what comfort do you find from the preaching of duty faith? Do you expect to find liberty in your souls from wrath and condemnation, and to enjoy a sense of peace and pardon, through the Mediation, Suretyship, redeeming Blood, justifying Righteousness, prevailing Intercession and saving Grace of Christ alone; or through Christ upon condition, or in consequence of your performing the duty of believing? And if the latter, what peace can you expect from such a salvation which must depend precariously on the performances of a lapsed worm? For however great Salvation itself is, to you at must be as uncertain as the performance of the condition on which its efficacy depends. Are you thoroughly convinced of your own vileness, misery and helpless condition? Then, whether do you find more peace and comfort, in hearing faith urged as a duty, and the want of it aggravated as a damning sin; that God has told you how to obtain this faith, and therefore you are worthy to perish for your unbelief; that you not believing is the clearest and most accountable cause of your damnation, &c., or by hearing Christ preached in his all sufficiency, as a Covenant Surety and a crucified Redeemer; a merciful High Priest and a compassionate Savior; a righteous Advocate and a powerful Intercessor; a fountain of living water, a well of salvation, a river of peace; the foundation, author and finisher of faith? I say, which of these doctrines is best adapted to your case? For though a person may believe the report or assent to the truths of the Gospel as they stand in the letter, who still is righteous in his own conceit, and never was truly touched with a sense of sin; yet, it is impossible in the nature of things that any soul should believe unto a sensible assurance of his standing in Christ until his eyes are opened to see himself lost; and the dispute is not about a practical adherence to the word of Grace, but about that faith which is inseparable from Salvation. When faith is urged as a duty and pressed upon you with threats of damnation; do you find yourselves instructed, encouraged and strengthened, or some way affected thereby, so as it gives you hopes of obtaining the blessing? Or, do not the gracious words of the anointed of God, rather give life to your hopes? "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." {Lk.4:18} My beloved brethren, since we are all chosen in the only begotten Son of God; adopted in the glory man Christ Jesus, who is the delight of God and Head of the Church; redeemed with the precious blood of the Lamb; born again of the Spirit of holiness; have all access by one Spirit, through Christ, unto the Father; are all following the same Captain of our Salvation, and fighting against the same adversaries; being heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, of the same glory; let us therefore be united in the faith of Christ, believing on his name and loving one another; and inasmuch as the glory of God and our own consolation is so much concerned in our practical walking with God, in faith and love; let us press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I need not be afraid of being mistaken, or my words mis-constructed as tending to legality by those who have been blessed and enriched with the streams of Divine Grace. For they are better instructed than to imagine that they can perform anything as a condition of salvation and eternal life; and they are more seasoned with the principles of holiness than to disregard

the holy commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every command of God is conscientiously to be observed; every ordinance of Christ to be closely attended to by the believer; not to obtain life, acceptance or salvation thereby; but to show forth our gratitude, to manifest a holy principle and to prove the truth of God's love shed abroad, and the Law of God written in our hearts, as well as to seek his face, behold more of his glory, receive more of Christ's image and show forth his praise. The Apostle says, "these things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God;" for it is the will of God, that all who believe spiritually should believe practically, and this can never be turned into a task, unless our minds grow carnal. And this is the thing, wherein I think our author is reprobable; if I am to suppose him a believer; for had his forty years daily search of the Holy Scriptures been attended with a close inquiry after the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make himself and others see, "what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ;" it is my judgment that he would not have confounded the perfection of the earthly Adam with the fullness of the Lord from heaven; the life promised by the Law with that which is exhibited in the Gospel; the Grace of God with the duty of man; and the faith of the operation of God with practical believing, &c., for, we obey the commandments of God, to believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, when we embrace the Gospel Revelation in the purity and glory thereof; when we ascribe all the glory, from first to last, to the eternal springs of Grace in God the Father; to the Grace fullness and mediatorial performances of the Son; and to the Divine operation of the Holy Ghost. When we advance Christ Jesus in all his offices and relations; glories and perfections, so as in every branch of salvation, grace and glory, we magnify him as the Alpha and Omega; and when our eyes are fixed on Him alone as the Object of our love, the Object of our praise, the Object of our confidence and the Object of our hope, for everything to be done for us and everything to be done in us, and everything to be enjoyed by us, in time and to eternity. John Johnson {Faith of God's Elect, 1754}

### **Effulgence of the Glory of God in Christ**

Since it has been the good pleasure of my Heavenly Father to enlighten mine eyes by his Sacred Word, to distinguish between the Divine Testimony and human glosses; and to strengthen my heart by his Spirit, to shake off those unnatural shackles; I plainly see that the Doctrines of Grace are perfectly harmonious without the least jar. Everything runs consistent, without any harshness or absurdity attending it. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Therefore it is not with me a light matter, but what very sensibly touches my heart with deep concern, to think of those tender lambs of Christ, who are kept back from feeding in the richness of the pastures, through being entangled in the same fetters as I have been; and however I may be esteemed a speckled bird for treading out the old beaten path, I esteem it my duty to hearken unto God, rather than unto men. And, my beloved brethren, I persuade myself that I am not writing to persons who conceive of no other rule whereby to regulate their judgments in Divine Things beside the opinions of men received by tradition; but to such as have learned to inquire for themselves, and to search the Scriptures, "whether these things are so." 1. It is clear from the Scripture that the Love of God is eternal, for it is essential to Himself. "God is love." Therefore, if God is eternal, his love is the same; but love doth not exist without its peculiar Object; therefore, the Object of his love is eternal, and eternally beloved; and this Object is his only begotten Son, EMMANUEL. "Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth." "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." "The Father loveth the Son." "Thou lovest me before the foundation of the world." "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his Delight, rejoicing always before him." 2. All God's elect were eternally foreknown in Christ the Firstborn, therefore they were objects of the same eternal love of the Father. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and

that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." "According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before Him in love. Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." "Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." 3. The everlasting love of God to his elect proceeds from his own eternal bosom, in Christ Jesus the ultimate delight of his soul, independent of any other inducement. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself." "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." 4. The children of God were heirs of eternal life from everlasting, and it was insured unto them as firm as it was possible for God to make it, before the world began, secured to his elect in Christ by the band of eternal love, which is God himself; and eternal life is nothing else but the living God himself. "Who only hath immortality." "With thee is the fountain of life." "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." "The living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father." "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." "His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." "Christ who is our life." "Eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." 5. Grace was secure to God's elect from eternity. Grace is no other thing than love in its outgoings. This is the difference {if there be a difference} between love and grace. Love is grace residing in the Fountain, the Eternal Bosom. Grace is love issuing forth to us in streams of goodness; whereby we enjoy all rich, spiritual, heavenly, and eternal blessings. Therefore, grace is God himself; or it is the goings forth of the fullness of God, in Christ from of Old, from Everlasting. Grace is essential to the Godhead; for, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." But it is impossible for anything but the infinite I AM to be extended beyond the boundings of sin. Every perfect gift is by grace, and the gifts are such as cannot possibly proceed from any but the eternal Father. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given." "The Holy Ghost which is given unto us." The Son of God is full of grace and truth; but all the creation of God cannot fill him, for he himself fills all things; therefore the grace, of which he is full, is Jehovah; and the Apostle's common prayer was, for "grace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." And this grace, according to God's own purpose, "was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." 6. Eternal glory was secured to God's chosen, as firm as the Being of God, before the world was. Eternal glory is God himself. "The Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." "They need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." This glory is the unalienable right of God's elect. "The hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory." "To sit on my right hand, and on my left - shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the world." And this preparation is of the Sovereign Pleasure and Immutable Counsel of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, "whom he hath appointed heir of all things;" in whom all the elect are adopted children of God, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ - that we may be also glorified together." 7. The eternal plan of life, grace, and glory in the bosom of infinite love, perfect before all worlds, in the unchanging counsel of the uncreated mind is the Foundation of the grandest structure of the incomprehensible glory and perfection that ever was formed in the

wisdom of Jehovah; or at least, that ever did transpire to created beings, from the unsearchable depths of his Will. It is nothing less than a palace for God; an habitation for the Most High; a dwelling for the Holy One; there to regale himself with infinite delight, and display the effulgence of his Glory to all Eternity. And in this building of God, "the Son of his love, God with us," is the Foundation, Life, Strength and Glory of the whole. "Behold, I lay in Zion for a Foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious Cornerstone, a sure Foundation." "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the buildings fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit." "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." "This is the hill which God desireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord will dwell in it forever." "For the Lord hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." "And I will glorify the house of my glory." The glory of the Father primarily dwells in his beloved Son. "It pleased the Father, that in Him should all fullness dwell." "In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." And through Christ, the head of the body of the Church, the glory is communicated to all its members. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Thus, Christ and his Church being one body, one house, are one habitation for God. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." "The temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people." In this Grand Design, God is the First and the Last. The original ground is his love; the plan is drawn by his own wisdom; the Council is executed by his own power; all the provision is of, and proceeding from Himself; the situation is in his own bosom; the perfection is his own presence; the edifice is for his own ultimate delight, and the highest manifestation of his glory; the house is a sanctuary, consecrated to Jehovah, for his eternal residence. "That God may be all in all." John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, 1758}

### **Eternal Justification in Christ**

"Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." Now be it observed, that everything that comes from God, must have a time, and a beginning; but as they are in God himself; that is, in his perfect will, or immutable counsel, they are absolutely eternal. For whatever blessing is brought forth in time, is according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself. "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." And therefore, because all the Council of God is absolutely irreversible; the things that are spoken of, are {in accordance with Divine Immutability} as if they were already done; by Him who "callet those things which be not as though they were." Yet it may be the Lord may speak of those things which are so fixed in his counsel, with an IF; as if they were precarious, or contingent; but then it is to those souls who are not yet called by his grace; so that the blessings still remain uncertain as to themselves, "although the works were finished from the foundation of the world." Now Justification must be one of those works, that were finished from the beginning of the creation; forasmuch as Christ is called, "a Lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world;" and again, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." These are one and the self-same thing. For in that he is said to be ordained, before the foundation of the world; this ordination was in God himself, as firm as the Eternal Throne; no more to be frustrated than if this had already been accomplished in time. And whereas Christ is said to be slain from the foundation of the world; it could be no other than in the Divine Purpose; and the same purpose, in which Christ was ordained to be slain, the end of his death must also be ordained; that is, the blotting out of the sins of his people, and the justification of their persons in Himself. {Christ appears as a lamb that has been slain, as an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savor, and gives peace by his blood, both to the Old and New Testament churches.

Is.53:10-12, I Pet.3:18, Eph.2:14. For notwithstanding he was not actually slain in person, during the former administration, yet he was in the immutable counsel of God from the foundation of the world, a lamb slain. Otherwise it had been impossible for the former children to have enjoyed remission of sins, justification, peace with God, or salvation. Zech.9:11, Rom.5:9, Col.1:20, Heb.9:22. For no man ever did come to the Father but by him, or obtain redemption and forgiveness of sins, but by his blood. And now he appears perfectly accomplished with power and wisdom, to perform every work appointed him of his Father; and to open all the counsel of his will to his church.} The Son of God could not be slain for anything but for our sins; he could not be slain for our sins, but his death must be a sufficient propitiation, to take away our sins; and our sins could not be taken away, but we must be acquitted, and justified from them. "Now, where remission of these are, there is no more offering for sin;" so that, from whatever date, and in whatever light Christ was the Lamb slain; from that same date and in that same light, sin must be laid upon him; and in whatever sense sin was imputed to him, in the same sense it was taken away by him; and in whatever sense he made an end of sins; in the same sense he brought in Everlasting Righteousness. The bosom of the Father is the infinite ocean of blessedness, from whence all the springs of life proceed, and every work stands in ample perfection, from everlasting to everlasting. All the fullness that is in Christ, all the works performed by Christ for his Church, and all the works performed by his Spirit in his Church, and all the glory and felicity which the saints shall enjoy in the world to come; are no other than the openings and outgoings of the infinite, eternal, immutable love of the Father. "For I proceeded forth, and came from God." John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Eternal Life Union in Christ**

Grace and Glory are Christ's native Right, as he is "Heir of all things," and the indisputable right of all his elect, as they stand in Him children of God, and "joint heirs with Christ;" and since these unspeakably high, rich, and glorious blessings reside alone in God, and proceed spontaneously from the stupendous Ocean of Infinite Perfection, the Grant is his Immutable Will, "I will be their God;" and the children's right is hereditary in the Person of his Son; "if a Son, then an heir of God through Christ." I confess that they must be persons of very little accuracy, who think that all that Christ did was to remove an encumbrance brought by sin upon that grant of Grace and Glory in him as a Head. Grace and Glory are, and always were, absolutely above all encumbrance. The encumbrance, thralldom, and misery brought by sin came upon the persons, and not upon the Inheritance. It is true, the earthly inheritance possessed by man in a state of innocency is lost by Sin, and never to be regained; but the Heavenly Inheritance, secure in God, never was within the reach of any encumbrance by sin or any other thing. The Portion and Inheritance of the Church is nothing less than the essence of Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; "I am thy God;" and being the children of God, they are the children of the promise, "which God that cannot lie promised before the world began;" and have a native and unalienable right to their Inheritance; "for this God is our God for ever and ever." Grace and Glory are the patrimony of the Church, and have no dependence upon anything but the Immutability of God; and a legal Title to all the Blessings of Eternal Life rests in Christ the First-born, and his elect, being "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." Their right of Inheritance is founded in his indubitable Claim, "whom he hath appointed Heir of all things," and who says to his children, "I have appointed unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." The Patrimony and the Purchase are not to be confounded, for they are two distinct things; the former is the God of his Church, the latter is the Church of God. Not the inheritance, but the persons were purchased. Transgression involved their persons in ruin; Christ {their Inheritance} purchased them to Liberty for himself, and by answering all the demands of the Holy Law in their stead, obtained for them a Legal Title to Pardon, Justification, Peace with God, and Freedom from all the Effects of Sin. And, as the Reward of

his Sufferings, the Father promised him the enjoyment of his Purchase. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied - therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death." These, and such like, are the Promises which the Father made to the Son on Condition of his fulfilling the Covenant Engagements; not Grace and Glory to bestow upon his people, for that is Himself, but full satisfaction in the enjoyment of his people, who are his Heritage. "The Lord's Portion is his people." They destroyed themselves, but in Him is their help. Through his undertakings and performances, through his meritorious death and life, through his blood and righteousness they have Redemption, Remission of Sins, and Eternal Salvation, for "God is the Portion" of his elect forever; with whom there never was, is, nor can be any restraint, obstruction, or alienation. Their indisputable Right is secure in their Eternal Union with Christ, and in their plenteous enjoyment proceeding in Divine Communications of Life, from "the fullness of him that filleth all in all - for it pleased the Father, that in Him should all fullness dwell." Christ in undertaking our Redemption was "made under the Law," and obnoxious to the wrath of God; and in that capacity obedience was his duty, and vengeance his due; and by the amplitude of his Obedience unto Death, and the preciousness of the Life which he laid down, he so completely fulfilled his Surety Engagements, and gave such honor to the Law as made "an end of sins," and brought in "Everlasting Righteousness;" and it is my humble opinion, that he that has a just apprehension of the Infinite Value of the Righteousness of Christ, will never form any conceptions of a righteousness of his own in the sight of God, in time or eternity. John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, 1758}

### **Eternal Suretyship of Christ**

In all engagements, transactions or performances of one person in behalf of another, some relation {either natural or contracted} is supposed to subsist between the parties; and it is only in consequence of this relation, that what is done by the one becomes effectual to the other. A general relation is not sufficient to give individuals a claim to the efficacy of Christ's death, for the removal of their own personal guilt; for, was Christ to die ten thousand deaths, it would not possibly make atonement for any sin, which was not properly Imputed to him in strictness of God's Justice; and it cannot be an act of justice, to lay the fault of one person to the charge of another, any further than the union between those two parties makes it natural and equal for one to answer on the other's behalf; as a husband pays his wife's debt, because they are one in nature; and a Surety answers for the debtor that is in debt because they are one in the bond. There is a special union between Christ and his elect, wherein every individual person stands particularly betrothed to him, and he stands engaged to answer every case relating to every individual member of his body. They are given him of his Father. {Jn.17:6,9,10} They are enrolled in the eternal records of his Kingdom. {Rev.13:8, 20:15, 21:27} They were foreknown, chosen and predestinated in Himself. {Rom.8:29,30, Eph.1:4,5} They stand in the relation of children, and he as their Father. {Is.8:18, 9:6} They sustain the character of a wife to Christ their Husband. {Jer.3:14, Eph.5:23-25} And he hath bound himself on the behalf of these objects of his love, in all the ties of Suretyship and Covenant Engagements; {Ps.89:28, Is.42:6, 49:8, Heb.7:22, 8:6, 13:20;} and this he did without any compulsion or reluctantancy; but freely, with all his heart and with all his soul, he gave himself for their sins; {Gal.1:4, Tit.2:14;} and cheerfully submitted to whatsoever the righteous Law should inflict upon Him for their offenses. {Ps.40:7,8, Mt.20:28, Jn.10:15,17,18, Heb.12:2} Thus, in consequence of this spiritual union with the persons of God's elect, and a contracted union, wherein Christ Jesus freely engaged Himself to answer for their sins; it became a righteous thing with God to impute to Him all their iniquities. {Is.53:6,11, Dan.9:26, II Cor.5:21} And accordingly, the Son of God was punished with the utmost severity and sustained all the wrath of God which was due to his people for their sins; {Ps.22:14,15, Zech.13:7, I Pet.2:24, 3:18;} and

through his sufferings, thus legally inflicted and faithfully sustained for the select members of his body, all the Church enjoys Peculiar, Complete and Eternal Redemption. {Rom.3:24, Gal.3:13, Col.1:14, Heb.9:12, 10:14, I Jn.1:7} Without personal union, personal redemption is impossible in the very nature of things. And where such a union subsists between Christ and his members, it is, in the nature of things impossible for that soul to perish; for he who is "the true God, and eternal life," hath said, "because I live, ye shall live also;" and again, the Holy Ghost hath said, "your life is hid with Christ in God." The peculiar redeemed ones are redeemed from all iniquity, but those that perish will be rejected as workers of iniquity. {Lk.13:27} They that enjoy Redemption through Christ's blood do thereby receive the forgiveness of sins; but they that perish, die in their sins. {Jn.8:21} The children of God are redeemed from the curse of the Law, but the sons of perdition shall eternally remain under the curse. {Is.65:20, Mt.25:41} God's elect are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" but they that are cast out, "shall be unjust still." {Rev.22:11} Christ suffered for his people, that he might bring them to God; and by his blood he has redeemed them to God; but the wicked are put away like dross and remain in eternal exile. {Ps.119:119, Lk.16:26} "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads;" but such as remain under the bondage of sin, {though with the most pompous appearance of morality and religion,} shall be cast into endless misery. {Mt.7:11,12, Lk,13:28} John Johnson {Election of God Undisguised, 1759}

### **Eternal Union in Christ**

When your author talks of that love which is essential, I presume that he had forgotten, or rather never knew, what that Essence is; and that it is essential to that love, to rest alone in its proper Object; which Object must be in all things adequate to the love that terminates in it; his own perfect Image, in whom he can find ultimate satisfaction and take infinite delight. The word is that, "God is Love." There is but one God, and there can be but one Object of his love. God is infinitely holy, so must the Object of his love be infinitely holy. God is eternally present in all his essential properties, and his love cannot possibly rest with complacency in any Object but what is the same. For if this love should fix upon any unworthy object, or take up its rest in any being inferior to its own essential Perfection, it would thereby decline from its excellent Glory, and no longer retain the dignity of its character. But in heaven and earth no such object is to be found, only in the Person of Emmanuel, who is the only begotten Son of God. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his Person." {Heb.1:3} "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." {Phil.2:6} "Who is the image of the invisible God." {Col.1:15} "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father." {Jn.1:18} This is he whom God has pointed out as the Alone and Supreme delight of his soul. {Is.42:1, PV.8:30, Lk.3:22, II Pet.1:17, Jn.3:25, 5:20} And that this Holy One is the sole delight of God is manifest from the Perfection which God is pleased should dwell in Him; {Jn.1:14, Col.1:19, 2:9;} the authority committed to Him; {Mt.28:18, Jn.5:26,27;} the glory and dignity conferred upon Him; {Eph.1:20-22, Heb.8:1, I Pet.3:22;} and the honor commanded to be given unto Him; {Jn.5:23, Heb.1:6;} as well as from the Union which forever subsists between the Father and the Son. {Jn.10:30, 14:10,11, 17:21, I Jn.2:23} Therefore, since God beholds in our Lord Jesus Christ all consummate perfection of holiness, beauty, excellency and glory to the full enjoyment and infinite satisfaction of his soul; he is the infinitely extensive residence and eternally fixed Center and Rest of all Divine Love. It is therefore impossible that there should be any other object in heaven or earth in which this love can find a place to shed forth its ineffable beams. And in this One Inconceivably Glorious Object of Divine love, all the elect of God are included. In this incomprehensibly perfect living Head, are comprehended all the select members of his mystical body. "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." {Eph.5:30} The connection is

inseparable and the union indivisible. "He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ." {Gal.3:16} "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." {I Cor.6:17} In the transcendent heights and depths of this unsearchable mystery of Godliness is contained all the unfathomable boundless ocean of the love of God to all his chosen. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." {Eph.1:6} Thus Christ and his Church stand before God as one undivided object of love from eternity to eternity. {See John 17:21-26} "He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom." {Jn.3:29} "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel." {Is.54:5} "Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." {Rev.21:9} Therefore Christ and his Church are no more twain. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church." {Eph.5:31-32} Were the children of God to be considered in a separate capacity, or beheld as they appear in themselves, and regarded only according to their own personal characters, there would be found no creatures in heaven, earth, or hell more unworthy of the love of God than they. Therefore they cast their crowns before the Throne, saying with a loud voice, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." {Rev.4:11} "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." {Rev.5:12} They were not chosen in themselves, but chosen in HIM, before the foundation of the world. Grace was not given them in separate portions, but grace was "given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." {II Tim.1:9} Their spiritual life is not a principle separately subsisting in themselves; they can say, "Christ, who is our life;" {Col.3:4;} "I live; yet not I, but Christ." {Gal.2:20} And he hath said; "because I live, ye shall live also." {Jn.14:19} Eternal glory shall not be to each saint a separate inheritance; for they are "heirs to God, and joint heirs with Christ." {Rom.8:17} Thus they are worthy in the worthiness of Christ alone; and they are beloved in Him; who is, and was, and is to come; who is his Father's only delight; and who's delights from everlasting were with the sons of men. {PV.8:30,31} But this everlasting love is not common to all men; for that stupendous love, which is essential to the Godhead is discriminating love. "I have loved you, saith the LORD. - Was not Esau Jacob's brother; saith the LORD; yet I loved Jacob." {Mal.1:2} John Johnson {Election of God Undisguised, 1759}

## Faith

Faith is the belief of the truth; for it is the truth of God, as it appears in the Gospel, in such clearness of demonstration, and such strength of evidence, as that it preponderates in the understanding, makes its way into the heart, and gains the full assent of the mind. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." God is the God of truth, and the Gospel is his Word; Jesus Christ is the truth of God, and the Gospel is the Record which God gave of his Son; the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, and the Gospel was spoken by holy men of God, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost; and hence, our Lord said to his Father, "thy Word is truth." In the Gospel of God's Holy One is revealed, the perfection of all the glorious attributes of God; all his will, counsel, and purposes of grace; all the blessings of peace, righteousness, and salvation; and all the blessings of Divine light, everlasting consolation, and lively hope; even all the fullness of God, as a residing in Himself; and all the fullness of grace and truth, as it is extended to us, and is represented to us in its supreme excellency and glory as dwelling in the Son of his love. "For it pleased the Father, that in Him should all fullness dwell." Now, the mind of the Father, opened in the Son, by the Holy Ghost is revealed to us in his Word of grace; for us to receive and believe, that we may have life thereby; and as it stands in the Word of the Gospel, it is called Truth; and the same truth received and believed in our hearts is called faith. So then, faith is no other

thing than the truth of God, received, believed, and dwelling in us. Or in other words, it is the Record that God gave of his Son, abiding in our hearts, with full acquiescence of soul. Belief is an unwavering credence, an immovable certainty, an unshaken assurance of the Truth believed. John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Faith**

Every blessing of grace and truth that dwells in Emmanuel is revealed in the Gospel; every blessing of grace and truth revealed in the Gospel is communicated to his elect by the power of his Spirit; and everything communicated to the heart, by the Spirit of God, is received by faith in that soul, and becomes a nail fastened in a sure place; for it is written in the table of the heart; not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. Thus, whatever any soul receives by faith is absolutely unalienable; it is eternally his own; for it is the gift of God; and, by his own finger it is indelibly inscribed in the intellectual parts; engraven in the soul by the hand of the immutable God. This is faith; and nothing less than this is the faith of the operation of God; notwithstanding the religious world make such a child's play of what they call faith; as if it were an ignis fatuus. Thus, the righteousness of God, the righteousness of Christ, the righteousness of the Gospel, and the righteousness of faith is all the self-same thing, coming from the Father, in the Son, by the Gospel, and perfectly made one with the soul through faith. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what Law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith." God is the fountain, and God himself sends forth the stream. God communicates the grace, and faith is the gift of God. So that from the beginning to the end, God is the justifier. John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Faith & Assurance**

We are justified by faith; when the truth of Christ, in the fullness of grace, as sent from the Father; the virtue of his death, as our Representative, made sin for us; and the power of his resurrection, whereby the efficacy of his sufferings is perfectly demonstrated, is received by faith, and fully embraced in our souls. When, with all our hearts, we believe into the truth thereof; so that we live by the faith of the Son of God. Then we enjoy satisfaction in his righteousness alone; and find our consciences made free from condemnation. This is that justification by faith, so often mentioned in the New Testament. "That a man is justified by faith." The original source is the divine will; the meritorious cause is the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ; the irrefragable demonstration is the resurrection of the Lord; and the enjoyment is by faith. The nature of the thing tells us, that when we behold the righteousness of Christ in such a conspicuous light, and our hearts drink it in with such unstaggering approbation, that our consciences are set free from all apprehension of condemnation; then, and not till then, justification takes place in the soul. For so long as the person finds condemnation in his conscience; that same conscience tells him that he is not justified. Justification by faith is nothing less than a fixed rest in the righteousness of Christ; as all sufficient in itself, performed for us, and sealed to us by his Word of truth in the power of the Spirit; and in this righteousness, the soul and conscience stand justified before God in full assurance that his sins are blotted out, and can say, "God is my salvation." For every justified soul under heaven can say, without all wavering or hesitation, "in the Lord have I righteousness;" and without misgiving of heart, can address his heavenly Father by this appellation, "O God of my righteousness;" and without fear of fraud, can call the Holy One, "the Lord our righteousness." For without this, common sense would tell any man that he is not justified in his own soul. Notwithstanding, numbers of preachers, {in order to please fools and children, and buoy up hypocrites,} tell us idle tales of doubting believers, persons having faith, and yet being justified, their sins forgiven, and being in a state of salvation, &c., and at the same time, themselves not knowing it; but being full of

fears and diffidence about it; but these persons fully demonstrate themselves to be total strangers to the testimony of God in Christ. For such suggestions as these, represent God as a perfect devil, leading his children in darkness; whereas we are told, "that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." They represent Christ as a liar, who has said, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life." They represent the Spirit of Truth as a false witness, who though he is sent to testify of Christ, yet does not testify the truth, but leaves the children of God in doubts and uncertainty; whereas we are assured, "it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." And again, "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." - But it is often objected, that it is presumption to be overconfident. I know it is presumption to be overconfident in anything; and therefore God reproveth the wicked, saying, "what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth;" but the soul that enjoys his God in truth, is not overconfident; when he says, "my soul shall make her boast in the Lord." "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "I know whom I have believed." For God hath said, "my people shall never be ashamed." The Scripture always speaks of it in positive terms; for God always speaks to them as persons that knew their relation to him; and they always speak of their relation as a thing unquestionable. "This God is our God for ever and ever." "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations." "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever." John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Faith of God's Elect**

If a Man, in his whole heart, and his whole soul, believes without reserve, the Sum and Substance of the Everlasting Gospel, in the Truth, Life, Spirit, and Power thereof, the Faith of God's Elect is no more. For this is nothing less than to have the Word of God dwelling in us; the Record which God gave of his Son, written in our minds by the Eternal Spirit; which is the same thing, as Christ dwelling in the heart. {II Cor.3:3, Eph.3:17, II Jn.2} The things of the Kingdom of God are of infinite and eternal consequence; therefore cannot be believed, but upon evidence which is absolutely infallible. Persons may pretend to believe those things, which in themselves are divine Truth, when this belief is only grounded on human testimony; received, as the word of Men. But this, which they call faith, is no more than opinion, and will vanish in time of trial. The faith of the Operation of God, of which Christ is Author and Finisher, is grounded on the infallible Truth of the living God, written in the heart by the finger of the eternal Spirit; and can never be shaken by anything within us, or without us; visible, or invisible, in earth or hell; in time, or eternity. Forasmuch as it is the Gift of God, whose Gifts are all without Repentance. {Eph.2:8, Rom.11:29} The common rant of Ministers {under pretense of comforting the weak, and miserable Comforters they are} telling of persons believing, then disbelieving, and believing again; having faith, losing it, and finding it again, &c, is only a delusion of the Devil to encourage hypocrites by vain deceit. He that doubts the Truth of God never did receive the Divine Record. {Is.59:21, Lk.10:42, Jn.17:8, I Jn.2:27} Therefore the hope of a Believer is an unshaken dependence on the infallible Promise of Jehovah. {Rom.4:21} With a patient waiting, and unwavering expectation of the ample completion of all the Grace, and perfect consummation of all the Glory, promised to the Church of the First-Born. {I Jn.3:2} Nothing less than this is the Believer's Hope. {Rom.5:2, II Thes.2:16, Heb.11:1} The Believer ventures nothing on the Score of his Christianity; he rests all upon Christ. John Johnson {Propositions of John Huddleston, 1766}

## Faith of God's Elect

In treating on this Divine Communication {the precious Faith of the Saints,} of Spiritual Grace and Vital Power, I propose to keep close to the thing under consideration; that is, the Faith peculiar to God's elect, whereby they become {are manifested} spiritual members of Christ's mystical body, and are thereby distinguished from all the rest of the sons of men. I know that the word 'faith' in Scripture, as well as in common speech, hath divers acceptations, wherein it may be applied to men in common, without any special regard to God's chosen. Again, when it relates to the children of God in special, it may be variously understood, according to the subject under consideration; for it is not always to be taken in the most extensive light, but is frequently applied to some particular branch or fruit, or some particular outgoing of faith in the soul. But I shall neither discuss the different senses in which the word is used, nor regard any objections that may be raised therefrom; for my business being only to attend to the essence of that faith which by the Holy Ghost is held forth as the peculiar privilege of the members of Christ, and from whence they are denominated the children of God. This precious Faith is the indwelling of God, the Life of Christ, the powerful Breath of the Holy Ghost in the soul, whereby the soul is spiritually illuminated into the Knowledge, attracted into the Love, quickened into the Life, enlarged into the Grace, strengthened into the Power, transformed into the Likeness, and united into one Spirit with the Son of God; and whereby it enjoys all the spiritual Blessings, Comforts, and Enjoyments of God in Christ that it is capable of receiving, or ever shall be possessed of, until this mortal shall put on immortality, and faith shall be succeeded by open Vision. And from hence proceed all the fruits of grace, holy principles, and spiritual dispositions that adorn the heaven born mind. The Saints have but one spiritual Life, and that life is in Christ. "I am - the Life - he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." And it is said that, "the just {justified} shall live by Faith." Therefore, to live by Christ, and to live by Faith is the same thing. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." - The Operation of the Holy Ghost in the heart, and the Faith of Christ, are one and the same thing; or they are absolutely inseparable. "We having the same Spirit of faith." Christ alone is the Foundation upon which his Church is built; "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." "Upon this Rock I will build my Church." Yet the Saints are built in and upon the Faith; "but ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith." "If ye continue in the Faith grounded and settled." "Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the Faith." - Faith is a Living Stream of Grace from the bosom of the Father, in the fullness of Christ, by the Power of the Holy Ghost, flowing into the soul. Can Faith be anything less than this; namely, an Efficacious Manifestation of Divine Grace to the Understanding, whereby the intellectual powers are enabled to trust in the All-Sufficiency, the affections United to the Excellency, and the will subjected to the Person of Christ. - Where the Holy Ghost speaks of the Faith of the Operation of God, it is plain he intends that Spiritual Union wherein God possesses the soul, and the soul enjoys all spiritual blessings in Christ. Christ is compared to a Vine, or an Olive Tree, and his people to the branches. The branch being grafted into the Tree, and the Life of the Tree infused into the branch; here is a living Union. The nature, virtue, and richness of the Tree lives in the branch, by perpetual communication; and the branch lives in the Tree by inseparable connection and perpetual nourishment. The Life of the Tree is the life of the branch. Thus Christ dwells in the heart by faith; and the life which the soul lives, it lives by the Faith of the Son of God. "I live - Christ liveth in me." I can no better express my sentiments of faith than thus; it is "the Love of God, the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost," replenishing the soul, and the soul living in the enjoyment thereof. John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, 1758}

## Faith of the Operation of God

Faith is built upon God himself, and not built upon Him, apart from Divine Illumination, accompanied with deep digging, close scrutinizing, and deliberate pondering his Word; that we may come to an infallible certainty, that we are upon the very Rock Christ. And it is by the Spirit of God that we are thus directed and by the infallible Word of truth we are established, where no suspicion, diffidence, or uncertainty can come. They that receive his Word as it is in truth, the Word of God, can say without scruple, "we believe, and are sure." The precious faith is God dwelling in us by the truth of his Word; or his Word, communicating the riches of his love, grace, and truth into our intellectual powers. "He that cometh to God must believe that he IS." Faith is the truth of God dwelling in the heart, in its special efficacy and vital power, or it is the Gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation, to everyone that believeth; received, as it verily is, as the Word of the living God; and effectually impressing the heart with heavenly influence, according to the Majesty, Glory, and Excellency of Him whose Word it is. "Whose Voice then shook the earth; but now he hath promised; saying, yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven." And if it, {his voice; that is, his Word effectually conveyed by the Spirit of Truth,} has not this effect; to go through all the powers of the soul, sharper than any two edged sword; to cause him to tremble at the Majesty, while he is astonished at the wisdom, and adores the love and grace of God in Christ; it is not received as the Word of God. And then there is no true faith. Let anyone consider, the great things which are ascribed to faith, and he must see, that it is not an empty speculation, or bare assent to the truth, though held in the most certain and clear light; but the life and spirit of the Truth, as it is the truth of God. If it be the true faith of the operation of God, it worketh by love; for God fulfills the work of faith with power; and it stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. And this power of God in the heart is invincible. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." But it first overcomes the soul, and brings it into total subjection to the Captain of Salvation; and then, under his banner, it always wears this motto; "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." The soul finds itself so overcome, that it cannot resist the truth of the testimony of God; but receives it with full assent and consent, and with full approbation of all the powers of his mind; for he cannot repel the clear demonstration of the Spirit, and of the power, in which the Gospel comes. He is blessed indeed with the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. As the Lord hath said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The riches, the excellency, the blessedness that is in Christ unites his soul in love; as he seeks with desire and delight, and with all his powers, earnestly crying out, "draw me, and we will run after thee; whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." The infallible Word of truth, assuring him of the all sufficiency that is in Christ, his consummate Salvation, and the freeness of his Grace; through the power of the Spirit of grace, gives power to the soul, to commit himself wholly to the Lord for time and eternity; to depend entirely upon Christ, for righteousness, peace, and everlasting life. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." This faith will assuredly produce true Repentance. That is, a readiness to relinquish everything that is contrary to that Holy One, in whom he has believed. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." He is ready to forsake all vicious practices, immoral conduct, and all filthiness of conversation; as well as to hate all internal wickedness, or perverse principles; and earnestly to seek after purity in heart and life; because He that hath called him is Holy; but, "the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." He also is ready to explode all his own righteousness, wisdom, power, or excellency; with everything that is of man; or whatsoever the religious world may propose as a foundation of acceptance with God, life, or salvation; knowing that, "all flesh is grass;" and that, "other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is

Jesus Christ." He also is ready to quit all friendship with the world; with all relations, friends, or enjoyments whatsoever in case they stand in the way, to hinder him from following his beloved Lord. "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." He that is wanting in this principle, to forego everything that stands in competition with Jesus Christ has not that repentance which is unto life; and he that has not the genuine repentance, has not that faith which is of the Operation of God. John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Freeness and Sovereignty of Grace**

The origin of all grace is the Everlasting God, who is known by his name JAH, and rideth upon the heavens in the Excellency of his Majesty; and whom no creature is able to extol in accordance with his Inconceivable Greatness! Whose name alone is Jehovah, and is the Most High above all the earth. His essence and all his Attributes are Infinite Perfection. He calls himself I AM; which is, and which was, and which is to come; and tells us, "this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations." He appropriates to Himself these characters - Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last. He often avouches his despotic Authority; "I am the LORD;" and commands the whole creation to stand in reverent awe of his Sovereignty. "Be still, and know that I am GOD." Nor can the Eternal HOLY ONE know any change, or be what he is not, or cease to be what he is. "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth." "Behold, heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee." "Blessed be thy gracious NAME, which is exalted above all blessing and praise." Wherefore, as the Divine Being in all his Attributes is Independent, Immutable, and Uncontrollable; his Unfathomable Love, his Unsearchable Wisdom, and his Irresistible Power are Infinitely Perfect; and his Grace, in its immense original, in its glorious manifestations, and efficacious communications is absolutely free and absolutely Sovereign. That Grace which is in God the Father proceeds forth from him in his beloved Son, and is communicated to his elect by the Holy Ghost, and is infinitely above all created influence, has no dependence on any occurrence that can happen in time, nor can possibly be affected one way or other by anything found or not found in, done or not done by any creature; for "he is of One Mind, and who can turn him; and what his soul desireth, even that He doth." From Everlasting to Everlasting he is known by the name of God ALMIGHTY - EMMANUEL. The Husband, the Life, and the Fountain of all grace to his Church, eternally dwells in God. "I am in the Father." The union between Christ the Head and the select members of his body is in God. "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Election is in God. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Adoption is in God. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." The Council and purpose of Grace is in God. "According to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself." The execution of all the divine counsel is by his own Son, the Wisdom and Power of God. "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." And all the blessings of grace and glory proceed from God, as a living Stream from an overflowing Fountain. "The Lord will give grace and glory." Wherefore, upon this Foundation I stand, as an invariable Truth built upon the infallible Word of God; that the grace of God cannot possibly be excited by any motive, being in itself absolutely free; nor can it possibly be retarded by any obstacle, being in itself absolutely sovereign! John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, 1758}

### **Gog & Magog**

In the two following chapters, {Ezekiel 38 & 39,} under the names of Gog, Magog, &c., and under the similitude of armies, &c., are represented the spiritual enemies of the church, making war against the saints, and using all means to root out and destroy both the truth of

Christ, and the peace of the children of God. This must be in the days of the Gospel, for it was not done before the coming of Christ; and it is said to be in the latter years, and in the latter days. And this war is against the life and power of the gospel; not by armies of soldiers and horsemen, for believers never stand as nations, provinces, cities, or worldly bodies; therefore no war, in that form, can be made against them. They have three sorts of enemies; the profane world; they that go about to establish their own righteousness, in opposition to the righteousness of Christ; and they that profess Christ in name, but deny him in power. The first of these are least malignant, and the last are the most inveterate enemies to the truth; for while the openly profane disregard the Son of God, and treat his Word with contempt; and the self-righteous set themselves in open rebellion, and bid defiance to the Righteousness of Christ; they that call themselves by his name, but not in truth, act the part of traitors, pretend to be of his church, and introduce themselves among his people, that they may artfully sow their false doctrine, and with subtlety bring in a mixture of false worship, that they may insensibly undermine the faith of the saints, and sap the foundation of the truth, as it is in Jesus. These are always pointed at as the most mischievous and most dangerous enemies of the children of God; and these plainly appear to be intended by the army of Gog, as they are enemies under cover, which is said to be signified by the name Gog. The prince of this army is the darkness and delusion of the false Christ; and the army is the seduced people over whom the deceptions of Satan reign; for no prince can reign without subjects. The other enemies join with these, to act their part; but they are not so dangerous, as they are enemies uncovered, which is said to be signified by the name Magog. - Some think this war is made by the Turks against the Christians, as most of the nations mentioned are either under the Turk, or at least of the Mahometan party; but they ought to consider, that this expedition is against the real followers of Christ, whom the Turk knows nothing of. I do not think the Turkish Empire can anywhere be found particularly mentioned in the Bible, only as some mention is made of the ravage of the Mahometan powers, in which that empire must be included; and as to the nations mentioned, we have no reason to think it intends the natural people of those countries; one nation does not hate the disciples of Jesus more than another, they are hated of all nations; only the false professors of Christ are their avowed enemies above all other people. Others think Gog and Magog intend the Pope and Turk, warring against the true Christians. Perhaps these may bear some resemblance to the things pointed out, as the Pope is an enemy to Christ under disguise; and the Turk, or Mahometan, is an enemy professed; and they both do what they can, but neither of them, nor both united, come up to the described enemies. For be it observed, that under the gospel, Israel is the true children of God; {since the resurrection of the Lord of glory, God never did, nor ever will show any more regard, nor any less regard, to the literal nation of Israel, than to any other nation; all the world now stand on one perfect level. "There shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Jn.10:16. "And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." Jn.11:52. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Rom.10:12. "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh." II Cor.5:16. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Gal.3:28. "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all." Col.3:11. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Eph.2:14;} and the Land is the spiritual rest given them in Christ; the enemies described as lying on all sides of that land, east, west, north, and south, shows that they shall be attacked on every side, and in every form, with all sorts of deceptions, traditions, false doctrines, carnal worship, and deceivableness of unrighteousness, which come as storms and clouds to cover and darken their happy enjoyments, and which are intended by horses and weapons; no national armies can enter this holy land, nor can any carnal weapons touch the blessings of the saints; this can be nothing else but the very

beast, or false Christ, inspiring the universal body of Antichristian professors, among whom the Pope is doubtless included, but not particularly pointed at. The design of this overspreading army is to spoil the church of God of their spiritual blessings; and the weapons brought from the gates of hell are so divers, so numerous, and so formidable, that it will take so much time to burn them; and everything relating to them is so infectious, that it will make the children of God so assiduous to have every bone buried. - By his being called Gog, the land of Magog, it should seem as if Gog were the prince, and Magog the land of his dominion. We find all the rest mentioned as nations, but Gog seems to be an original; and after him all the multitude is named; and cannot be any other thing than the man of sin, the son of perdition, the mystery of iniquity, the false Christ, the beast that rose out of the sea, and out of the bottomless pit, who now reigns over those whose names are not written in the book of life; and at this very time is at the head of all his multitude, making war with all his might against Christ and against his saints. And it is in the spiritual land of Israel that the making shall be at his fall; there shall his weapons be burnt, and his graves made. {Nahum 1:14} - There are many other prophecies which relate to gospel blessings, and cannot admit of a literal fulfilling; and they ought to be read with deliberate attention; for notwithstanding every part of the Word of God is plain and clear, it is only to them that understand, and is to be learned by comparing spiritual things with spiritual. Some predictions were fulfilled in the Person of Christ, and in his Apostles; some relate to the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles; some to the blessed effects of the Gospel in the hearts of God's elect; some to the trials of the saints in the world; some to the coming of Christ in the power of his Spirit, to make the Gospel effectual to all the nations; and some relate to his personal coming, to judge the quick and the dead, with the events that shall follow. And now, from the time that all vision ceased, the Book of the Revelation opens all the future events that are necessary to be made known to the church, till the Son of God shall appear in the glory of his kingdom. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Gospel Faith**

There is a sanctification in the affections and passions of the soul; or in the operative and passive faculties of the mind; for according as the understanding is enlightened with Divine truth, the heart will be affected with the special influence thereof; and dispositions conformable to the sacred Gospel of Christ will be produced in the inner man; or the blessed manifestation and communication of sovereign grace will make a certain impression, and have its due effect upon the intellectual powers. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." {II Cor.3:18} By the direct influx of the Spirit; and through the knowledge of the truth the soul is blessed with faith in God; or firm trust and confidence in Him. As saith the psalmist, "they that know thy name will put their trust in thee; for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee." {Ps.9:10} That is, not they that know how to spell and pronounce his name with a proper accent and natural sound; but they that know the truth, virtue, power and excellency of his nature and attributes, of which his name is expressive; these do, by his word, receive strength to commit themselves to him without reserve, for time, and for eternity; for life, for salvation; for righteousness, for peace; and for every branch of sanctification. For they see such absolute, infinite, eternal, immutable all-sufficiency in Him, that they cannot distrust him. His truth being incorporated into their very souls, and their innate powers incorporated into his faithfulness, nothing can intercept the united affection they feel towards him, and their unshaken confidence in Him. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." {Is.12:2} This is true faith; at least, in one of its special operations; but faith, in its utmost extent, includes all the branches of spiritual grace that a believer is made partaker of during this life; for as all spiritual blessings are held forth in the word of truth, and faith is nothing else but that truth received into the

heart, and dwelling there; all the spiritual blessings that can possibly be enjoyed are bestowed by faith; and every branch of experimental sanctification is no other than faith in a different mode of operation; and that particular branch, of fixed recumbence on the Lord; that is on the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; is a blessing promised to all the chosen of God. "My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust." {Is.51:5} Again, "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the LORD." {Zeph.3:12} John Johnson {Evangelical Sanctification, 1776}

### **Gospel Fellowship in Christ**

What fellowship can I have with persons of these principles? A Christ who is not properly set up from everlasting, or had not the preeminence in the Father's Counsel, but found out or contrived to assist upon an emergent necessity occasion by the intervention of sin. A Christ who only bestows some kind of life upon his people, but is not Himself their life. A spirit that speaks of himself or operates in the soul in a separate capacity without any manifestation of the Father or the Son or the Word of his Grace. A new birth which is neither by communication of the immortal seed or fullness of Christ, nor being brought forth into the light and truth of Christ, but by mere dint of operation, whereby a turn is given to the current of nature, or a different bias or inclination formed in or impressed upon the mind. Spiritual life properly subsisting in the man, not by immediate communication or vital union with Christ or Christ dwelling in him and he in Christ as Vine and branches. Faith which is not of God through Christ by the power of his Spirit in the truth of his word dwelling in the soul, but the creature's own act. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Gospel Glory of Christ**

In the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ the deep counsels of God are revealed, his will made known and his eternal purposes brought forth to light and the unsearchable riches of grace, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God, and kept secret in the bosom of Divine Love, are opened in the clearest light, and manifested in the highest glory that is possible for human creatures to behold, whilst in a mortal state. - All that is written in the Old Testament, was delivered by the dictation of the Spirit of Christ, and written concerning Himself. {I Pet.1:11, Acts 3:24, 10:43, Lk.24:27} And before the writing of the Scriptures, during the longevity of the fathers, when the long continuance of the messengers to whom the word of God was delivered, made them living oracles, and rendered writing unnecessary still; all that God spoke to any of his servants, was in relation to the Holy Seed. {Gen.3:15, 9:16,26, 12:3} And afterwards, when it was the good pleasure of God to commit his will to writing, it came in such clearness, attended with such majesty, and before such numbers of witnesses, that all the wit and malice of men was not able to resist the undeniable fact, to deny the truth, or invalidate the infallible evidence. And the Lord continued to send his prophets, one in one age, and another in another, still speaking the same language, and testifying of the same Holy One, the Messiah that was to come, the Spirit of the Lord still confirming their words with tokens of his power; which, with the purity of the language, the majestic style, the profound wisdom, and the invariable consistency that appears through the whole proves it to be impossible that it should have proceeded from any combination of men; for it bears all the characters of Divine Perfection, and cannot possibly be disputed by any that read it with sincere attention. All that is written in the Old Testament came by the same Spirit, pointed to the same things, and is given as a foundation of the higher glories, which now appear with more abundant clearness in the New Testament. {Is.30:26} Those

were the excellent dawns of the morning, giving notice of a more perfect day that was approaching, {Heb.11:13,39 & 40,} but now the sun is risen indeed, and we enjoy the perfect light of the brightest day; in comparison of which, the former light which shined in the Old Testament is called darkness; not that it was darkness, but real light, only as compared with the more effulgent glory. {II Cor.3:10,11, I Jn.2:8} All the prophecies in the Old Testament, all the types and shadows in the Law, and all the various appearances in which God was pleased to manifest himself to his people in the former days, were directions to lead us to Christ alone, and in everything terminated in Him. {Rom.10:4, Gal.3:24, Col.2:17, Heb.9:11,12} And now the Holy One being come to his temple, and manifesting his fullness of Grace and Truth in the glory of the New Testament, all those former things give place; as the moon, the stars, and the twilight, all disappear when the sun ascends to his meridian glory. Now, whatever was intended by the things that went before, has its perfect accomplishment in Emmanuel, the Lord of Glory. All that was declared in the Old Testament, is perfectly verified in the New; and all the glory that shines in the New Testament, is clearly witnessed and firmly established by the Old; and they are now no more two Testaments, but one record which God gave of his Son; like one house, of which the Old Testament is the foundation, and the New Testament is the superstructure; or one tree, of which the Old Testament is the root and stem, and the New Testament is the branch and the fruit. The truth of God in Christ is perfect unity. {II Cor.1:19,20} Thus the declaration of the whole will of God being completely formed into one perfect Testament, it is one entire chain of truth, one uninterrupted stream of blessedness, one perfect path of righteousness and peace, one glorious shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. In this perfect system of holiness, light, and truth, the glory of the Godhead shines forth in the utmost splendor, magnificence, glory, and excellency, that ever appeared to created beings, or that possibly can be accommodated to mortal intellectuals. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Gospel Glory of Christ**

In these Holy Oracles are represented to us, the essential attributes of Divine Perfection; and though it is impossible for us to comprehend any one of these attributes, yet we may apprehend so much of them, as may lay a foundation for our ample satisfaction, respecting all the further declarations which the Lord God is pleased to make of himself unto us, as every work, counsel, or blessing that proceeds from God must depend on his Essential Perfection. And in this Sacred Word is clearly held forth to us, the mystery of the Divine Will, as it centers in the essential attributes of JEHOVAH; even the paternal counsels and purposes of God, which from eternity he purposed in Himself; in which were contained a perfect plan of all the works that God would perform, and of all the goodness that he has showed, and that he will show to the universal creation in general, and to his church in particular, through time and to everlasting. In these two points of light, that is, the eternal perfections of his Essence, and the immutable counsels of his Will, we, according to his Infallible Word, behold the Father. This Holy Testament opens to us the great mystery of godliness; God revealing himself in our nature, of all the perfection of the Father manifest in the Son; here we behold the deep counsels of God brought forth to light; all the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in the man Christ Jesus; the highest delight of the Father, and the life of all his chosen; thus he is perfectly qualified to stand a Mediator between God and man, having the perfection of both natures in himself. The Father gave him to his church in all his divine fullness, {Eph.1:22,23,} and he gave them to him in all their sin and misery. {Jn.17:6} Here was the proof of the love of the Father and of the Son; God is love. The children were involved in sin, wrath, and condemnation; from which, unless they were delivered, they must be separated from him forever; and as the wages of sin is death, there could not be any deliverance, but by his dying for them; his love could not bear a separation; but as he had all power, wisdom, and holiness in himself, he was able to

redeem them, and this he was pleased to do, though the ransom must be his own life. And we are distinctly informed how the Father made him to be sin for us; how he bear our sins in the deepest of sufferings; how he made an end of sins and brought in everlasting righteousness; and how he was raised again for our justification; yea, we are further assured, that this same Jesus who poured out his soul unto death for us is now ascended into the highest glory of the Father, where he now appears in the presence of God for us. Our High Priest to make us accepted, {Eph.1:6,} our Advocate to maintain our cause, {I Jn.2:1,} our Intercessor to obtain all blessings for us, {Jn.14:16,} and our Fore-runner to give us access to the bosom of the Father. {Heb.6:19,20} And the riches of grace and glory revealed and communicated to God's elect in the Gospel by the special power of the Holy Spirit, proceeds from the Father and the Son; and is of the same nature with that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us by the Son; and every believer dwells in God, and God in him, and has fellowship with the Father and the Son, {I Jn.1:3, 4:16,} being made partakers of the Divine nature, {II Pet.1:4,} and filled with the fullness of God, {Eph.3:19;} that is, so far as is compatible with creatureship, or as can be conveyed into earthen vessels; therefore, what the children of God enjoy of the fullness of Christ, is as far above that vague empty child's play, which by professors of every denomination is commonly called religion, as heaven is above the earth. The Holy One of God having glorified the Father upon earth, and finished the work which God gave him to do; and being exalted at the right hand of God, ascended into the highest glory of the Father; and having all power in heaven and in earth given into his hands; he now sends down the word of his grace, the gospel of our salvation; a message worthy to proceed from the Father of lights, to be sent by the Lord of glory, and to be communicated by the Spirit of holiness; for this gospel contains such light, truth, love, grace, peace, salvation, felicity, and eternal glory, as cannot fail to give new life to everyone that receives it; but it is never received into the heart, but by the power of the Holy Ghost, even by the same Almighty God in his Divine inspirations, making the Word of his Grace effectual to the soul. {Acts 16:14, I Thes.1:4,5} For the Holy Ghost is the very same God with the Father and the Son; their different relations to the church, and different modes of manifestation and communication makes no difference in their Divine Essence. These Three are ONE. The Gospel is the Word of God, revealing the Father and the Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, sealing the instruction to the hearts of his people. The Spirit of God puts no ideas into the heart, distinct from what he has indited in the Scriptures; he never speaks of himself, but guides our hearts into the light and truth of that which is already spoken by the Lord in the word of his grace. {Jn.16:13} And this he never does in an enthusiastic way, by darting sudden thoughts into the mind, raising extraordinary impulses, pushing the mind into ecstasies, agitating the passions, &c. These things proceed from the frame of a person's natural constitution; and to excite and encourage these agitations in ourselves or others, from a conceit that they are the operations of the Spirit of God is a seduction of Satan. The Spirit of Christ opens our hearts to attend to the Gospel of the Son of God; bows our wills to receive it with meekness; gives us to see and feel its excellency; inspires us with earnest desires to enjoy the blessings; seasons our hearts with deep reverence of God; lays us low in deep self-abasement; and excites in us true lively gratitude for all these rich blessings vouchsafed unto us, &c. He causes the Word of Life to take place in our inward man with power, so that we believe with all our hearts, love with all our souls, and submit with all our powers; all these impressions, and whatever spiritual operations or blessings we feel or enjoy are naturally felt and perceived in the heart to proceed from the Word of his Grace, and from thence alone. No spiritual blessing ever comes to any soul but by the Word of God, for this is the sword of the Spirit, and he never makes use of any other instrument in his work upon the soul; this every believing soul under heaven does certainly know, for it is impossible for anyone to receive anything of an heavenly nature, but what he receives in his understanding; therefore he must be as sensible of the receiving of it, from whence, and in what way he receives it, as every child upon earth is sensible how he receives natural food;

but as a child does not receive all the blessings of nature at once, neither does a child of God receive all the blessings of the fullness of Christ as one transient act or operation; for the Lord gives his word line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, as they are able to bear it, till they grow up from new-born babes and little children, to young men and fathers. {I Pet.2:2, I Jn.2:12-14} John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Gospel Glory of Christ**

"And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter." {Rev.10:10} The gospel is called a little book, because it is little esteemed, and scarce known in the world; and even among those that make the highest profession of it, the life and truth is scarce known at all. It is little, notwithstanding it contains things of the greatest excellency; as it is in the wisdom of God, accommodated to our little capacities. It looks to men as it were contracted, because it does not direct to a multiplicity of objects; but to one single object, Christ Jesus, in whom all fullness dwells. And though it contains all the completion of blessedness that creatures in a mortal nature can possibly enjoy, it is but a little portion, compared with what the saints shall enjoy of God in immortality. {I Cor.13:9-12, I Jn.3:2} And this book, or message of grace, or testimony of God, the saints take out of the hand of Christ, as given from himself; not as from men, or as it were the word of men, but with their whole hearts, and their whole souls, they receive it as it is in truth, the word of God, they embrace all his salutary doctrines, and have respect to all his commandments; they do not mince nor mangle the word of God, they eat it up; for every word which the Lord hath spoken is meat and drink to their souls, it is the very delight of their hearts, sweeter than honey, or the honey-comb. For here they taste all the blessedness that possibly can exist, so far as their present constitution can be made partaker, or their earthen vessels can contain; the everlasting, essential, immutable, superlative love of the Father; the infinite fullness of grace and truth in the Son; the light, comfort and power of the Holy Ghost, with the everlasting felicity and glory of the world to come. And they can never cease desiring to be more and more sanctified by this Word of Truth. But still all real believers who are alive at this day, do find their bellies made bitter, or their hearts deeply grieved, to see how their Lord is despised, and his word rejected by all sorts of men; by profane and professors equally dishonored. Some disregarding the Divine Record, as if it had no existence; some profaning it, as if it had only come from an heathen idol; some treating it as a fable, denying its authenticity, some pretending to read it, as the rule of their faith and worship, but in the matter of faith and worship, the traditions of men bear all the sway, and the Word of God is only regarded as an empty speculation; some attend to it only as an amusement; some attend to it only to pervert, corrupt, or handle it deceitfully, to gratify some base principle. But the greatest grief of all is to see those that pretend to acknowledge Christ as all in all, salvation by free grace, the power of the Spirit, &c., that they are endeavoring to draw a veil over the glory, to represent all in a low, flat and dry light, so as every man, however distant he be from it, may think he knows and enjoys it, and may fancy himself to be a Christian. Thus to depreciate the glory of gospel grace; turning the life and power into bubbles and chimeras; to accommodate the things of the Spirit of God to the carnal mind, to seduce the weak and ignorant, and to buoy up hypocrites to imagine themselves to be saints, &c. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Gospel Offers & Invitations**

Offers of Salvation and Overtures of Mercy are the weak or wicked inventions of unsound teachers. To bring Christ to market is an indication that the teacher stands in need of being taught. It is the highest degree of ignorance to suppose that God has given his Christ, and

that Salvation is to be offered at random by finite creatures. But, say they, "he is offered in the Gospel." The men who are blessed with spiritual sight cannot find anything of the kind in all the Scriptures, but the offering ministers imagine they see it almost in every page. It is no part of a minister's commission to tantalize poor sinners by telling them that Christ is offered to them in the Gospel, when it is obvious from Christ's own words, that he neither prayed, nor died for the non-elect world. But with respect to his own children, he is God's free donation to them, the sight of which made Paul say, "thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." John Johnson {Faith of God's Elect, 1754}

### **Gospel of the Grace of God**

The Gospel contains the truth of God; for it must of necessity bear the very Image of him from whom it proceeds. For whether a man be virtuous or vile, wise or foolish, true or false, his words will bear the inscription of his mind. So the Word of God bears the likeness of its original; whose invariable character is, "God, that cannot lie." And it is noted, concerning his immutable counsel, and confirming oath, "in which it was impossible for God to lie." Therefore, no falsehood can be contained in the Gospel of Christ, to which God bears witness; as the Lord said, "the Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me;" and of the witness he bears is so clear, and undeniable, that every soul that attends thereto with meekness, and sincerity, is immovably established in the infallibility thereof. As John saith to the children of God; "I have not written unto you, because you know not the truth; but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth." The title which the Lord of Glory gives to his Heavenly Father is, "the only true God;" and that which he takes to himself is, "the Truth;" and that which he ascribes to the Holy Ghost is, "the Spirit of Truth." These are three celestial Recorders; and the everlasting Gospel is their record. And therefore, that Gospel record is as true as God himself; for it is no other than the very truth of the eternal God; and there the Apostle fixes the immutable verity of the Word. "As God is true, our word toward you was not yea and nay. For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us, even by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in him was yea. For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." - The Gospel contains the love of God. This is the grand stupendous attribute of glory, which shines forth in the Gospel of the Blessed God, in all its refulgent beams of light, and dazzling rays of immortal excellency. This is the glorious center of eternal rest, where Jehovah, in all his infinite perfections unchangeably dwells; and from whence all the vital streams of blessedness perpetually flow, through the Son of his delight, to the objects of his good pleasure. This is a divine essence. "God is love." And to reveal the everlasting God, under this character, is the main design of the Gospel; and its language richly abounds with love; "the love of God" - "the love of Christ" - "the love of the Spirit." Or rather, it's perpetual theme is the God of love; and of the streams of love that proceed by one invariable course from that open, full, free, inexhaustible Fountain. Take away this love, and the everlasting Gospel would have no existence. For the Gospel of Christ is no other thing, than the love of God manifesting itself to us; or the love of the eternal bosom displayed in open vision. The language of the great anointed, when publishing the Gospel was, "for God so loved the world;" when addressing his own disciples, "for the Father himself loveth you;" when speaking to his Father, concerning his chosen, "and I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them." Yea, whensoever, wheresoever, by whomsoever, or to whomsoever the Gospel has been, is, or shall be preached, the love of God is the striking accent; the loudest sound of the celestial Trumpet. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us." "But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared." "But God commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given

himself for us." "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." "We love him, because he first loved us." Thus the Gospel gives one harmonious sound, love moves every string in perfect symphony, without the least discord. The words of our Lord Jesus have laid a firm foundation for the strong consolation of his little ones. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." This raises in their souls the highest admiration; "behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." But it does not ferment the mind to irregular agitations; but composes it to sing praises with the understanding, "unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." - The Gospel also contains the grace of God. This is, in some respects, the same with love; but they may be thus distinguished: Love is grace in the original - grace is love in the outgoings; or, love is the fountain and grace is the stream; love is the disposition of the Divine Mind in Christ to his elect; grace is the flowing of his goodness in his beloved Son to the objects of his choice. Love in the eternal bosom of the Father was grace in the purpose; grace displayed in the man Christ Jesus is love in the execution. And this is the sum and substance of the whole Gospel; which is called "the Gospel of the Grace of God;" and, "the Word of his Grace." God's peculiar goodness, grace, and love in Christ Jesus never was known to any creature in heaven or in earth, but by the revelation of his Son in the Gospel. I know that the litigious caviler will be ready to say, 'these things were known {at least in part} before the preaching of the Gospel;' but this objection proceeds from ignorance; and that ignorance proceeds from enmity against God; for as the person does not like to retain God in his knowledge, and consequently, has never searched the Scripture with due attention and reverence of God; he therefore cannot understand what the Gospel is. For, notwithstanding the preaching of Christ and his Apostles, as contained in the books of the New Testament, is, by way of eminence frequently called the Gospel, in distinction from the Law and the Prophets; by reason, that then it arrived to the summit of its glory, far beyond anything that ever had appeared before; yet whosoever reads the Scripture with sincere inquiry, may easily apprehend, that the whole Scripture of the Old and New Testaments make One Entire System. For though the Sun of Righteousness was not ascended to his meridian altitude, as now he is; yet every ray of light that appears in the Old Testament, was no other than the dawning of our glorious day. Christ is the end of the Law, and of the Prophets; therefore, the Law and the Prophets were the beginning of the Gospel of Christ. John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Great Dragon Cast Out**

"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world; he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." {Rev.12:9} When the children of God stand firm to maintain the truth, determined to have nothing to do with the world's religion, nor pay any deference to their grimace or devout appearances, nor to be soothed and mollified into a charitable idea of their doctrines and practices, for fear of being deemed inflexible and rigid, and for fear of condemning such great numbers; but being valiant for the truth, as it is in Jesus, and refusing all assent to the traditions of men, or to have any fellowship with those that pervert the gospel, then the dragon is cast out, and if he be cast out, his angels are cast out with him. But so long as any persons or people retain what the world calls a charitable opinion of false teachers, or false professors, so as to hold a tampering dalliance with them, the devil and Satan is certain to keep possession of those souls. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness; and what communion hath light with darkness; and what concord hath Christ with Belial; or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel; and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols; for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out

from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." {II Cor.6:14-17} But this is Satan's grand murdering piece, or train of heavy artillery, whereby he beats down all before him; to cry out against un-charitableness, censoriousness, and want of catholic spirit, faying, "What; must none be esteemed Christians who do not receive the truth of Christ with such light, life, and spirit, as there is not one to be found among many thousands? What! Must we judge so many sincere pious souls to be no believers? Must we leave almost all the world behind us, and esteem them cast out?" The Christ of God has given us the ample description of his saints, and whosoever does not bear those characters, are none of his, the dragon and his angels deceive and reign over the whole world; therefore if I do not leave the whole world behind me, I cannot be a disciple of Jesus. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Heavenly Birth**

What Christ calls, "being born again," relates not to earthly, but heavenly things. This spiritual birth is an absolute necessity for all that shall enjoy the Kingdom of God. It proceeds not from the power of man, but from the Spirit of God. It is a free, powerful, sovereign production according to the will of God. This Divine operation is not in the outward man, but in the intellectual powers. This work is sensible and intelligible, so as to be seen, known, and understood by the person in whom it is wrought; but being internal, it is not to be discerned by outward spectators. The allegory, wherein the Apostle represents the children of legal bondage, and the children of Gospel liberty, he pursues to their different births; which he thus distinguishes; "born after the flesh," and "born after the Spirit." And the Psalmist, prophetically points out this birth as the discriminating character whereby the people of God are distinguished from all the rest of mankind. "And of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her; and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there." {Ps.87:5,6} Paul informs us wherein this new birth consists, in the declaration that he makes, concerning believers being children of God. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." {Gal.3:26} This clearly points out to us wherein this second birth, regeneration, or spiritual life consists; for, faith in Christ Jesus is the gift of God, and of the Divine operation of the Holy Spirit. Christ is the Object, Author, and Finisher, and thereby the soul enjoys that life which is in God's Holy One, or lives by the faith of the Son of God. It is wrought in the understanding by the Gospel of the Grace of God, called "the word of faith;" the "power of God unto salvation;" and made effectual in the soul by the Holy Ghost, called, "the spirit of faith." And Peter points out the new nature which those souls possess by the food that they now live upon. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." {I Pet.2:2} In all places where the Scripture makes mention of any such thing, it appears to intend the very same; namely, by the light of the everlasting Gospel, through the sovereign efficacy of the Holy Spirit, the grace and truth which is in Christ, being clearly manifested, and powerfully communicated to the soul, the soul receives of the fullness which is in Christ Jesus, and by faith lives thereby, feeds thereupon, delights and trusts therein, as his very life, joy, hope, peace, righteousness, salvation, glory and eternal felicity; and thus, bring brought off from all imaginary life in himself, or in any creature, and from all false hopes, comforts or delights, he now breathes in the pure air of his heavenly Father's Kingdom. "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." {I Jn.5:1} John Johnson {Being Born of God, 1776}

### **Holiness of God**

The holiness of God is too stupendous to be described. The thought thereof leads to such awful conceptions of his most glorious tremendous Majesty that our hearts faint, our

tongues fail, and all the powers of our souls are dislocated or absorbed in the transcendent glories, beauties, perfections and infinite heights, depths, lengths and breadths of Divine Rectitude and Incorruptible Purity. Nor can words express it or describe what the essential holiness of God is; for if we would attempt to give a definition thereof, with the greatest variety of eloquent expressions, we must {at last} be obliged to tell you, it is Absolute Holiness, as the glorious beings before the throne repeat the same thing, crying "holy, holy, holy." But to lisp out our scanty conceptions as well as we can, we call it, the incomparable Dignity, the incorruptible Pureness, the immutable Excellency, the inexhaustible Riches, the unfading Glory, the infinite Greatness and inestimable Perfection of his Nature and Divine Attributes; that is, it is God himself; it is the incomprehensible God; it is the inconceivable Jehovah; it is the Eternal I AM; it is the uncreated Essence; the Holy ONE; who is infinitely above every creature, and absolutely separate from all impurity, deficiency or imperfection whatsoever; and is utterly incapable of debasement, mixture, or declination from the summit of absolute, infinite, and eternal perfection. John Johnson {Faith of God's Elect, 1754}

### **Holiness unto the Lord**

In that great Day of Judgment, the holiness of the Lord God shall be manifest in truth; and magnified in its utmost perfection; for then it shall shine in its full glory, in Him who is the image of the invisible God; and the brightness of his glory. The Most High God takes this name and character, HOLY; as that by which he will be known to his people; it being the highest epitaph that can be given unto him. Of which name he appears the most jealous, and in the strictest manner, commands all that come near unto Him, to reverence. Therefore, in that great and glorious day, he will assuredly magnify the Glory of his Holiness above all things. Holiness appears to contain all the excellency, greatness, fullness, riches, glory, blessedness, and every perfection of all the attributes of the eternal God. Or in other words, it contains all that is great and good; or it is expressive of all that the infinite Jehovah IS. I cannot express; I call it, the excellency of his Majesty, the glory of the Divine Essence, the dignity of his Nature, the richness of the uncreated Mind, the fullness of the blessedness of the Fountain of all beings; but both my expressions and thoughts fail. But would we know what the holiness of God is; it may be best conceived in the contemplations of an humble mind, by observing, with sacred reverence, and tremendous awe, how it is set forth and recommended to us in the Word of God; and regarded by all that loved and feared his Holy Name. The Most High God, whom the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, has taken the name HOLY, as his appropriated character. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place;" {Is.57:15;} and he very often uses this phrase, "my Holy Name;" and that in the most sacred manner, to impress reverence and godly fear. And when he brought his first begotten Son into the world; to distinguish him from all other beings, he is called, "that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee" - "thine Holy Child Jesus" - "the Holy One of God." And in many places he is called, "the HOLY ONE;" to show his super-excellency above all other beings. "Then thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people." {Ps.89:19} And that Spirit of God, which the Father gave to the Son, without measure; and gives, through the Son, to all his Saints, in measure, to express his eminence, and infinite distance from, and superiority above all other spirits, is called, "the Holy Spirit" - "the Spirit of Holiness." In our translation, he is most commonly called, "the Holy Ghost." {It is a pity, that the old obsolete Gothic word, 'Ghost,' had been retained by our translators; for it is not so expressive, or intelligible, as the word, 'Spirit.} Thus, the descriptive character, whereby the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are distinguished from all other beings and manifest to be perfectly ONE is HOLINESS. "There is none holy as the LORD; for there is none beside thee; neither is there any rock like our God." {I Sam.2:2} "I the LORD your God am holy."

{Lev.19:2} "Thou only art holy." {Rev.15:4} The account, and description given of the seraphs in Isaiah's vision; standing above {upon} the throne; at whose voice the door posts moved; and by whom the living fire was communicated to the Prophet's lips; can comport with no other, but the Son of God, and the Spirit of Truth; by whom the glory of the Father is proclaimed; and who perfectly answer to each other, in everything, and are, with the Father, included in the message, on which the Prophet was to be sent. "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" They, to manifest the infinite excellency, and superlative glory of the Immortal and Invisible God are represented crying one to another, and saying, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory;" {Is.6:3;} as if holiness was the very ultimate altitude of all that can be expressed or known of God; or as if it was the highest ascription of glory, that can be given him; as if it were the very climax; that having expressed that word, they could no higher ascend; but repeat the same, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Though the true design of the vision is to express the grand intention of all that is revealed, and performed by the Son of the blessed; and all that is communicated by the Spirit of his grace; that it all centers in this point, to declare the Infinite Holiness of Him, whom Christ calls, "Holy Father." In the New Testament Church, under the glorious beams of the Sun of Righteousness, and the vital streams of the enriching Comforter; represented in the Book of Revelation, by four living creatures; being brought into the same spirit, and image, express the same language, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." {Rev.4:8} Yea, so holy is the Lord, that everything that proceeds from him, or pertains to him is holy. The writings wherein his will is revealed are the Holy Scriptures; and all his commandments are holy. Every place where his presence dwells is a holy habitation. "Be silent, O all flesh, before the LORD; for he is raised up out of his holy habitation." {Zech.2:13} Every place is holy where his presence appears. "The place whereon thou standest is holy ground." {Ex.3:5} The temple, the ark, the altar, all the utensils, and everything pertaining to the worship were sanctified {rendered holy} by his presence. And the times which the Lord appointed for his people to draw near to him, were holy; therefore, it is called, "the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD." {Ex.16:23} But we do not conceive that places, vessels, times, &c., are capable of any intrinsic holiness; but the Lord was pleased to sanctify them to his use, and appoint that they should be held in sacred reverence, to teach his people to reverence, to fear and tremble at his presence, and at his holy name; and that they whose hearts were capable of receiving a different kind of holiness, should be sanctified to God, in spirit and in truth. Therefore he says, "ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." For he calls his chosen with an holy calling; dwells in them by the Spirit of his holiness; and creates them, after God, in righteousness, and true holiness; and so they grow, unto an holy temple in the Lord. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" {I Cor.3:16} And to them he says, "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God; the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." {Deut.7:6} And having called them with an holy calling, brought them to himself, and his Spirit dwelling in them, they are made partakers of his holiness. Hence they are called, "holy brethren" – "an holy nation" – "an holy priesthood;" and such they must be, or they cannot stand before this Holy Lord God. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." {Heb.12:14} It may be asked, if God only is holy; how can a man be holy; or, if holiness in God, be of so sublime a nature; what is holiness in man? I reply, that we ought to distinguish well what we read, and attend to the difference, between the very identical thing, and an adjunct, which sometimes bears the name, by reason of its relation to, or dependence on the thing itself. There is a holiness in its kind in everything that relates to God, or to the worship of God. Some places were called holy, because the glory of God appeared there, striking the hearts of those that beheld it with sacred awe, and reverence of his Majesty. Some things were called holy because they bare some resemblance to, or were figures of the true; or were used in any service, relating to the Holy Lord God. Some things, or persons, were said to be sanctified, and deemed holy, purely because they were

separated from things common, and appointed to be employed in things pertaining to God. Sometimes purifying is called sanctifying; though purification and sanctification are perfectly distinct; the former is only putting away filthiness, the latter is to be beautified with Divine Grace; yet the former is called holiness, {"by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified,"} because it is a preparative for the latter. Sometimes a sincere, humble, upright walking in the fear of God is called holiness; because it is presumed to proceed from a principal of holiness in the heart; but, since none is holy except the Lord, if we come to speak of the truth of holiness in man, it is no other than God dwelling in them. "As God have said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." {II Cor.6:16} Hereby is the soul of man sanctified, and made holy to the Lord; and there is not a spark of true holiness, in any being in the creation of God, only what proceeds immediately from God, in consequence of his dwelling in God, and God in him; and so, by vital union with Him that is holy, the soul is made partaker; {by virtue of Divine Imputation, Christ our Representative unto the Father in all the perfection & holiness of his Mediatorial Representation;} of his holiness. "For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." {I Cor.3:17} Now, it is easy to observe, with what awe, submission, reverence, fear and trembling, all those persons, whom the Holy One of Israel hath sanctified through his truth, draw nigh to God, and make mention of his holy name. With what solemnity they speak of his holiness; and what Glory they ascribe to his Inconceivable Excellency. "Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy." {Ps.99:3} "Exalt ye the LORD our God, and worship at his footstool; for he is holy." {Ps.99:5} "Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy." {Ps.99:9} And again, "who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods; who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" {Ex.15:11} When exalting his mighty works, and wonders of grace, they come to this conclusion, "He sent redemption unto his people; he hath commanded his covenant forever; holy and reverend is his name." {Ps.111:9} And they admonish one another, "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." {Ps.29:2} And again, "Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." {Ps.30:4} And again, "Glory ye in his holy name." {I Chron.16:10} And when the prophet had spoken of the rich blessings, and the most glorious things to the Church; he resolves them all into this, "Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee." {Is.12:6} Thus it appears, how all the Saints have revered, adored, magnified, and rejoiced in the holiness of the glorious Lord God; and if these things, duly attended to, do not furnish us with expressions fully to declare, nor yet enable us to form perfect conceptions of the holiness of our God; they are sufficient to fill us with profound reverence, joy, and admiration. This was the motto worn in the crown of the high priest, in the tabernacle; and now under the Gospel, that all the saints are kings and priests; it is the motto worn by every believer in Jesus: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. John Johnson {Son of God on the Throne of Judgment, 1776}

### **Human Learning - None of Christ's**

"And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit." {Rev.8:2} The smoke of the pit is the doctrine of devils, under the name of the doctrine of Christ; and the opening of the pit was the propagating of those doctrines by the sons of Antichrist. Men's hearts being deceitful, and desperately wicked, {Jer.17:9,} and the spirit of devils joining with them against the Lord, and against his anointed, undertook the most daring enterprise, to thrust the Son of God out of his throne, and to dignify man in his place. {II Thes.2:4} For instead of learning from Christ, the true prophet and teacher, they set up schools, academies, colleges, and universities; to teach the things of heaven by earthly wisdom. And hereby the true Sun of righteousness, the light of Christ, in the word of

his grace; and the pure air, the vital influence and special guidance of the Spirit of truth were totally obscured. For where this smoke of the bottomless pit, {human learning,} is introduced into the church, the true light is so darkened and confounded by the false light, {Lk.11:34,35,} that the truth, as it is in Jesus, has no residence there. For this earthly learning and wisdom of men is so idolized and taken into the place of the true light of the Spirit, that wherever it so prevails, as for the knowledge of God to have any dependence thereon, the Son of God has no longer the dominion in that church, or in that soul. But the traditions of men, as the smoke of a great furnace, drive away the pure light of the gospel; and under this veil of darkness, the authority of Christ is rejected; and men take upon them to dictate what is to be believed, and what is to be practiced, and to have dominion over the people's faith. To take, without license, what pertains to another, and put it to our own use, is theft; so for persons to take upon them to preach the gospel, when Christ has not called them to it, or given them authority by committing it to them; to arrogate to themselves the power which Jesus gave to his disciples, to bind and to absolve upon human authority; to apply the scripture according to men's opinions to those purposes for which it was never intended; and to claim to themselves, or to teach others to claim the promises of God, which were never adapted to them, or designed for them; or to call themselves of the kingdom of heaven, when God has not sealed them thereto; this is diabolical theft. {Deut.28:20, Jer.23:30,31} For this I appeal to the conscience of every man that esteems himself unlearned, and yet thinks human learning necessary to the knowledge of God, that he has no faith of his own, but that for which he is dependent on some learned man, or men, therefore it cannot be faith in God. And forasmuch as learned men of every denomination clash, dispute and contend one against another, almost in everything, which party must the poor man follow? In this he can have no director but his own fancy. This way it came about, that the mystery of iniquity, the unfathomable deeps of darkness and corruption prevailed; and the nominal church became an habitation of devils. {Rev.18:2} John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Imputation**

To know Christ in the execution of all his Mediatorial Offices, accomplishing the salvation of his Church, from all sin, and completing their deliverance from all evil. And this, no man can behold in a true light, unless he keep a steady eye upon the personal Perfection of the Son of God, upon the Union subsisting between Him and his elect, and the authoritative commission received from his Father for the performance of this work. For if the least imperfection was found in Him, he could not be equal to the stupendous undertakings; and if there were not a personal connection between Him and his chosen, the things performed by Him could not be imputed, or made available to them; and if those transactions had not been according to the commission, or power given him by the Father, they would have been made void, for want of authority. Notwithstanding, many there be who pretend to believe in Christ, to depend on the virtue of his blood, and expect salvation through his righteousness, who never pay much attention to his Word, as to have their souls established in these things by the power of the Holy Ghost; but that is not faith, it is only fancy or opinion; for no man can, in reality, believe anything further than his understanding enters into the spirit of the thing believed; but the believer receives the Truth of Christ in his Word, not merely gathering up a little smattering, and leaving the greatest part as obsolete or unnecessary; for he knows it is all given by the Inspiration of God for our profit; {II Tim.3:16;} and from that Sacred Word, he learns the true character of the Holy One; and keeping these perfect qualifications in view he is enabled to observe the measures taken by the Lord for our Salvation. The word of truth informs us that our sins were imputed to the Son of God by appointment of the Father. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." And that the Son voluntarily submitted to the Appointment without the least reluctance; saying, "lo I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God." And standing in this predicament, put in our

place, under the charge of our iniquities, the righteous Law condemned him in our stead. "For he was made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law." And being righteously condemned, by that Law which we had broken, the Father spared not his Son, but pronounced the righteous sentence, "smite the Shepherd." And the Son opened not his mouth, but became obedient unto death. Thus he was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse; being made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; and his blood, being offered through the Eternal Spirit without spot to God was made perfectly available for our justification. "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." And in his resurrection he proclaimed victory over all our enemies; and put the matter beyond all doubt, that he had made our righteousness complete. "Who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." This is the righteousness preached to us in the Gospel, whereby every soul that receives it in truth is delivered from guilt and enjoys peace with God. John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, Justification, 1758}

### **Imputation & Righteousness**

Jesus Christ is the Center of Righteousness, being both essentially righteous in Himself, and fulfilling all righteousness for his people. The Father calls him, my Righteous Servant. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." {Is.53:11. A Righteous Branch. "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth." {Jer.23:5} The Branch of Righteousness. "In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land." {Jer.33:15} The Sun of Righteousness. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall." {Mal.4:3} And again, he is called, Jesus Christ the Righteous; "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" {I Jn.2:1;} to show that he is the essential residence, and original source of all righteousness; and to him it is ascribed, in every character, and every performance. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." {Ps.45:6,7} "And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins." {Is.11:5} "I the LORD speak righteousness, I declare things that are right." {Is.45:19} "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." {Dan.9:24} "Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness." {PV.8:18} From him alone, who is the inexhaustible Fountain, proceeds all the righteousness of the saints; and he is, of God, made to them righteousness. They know, they expect, they desire, they seek no other righteousness, but that which Christ is. "Surely, shall one say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength; even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed." {Is.45:24} "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." {Is.45:25} "That I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." {Phil.3:9} And in this perfect righteousness of Christ, they stand complete before God. "Ye are complete in Him." {Col.2:10} They are as righteous as God himself; for they do not stand in the righteousness of their own; nor in a righteousness inherently wrought in them, or conferred upon them in an abstracted sense, distinct from its radical source; but in the very identical righteousness of the Son of God. "This is the heritage of the servants of

the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD." {Is.54:17} They are presented to God in the perfection of Christ; called by his name, and approved in him, even as himself is approved. His righteousness is, of God, made theirs by Imputation and they are made the righteousness of God in Him. In this righteousness they are justified in the sight of God. Acquitted from all guilt, wrath, curse, and condemnation which sin had introduced; and all their iniquities, perfectly and eternally extinguished, as if they had never been. "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins; return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." {Is.44:22} "In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." {Jer.50:20} "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." {Mic.7:19} And this justification from sin, is alone by his blood; having borne our sins in his own body, and poured out his soul unto death for us, whereby he became, "the propitiation for our sins." "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." {Heb.10:14} His blood, {that is to say, his life laid down for us,} being of infinite value in the sight of his Father, must needs be of infinite virtue, to answer the end to which it was devoted; namely, to make full atonement for transgressions; and deliver his children from death and misery. "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." {Zech.9:11} "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." {Rom.3:25,26} "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him." {Rom.5:9} "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." {I Jn.1:7} Thus, when regard is had to the matter of our justification, or that whereby the remission of sins is obtained, it is always ascribed to his blood. But when the evidence is in view, or that which proves the sufficiency of the atonement, it is ascribed to his resurrection. For the resurrection was an undeniable demonstration that the sacrifice was accepted. "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." {Rom.4:25} In this righteousness, the saints are justified in their claim and title to the everlasting kingdom of God. Undoubtedly they have an eternal inheritance settled upon them, which includes all the blessings that can possibly exist, in God, or in the creation of God; in time, or in eternity; and secured to them by the most firm conveyance that a faithful God can make. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." {Mt.25:34} "To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." {I Pet.1:4} "For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death." {Ps.48:14} "The LORD will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." {Ps.84:11} "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." {I Cor.3:23} "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." {Rev.21:7} But by what right or title do they come to this inheritance? This right of inheritance to the saints is alone in Christ Jesus. The only begotten of the Father; "whom he hath appointed heir of all things;" {Heb.1:2;} and the saints possess a title to the eternal inheritance, by virtue of their union with the Son of God. He being sole heir, by native right, and they, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, in marriage relation, are no more twain, but one body and one spirit with the only Son of God. And thus he is made righteousness unto them. Nor is it possible for anything to dissolve this union with the Son, to disannul their relation {as children} to the Father, or efface their title to that glory which is in immortality; for in the right of Emmanuel, their title is irreversible. Some persons talk of these things being purchased by Christ for his Church; yea, they will tell us of his purchasing grace, the Holy Spirit, eternal glory, &c., but these are mere fictions; and betray the ignorance of such vain talkers; for these things are absolutely above the nature of any purchase, being nothing

less than the outgoings of Divine Perfection. Christ purchased his Church with his own blood; and by making atonement for the sins of his people, procured for them eternal deliverance from everything that is evil, but to procure real endowments, to obtain positive good, or merit enriching blessings, never was the design, in the shedding of the blood of Christ. By his sufferings, we have redemption from sin; and by Union with his Person, made heirs of God. Eternal life and glory comes not by purchase, but by patrimony. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." {Gal.3:29} John Johnson {Christ: All in All, 1776}

### **Infant Baptist – A Pillar of Popery**

The things of the kingdom of God are accommodated to the understanding, to be received by faith, without which no creature can possibly enjoy any spiritual blessing; the worship of the gospel is of a spiritual nature; but the baptism of infants is a mere carnal ceremony, taught by the precept of men, therefore the worship must be in vain; it is a profane mimicry of a most solemn ordinance of Jesus Christ, under pretense of doing something spiritual, by a carnal operation, to a creature who is incapable of knowing anything of the nature thereof; as if the Son of God were a whimsical superstitious being, like one of the vanities of the heathen, or as if it were done in direct opposition to the grace and truth taught in the New Testament. It cannot be the worship of the true God, as no such thing is found in his Holy Oracles; yet worship it is, of the kind, and of consequence it must be the worship of devils. A man must believe in a false god, before he can follow such false worship; but I cannot conceive it possible for any believer, or sincere lover of the Son of God, to have any hand in such a practice; for nothing more foolish and wicked, or that more manifestly appeared to be the device of Satan, was ever invented since the world began; or anything more abominable ever practiced by Heathens, Mahometans, Jews, or Antichristians; and in one point, this idolatrous practice exceeds anything that Heathens ever were guilty of; that is, in the deep profanation of the sacred name, or taking in vain the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. As far as is possible for men and devils to conspire to the eternal destruction of the infant, it is done in this delusive branch of will-worship, by laying a foundation to train it up in lies, and make it believe that some great thing was then performed, to secure its eternal salvation, which is all gross seduction. For as long as any man is made to believe, that in his infancy, by some carnal performance wrought for him, or upon him, by men, he was initiated into the Mysteries of Grace, taken into the New Covenant, regenerated, made a Christian, a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, it is impossible for him to know in truth what those blessings mean. And it is perfectly adapted to seduce the parents, as well as the child; for it is done under pretext of the faith of the parents; therefore it is always suggested, that the parents are believers, though they know no more of true faith than the stones; nay, were it only to make a common confession with the lips, there is not one in three that could give any more tolerable account than this, that they believe as the church believes. But if they had true faith, they must know better than to be guilty of treating the Lord with such contempt and solemn mockery in so profane a manner. There is not a man upon earth, that has true faith, but he does know better than to imagine it can be communicated to his children. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Justified by the Resurrection of Christ**

We are justified by the Resurrection of the Son of God. "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." This is not the matter of our justification; or that whereby we are made righteous before God; for that was, and is, in consequence of Christ being substituted in our very place, and stead; to suffer for us the very things which we

ought to have suffered for our rebellion. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity." "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." And so, when we ascribe our justification to the suffering of Christ, to his death, or to his blood, these all come to the same thing; he suffered to death, wherein his blood was shed, and his life taken away, instead of ours. And in this very transaction our justification was absolutely perfect in the sight of God's righteous Law, whose demands were now perfectly fulfilled. The resurrection of Christ was not any part of the fulfilling of the Law; or of the expiation of sin in the sight of God. It was the Law giving him a full acquittance; declaring him perfectly justified from all the sins that had been laid upon him, by the ample satisfaction he had made; and consequently, that all those whose sins had been imputed to him, were as perfectly acquitted as himself, and his righteousness imputed to them; and they made the righteousness of God in him. In demonstration hereof, Peter says of our Lord Jesus, "whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it." Thus we are justified by his resurrection; not as the matter, or cause, of the remission of sins in the sight of God; but as a full proof, or demonstrative evidence, that his life was an adequate ransom; and that "the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake." God perfectly knew the virtue of his sufferings; but had all the creation been present, beholding the sufferings of the Lord, and had known the cause, they could not have known that it had fully answered the grand design; and that the work had been perfectly accomplished, so long as he was held under the bands of death. And indeed; we may say, that his confinement in the grave was a part of the penalty inflicted on him; which {because the wages of sin is death} he was to endure to a perfect period; after which, his soul could not be left in hell, nor would the Father suffer his Holy One to see corruption. There could not have been any foundation of our faith and hope, if the Lord had not been raised. Had not the Father given us this undeniable testimony, this manifest declaration, or irrefutable proof that the work was finished, and that the Son by his one offering had perfected forever them that are sanctified, it had been impossible for us to believe to the saving of the soul. There must forever have remained a doubt, an hesitation, an uncertainty; and so our souls must forever have remained under condemnation, as we could not have had faith, and without faith no justification. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." But in the resurrection of Christ, our justification is irreversibly ratified; and a firm foundation of our hope immovably laid; which neither earth, nor hell, sin nor death can shake. "Blessed to be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Law and Gospel Distinctions**

The Gospel is a message of glad tidings to the sons of men; and is directly opposed to the Law, as a Covenant. For the Law requires obedience from us; the Gospel publishes blessings to us; the Law proclaims justice, the Gospel mercy; the Law pronounces condemnation to the sinner, the Gospel peace and pardon. Yet, they do not in any wise contradict one another, but fully maintain and establish each other's honor and authority. For as the holy Law righteously pronounces a curse upon all sinners, binding them over to eternal condemnation for the least offense; so the Gospel declares God to be gracious and merciful, and points out the way in which this Grace and Mercy proceeds, in the hand of the Mighty One, Christ Jesus; by whom everlasting Salvation comes to the sinner without the least encroachment upon the perfection of the Law. It represents these things in a most clear demonstrate light; showing how the Law is established by Grace, and how Grace is magnified by the Law; in that the blessed God, the Father of mercies and God of all consolation, in the depths of the unsearchable riches of his love towards perishing sinners

have been pleased to raise unto his people a Savior, even his own Son, Emmanuel, who is God manifest in the flesh, and in whom dwells all fullness of Divine Perfection; and into whose hands God the Father hath committed the government of every creature that hath a being; for him hath God the Father sealed, sanctified and sent into the world to save his people from their sins, which he must so perform, as that the Lord shall be well pleased for his Righteousness sake, for he will magnify the Law and make it honorable; and the Mediator is represented in his Surety Engagements for his people, his actual performance of his Father's will, his penal sufferings for sin, the plenary satisfaction made to the demands of the Law, his Advocateship before the throne, the eternal redemption obtained for us, and the everlasting Righteousness brought in by God's Holy One. With the fullness of Grace which is treasured in Christ for his Church; and his faithfulness to maintain and perfect his work for us and in us, to the end. Also the Spirit of holiness is represented in his gracious operations, in that he hath spoken by all the prophets, which showed before of the coming of the just One; and by all the Apostles who preached peace by the blood of Christ's cross; who opens the hearts of God's elect to receive the word of his Grace, seals instruction to their souls, communicates to them the love of God and establishes them in the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; so that, the Salvation prepared by God the Father, and wrought by God the Son, becomes the strong consolation of his people by the influential operation of God the Holy Ghost. Hence the Gospel is a full flow of Divine Grace; a free proclamation of life, peace, pardon and everlasting Salvation, without any mixture of bondage, threatenings or conditions required on the creature's part; for it sets forth Christ as the New Covenant of his people, answering all the conditions of the legal Covenant. Perfect obedience he performed in his life; perfect satisfaction for sin he made in his death; perfect holiness he communicates by his Spirit, from his own fullness to the souls of his people. Thus the rich blessings of the Gospel completely answer all the demands of the Law; for as the Law gives nothing, but requires all; so the Gospel requires nothing, but gives all. John Johnson {Faith of God's Elect, 1754}

### **Lord's Supper**

In this ordinance of breaking bread, {though in itself only a shadow,} are represented spiritual things, and the figure extends to eternal things. {Mt.26:29} Therein we confess the Holy One of God; we confess that we believe in the Lord Jesus, what he himself is, what he has done for us, what he freely gives us; in what relation we stand to the Christ of God, what we now enjoy in him, and what we hope for in the life to come. For, in coming to this table, we confess him to be the Fountain of all our supplies, and declare ourselves to be the children of his grace, with a fixed dependence on him as belonging to his family, and having a right to all the blessings of his household. For all the riches of grace and glory reside in Himself, in whom we now enjoy the blessings of grace and truth, and by whom we expect to be blessed with all the perfection of everlasting life and glory. And thus, while we attend to these visible signs, the eye of our mind is fixed on the spiritual substance therein held forth to us. The time of the institution of this ordinance was very significant, for it was the night of the Passover, which was an ordinance commanded to Israel on a very awful occasion, the slaughter of all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, and bringing out the armies of Israel with an high hand and an almighty outstretched arm. So was this at a very awful period. The night in which our Lord Jesus was betrayed into the hands of sinners; when he was immediately to launch forth into the depth of suffering, to bear the heaviest of all sorrows, and to be crushed with the most tremendous agonies for our sakes, that by his stripes we might be healed, and set free from the most intolerable bondage. And herein was love manifested in very deed! That when the Lord knew he was just going to fall under the fiercest wrath, to be tormented with the most excruciating pain, and sustain the most tormenting anguish that ever was felt by any being, and that, entirely for our iniquities and sins; even at that very time that he should express the most tender compassion and

invariable kindness, the most exquisite love and sincere affection! This superlative love every believer, drawing nigh to God in this ordinance, dost celebrate with the highest gratitude, and with all his soul; yea, with the deepest humility, self-abasement and self-adorrence, yet with the most elevated joy and heavenly delight, crying out, "behold, what manner of love is this!" The order. "When the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him." {Lk.22:14} This was to express the unity of the body, Christ the head, and all his disciples as members, standing in an indivisible union with the Lord, and with one another. For no schism can be in this body, for all his children are of his flesh and of his bones, being one spirit with him, and the same with one another. "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." {Rom.12:5} No separation is possible; for they are all one in the eternal counsel. {Eph.1:4} All one in covenant, when the Father sent the Son into the world. {Is.42:6} And all one in Spirit, when they believe on the Son of God. "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." {I Cor.6:17} Christ and his saints have all but one life, {Jn.14:19,} one kingdom, {Lk.22:29,} one everlasting habitation, {Jn.14:2,3,} and one eternal glory. {Jn.17:22} These things are excellently represented to us in this glorious ordinance; for it was the good pleasure of the Lord to ratify to his disciples, in lively figures, those things which he had spoken to them in his doctrine. And sitting down together as one family, with the Lord at the head, represents our sitting spiritually with Christ in heavenly places, {Eph.2:6,} as also our sitting with him in the mansions of eternal glory. {Lk.22:30} Thus drawing nigh to God in this ordinance, we confess the very truth of Union in the love of the Father, in the fullness of the Son, in the power of the Spirit of truth, and in the glory which shall be revealed when Christ shall appear. The body of Christ; that is, the fullness of the Godhead in the Man Christ Jesus is represented by the bread, as he said, "this is my body." The very Christ of God, Immanuel, the fullness of the Godhead dwelling in the man; for notwithstanding the manhood of Christ was in very deed irreprehensibly perfect, {Heb.7:26,} it is absolutely impossible, that created nature should be possessed of such virtue in itself as to give eternal life to any being. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." {Jn.6:34} It is the Word made flesh, or God manifest in the flesh; that is, the human nature filled with all the fullness of the Divine nature, that the heart and soul of every believer feeds upon by faith. It is spiritually, mentally in the understanding; the soul beholds the infinite riches that dwells in the Holy One of God, and from thence receives the knowledge of life in Christ. If Christ were not the absolute God, no blessing of eternal life could proceed from him; and if he were not perfect man, he could not convey those blessings to us. This is the great mystery of godliness, yet there is not a believer under heaven that does not know it; for it is not possible that any sinner should be in a state of salvation, who does not believe it with all his heart, even so as spiritually to eat it, and live upon it with all his soul. "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." {Jn.6:53} Therefore when Jesus speaks of his flesh, or of his body, nothing less is intended than the infinite eternal perfection of the Divine Being, by an indivisible union, inhabiting the nature of man in perfection; and everyone that comes to this ordinance in faith, beholds the Son of God in this light. Every believer, when he comes to eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ, finds the Son of God to be his life, and forever ceases to seek life by his own works, or to go about anymore to establish his own righteousness. {Phil.3:9} John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Lord's Supper**

Jesus took the bread; that is, he presented it before God and before his disciples, a lively sign and figure of himself in his mediatorial capacity, presented to his Father and presented to his Church. He was set apart, devoted, sanctified, sent, and given of the Father to his Church, to be the bread of life to every soul that believeth; {Jn.6:27;} and he presents

himself to his chosen as his Father's gift, and as their eternal life; {Jn.10:10;} and at the Head of his Church, as their Representative, he presents himself a sacrifice to God; {Heb.9:14;} and he presents them in Himself as one body and one bread. {Is.8:18, I Cor.10:17} Christ is in every light presented as the delight of his Father, and as the life of his Church lifted up as an ensign, in whom we behold the ample perfections of the Mediator, Redeemer, Sanctifier, Savior, High Priest, Advocate, Intercessor, and every desirable office or quality. For we feed upon him in every light, and in every capacity, while we behold him in his personal excellency, his union with his Father, and his special union with his Church. {Jn.1:14} John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Mediatorial Work of Christ**

Christ, the Prince of Life is our Representative in the presence of his Father. For Jesus the Son of God, our Great High Priest is now passed into the heavens; and having obtained eternal redemption for us, he entered into the holy place, by his own blood; where he now appears in the presence of God for us. That is, to present our persons acceptable to God; to maintain our cause in the court of Divine Justice; and to prevail for every blessing that is needful to perfect us with Himself; for all which, he is perfectly qualified. "Of the things which we have spoken, this is the sum; we have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." It is very clear, that all the chosen of God, are made acceptable in his sight, alone in Christ; their great Forerunner, and High Priest forever. "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Christ is the mountain of the height of Israel; of whom the Lord says, "there will I accept them - I will accept you with your sweet savor." He alone is the altar that sanctifies the gift; of whom it is said, "they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar." Peter tells the believers, that they, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And as he makes their persons accepted, he also maintains their cause. Notwithstanding their sins, he has paid the ransom. "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous." He is righteous, and they are made, "the righteousness of God in Him." He pleads his sufferings for us; and then calls upon his Father, "let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed for my sake; let not those that seek thee be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law; and now presents himself in the presence of God, as a Lamb that has been slain; and has borne our sins in his own body on the tree; having carried our sorrows, and borne our griefs; and made atonement with his own most precious blood. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." And as he maintains our justification in right of his own life having been given, a sacrifice for us; he also, as our Intercessor, obtains for us, and communicates to us, every spiritual blessing in heavenly places; "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." All the blessings of the kingdom of God, come from the Father of lights; and are conveyed to us through him, "who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." An advocate pleads right and justice; an intercessor makes request for favors. By the former we are delivered from wrath; by the latter we are enriched with all good things. John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Offers of Grace**

In the next place he loads the doctrine of special grace with another calamity, as if it made the Most High deceitful, false and insincere in offering grace which he never intends to give; but his assertion is utterly false; for Grace and Salvation were never offered to any creature

since the world began. To God's elect they are not offered, but irreversibly given; and to the rest they were never offered, for they have no right to them. Nay further it is contrary to the nature of Gospel grace to be offered to any creature; for the natural man cannot understand it, {I Cor.2:14,} therefore he cannot choose it; and the spiritual man is already under its special influence, and enjoys it with so much delight and satisfaction, that his soul cannot be alienated from it. {Rom.8:35} Therefore, an offer of grace is a mere fantasy of his own imagination; and his simile is utterly incoherent; for it supposes persons to be denied of something which they earnestly desire and ardently seek after; but though God does not bestow this rich grace of life and salvation upon all, {for then all would be eternally saved,} yet he never denied it to any that hungered and thirsted after it; {Mt.5:6;} but carnal minds are so far from any real hunger and thirst after Jesus Christ that they see no beauty to cause them to desire Him. {Is.53:2} Nay, they are enemies to him, for they despise his salvation and hate his Person. {Rom.8:7} Therefore, what he says on this head is a mere fabulous invention to amuse unwary minds. An offer supposes the thing presented to the person, and left to the freedom of his will, to choose or refuse; but if this was all that was done, respecting the grace of salvation, not one individual in the universe would be saved; for by nature all the children of men are under the power of Satan; and while he reigns over them he is certain to prevent them from embracing the Grace of God in Christ; therefore unless that grace be displayed with such power, as to set the soul at liberty from Satan's bondage, all offers or proposals of life and salvation by Christ would be like so many overtures to the deaf ear; for the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; {II Cor.4:4;} and they are alienated from the life of God. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart." {Eph.4:18} Therefore Christ says that, "no man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" and the drawing of the Father is of such a nature, that Christ further says, "every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." {Jn.6:45} Thus it is not by virtue of an offer of grace, but by Divine attraction that souls are brought to Christ; and this Divine attraction never fails in its effectual operation. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." {Jn.6:37} The Gospel of Christ is not an offer of salvation, but a glorious Publication of Salvation; wherein it is fully revealed, that Christ shall save his people from their sins; "Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins;" {Mt.1:21;} and that he shall give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." {Jn.17:2} And this Word of Truth is that everlasting Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth. It is not a proposal made, but an infallible truth declared; the voice of the Great Shepherd, whereby his Father's love is manifested, and everlasting salvation proclaimed to them that are lost, which through the special efficacy and energy of the Holy Spirit gives life; and this Gospel is preached to all the world, that all God's elect may hear it, wherever they are scattered, "go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;" and the persons who shall be saved are particularly described, that may know and enjoy the comfort of their salvation. "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." {Acts 10:43} And wheresoever this joyful message finds one of those souls, whom the Father hath predestinated to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, the Holy Ghost gives entrance to the Word, so as it efficaciously melts the heart and brings the soul to God. "Whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." {Acts 16:14} "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." {I Thes.1:5} And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." {Acts 13:48} Where the Gospel of the grace of God comes to any soul, in the power of the Holy Ghost, there is such a glorious manifestation of Divine love, sovereign

grace, full redemption in the blood of the Lamb, boundless mercy and everlasting salvation, that it does omnipotently operate in the soul; and this will melt the hardest heart; and neither men nor devils, earth nor sin, death nor hell, can prevent the effect. This is real grace, and all that receive it esteem it grace indeed; and never treat it as if it were only a kind of half grace, or as if God might be thought to be unjust, or not clear from man's destruction, supposing Him to have withheld it. Whatever is grace is freely bestowed, without any obligation at all; and if there be any obligation to bestow a favor, so as there would be the least injustice in withholding it, then it comes not of grace, but of debt. Therefore if our sin does not fully deserve destruction and damnation, so as it might perfectly be a righteous thing in God to destroy us, without leaving us the least ground of complaint, salvation cannot be of grace. But all that believe in Christ for salvation are perfectly convinced that damnation was rightly their due, and that they as justly deserve it as any in hell; therefore they cease to contend about what right God has to dispose of them, or what right they have to expect mercy from him; for had he turned them into hell, his hand had done perfectly right; but as he is pleased to save them, his grace appears exceedingly rich, and his Name alone shall have all the glory. Thus that sovereign grace which proceeds from the bosom of the Father, reigns triumphant in the Son and effectually operates by the Holy Ghost in all God's elect, and his Gospel prevails in them above all the calumnies and reproaches, above all the fallacies and seductions of men, "for they know His voice." To the great Shepherd of the sheep be praise and glory everlasting. John Johnson {Election of God Undisguised, 1759}

### **Pale Horse & Death**

"And I looked, and behold a pale horse; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." {Rev.6:8} Wheresoever the light and glory of gospel grace makes its appearance, the church may be assured that Satan and his instruments will try all their efforts to evade, to diminish, to degrade, to quench, to kill, to bury, and to destroy; as there is nothing in existence that the souls of religious people more abhor. And the reason why the light and truth of the gospel is so detestable to them is because they are dead, yet they want to persuade themselves that they are alive; but the real life that shines in the Gospel of the Lord of glory discovers the counterfeit, and breaks the bubble; which fills them with the utmost enmity and malice. The pale horse is a perverted gospel, destitute of life or spirit; and death, which rides thereon, is the depth of corruption, whereby the truth of Christ is turned into a lie, so as to coincide with the dead carnal mind. And hell that followed, is the gross darkness that envelopes the consciences of all those who, through hardness of heart, withstand the true light. For the way to obtain the victory over the witnesses of the true God is by paleness, death, and darkness; yet these have not power over the saints, but only over the fourth part of the earth. This fourth part of the earth may not intend a proportional quantity either of number or measure, but a fourth division, class, or party of earthly minded and carnal men; of such a cast as are adapted to such a purpose; for there be three parts which are by no means fit to engage in this work; there are the loose, empty, vain, and profane, who think nothing of God, and seek nothing but sensual gratification; there are the self-righteous, who have no higher ideas of God, but as a being like themselves, or as a master requiring service from his creatures, and if they perform some sort of work, such as pleases themselves, they think it must please him; and there are the dreaming professors of the gospel, who think all is well if they believe the report of the gospel to be truly recorded and profess to expect salvation by Christ, going on in a cursory round of what they call religious duties. Though all these do verily belong to the kingdom of darkness, they are not the veteran troops of hell; and though they often skirmish with the truths of the gospel, they are not qualified to fight the strongest battles of the dragon. But the fourth part here intended, may intend men of

sensible feelings, a quick prying genius, carnal minds, and malignant spirits, who in going about to kill the truth of Christ, have power given them to kill themselves, or death and hell have power to kill them, and they are killed with their own consent. {The saints against whom they fight, they never kill.} Some kill with the sword; beating down the truth with arguments, sophistical reasonings, and the wisdom of men. Some kill by hunger; pretending to own and acquiesce in the truths of the gospel, but not in the true spirit, only to soften, to qualify, to meliorate, to detract, and to drain away the life and power, leaving the soul to famish for want of substance. Some kill by death, pretending to embrace the great things of the gospel, but turning them all into amusements to gratify the carnal mind, enthusiasms, phantasms, bubbles, and all chimera. Some kill with the beasts of the earth; either the poisonous, swelling men with pride, on account of speculative knowledge of divine mysteries; or else the voracious, tearing and rending with reproach and calumny all that confess the glories of Christ; calling them proud, conceited, arrogant, presumptuous, self-willed, uncharitable, censorious, whimsical, oddities, notions of their own, &c. Thus they bear down, overcome, and carry away all those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Praise and Thanksgiving**

This is a privilege of the highest nature, and an exercise of the highest delight; for glory in the highest perfection is due to the Holy Name of the Lord. "O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard;" {Ps.66:8;} and all nations are called to bless and adore him; that is, so many as it shall please our God to call to the faith of his Son Christ Jesus, for they that love the Lord, can never cease from this work. "Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee. Selah." {Psa.84:4} "I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever." {Ps.145:1-2} "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." {Rev.4:8} Everyone that honors the Father, honors the Son, for their glory cannot be divided; no glory can possibly be given to the one, that is not given to the other, for they are one; and to render thanksgiving and praise is the most direct and immediate way of confessing the God of all grace. In this way we confess the sensible feelings of our hearts, and breathe out the very joy, admiration and gratitude of our souls; declaring our intellectual conceptions of the Lord of glory, and the deep impressions thereby made upon our innate powers, and exert all the faculties of our minds to show forth the excellency, the blessedness, the greatness, and the goodness of the Holy One. In ascribing the glory due to his excellent greatness, or his essential perfection; herein we confess the absolute Majesty and Glory of the Father, his eternal, infinite, immutable blessedness; his righteousness and holiness, his wisdom, power, truth and love; and that we confess the going forth of all these perfections in the Man Christ Jesus, or the opening of the Divine bosom in the Son of his Delight; so that all the ineffable, inconceivable glories of the Lord God omnipotent; which from the beginning of the world have been hidden in God, now shine in the greatest luster in the Person of Jesus Christ; for Emmanuel is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his Person; and in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; or all that is in the incomprehensible Jehovah, is in the Man of his right hand. "I and my Father are ONE." {Jn.10:30} Thus, all the saints adore and bless, magnify and extol the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father; whilst they confess the Holy Ghost to be the very life, light, spirit, truth, and power of the Father and the Son, proceeding into the hearts of all that believe; to come by the knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent; to introduce them into the fellowship of the Father and the Son; and fill their hearts with clear conceptions of the glory of God in Christ. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

## Prayer & the Will of God

The subject matter is Prayer. This is a spiritual exercise, inseparable from the being of the Saints; for Christ their Husband, their Life, their Prophet, their Priest and King; their example, and their glory, constantly practiced it, both in private and in public. He did it not to be seen of men, or to answer any sinister end; but from the pure spirit of grace and supplication; or the sincere breathings of his soul to God. All his children are blessed with the same spirit; for they naturally breathe after their Heavenly Father, and after the spiritual blessings that proceed from Him; and as the Lord hath given them the same spirit of supplication, he hath also instructed them how to conduct themselves in prayer, as well as what to pray for. Therefore they pray to their Heavenly Father in spirit and in truth, with order and with understanding. Prayer does not consist in a sound of words, though ever so pertinent in themselves, or joined in ever such regular form, or due connection. Nor does it consist in pathetic expressions, or ecstatic sentences, affections, or flows of passion; or any kind of whining, grimace, or moving gestures; but it consists in a reverential boldness in approaching to God, by the new and living way which Christ Himself hath consecrated; an humble opening our whole hearts unto Him, with profound resignation to his sovereign will; with holy awe, taking heed to express ourselves before Him as he hath taught us in his Word; to ask simply for the things we want, and for the things which God hath promised, and to see that our expectations be guided according as God hath laid the foundation of our hopes in his Word; taking heed that we do not presume before God, to intrude further than we understand; but that we have the Glory of God in view as our ultimate end. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." This gives boldness in prayer, when we ask those things which we know assuredly are according to the will of God. And we do know this, that it is the will of God to complete the work of sanctification in every believing heart. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Those things which God has promised, and for those persons to whom the promises are made, we may ask with fixed assurance. As Jacob pleaded with God, "and thou saidst, I will surely do the good, &c." But in such cases, or respecting such persons, where there is no express or particular promise; though {with submission to the will of God,} it is lawful to present our petitions; it can only be by way of a wish, at a peradventure. As Abraham concerning his son; "O, that Ishmael might live before thee." Of this difference, in prayer, our Lord has given us examples; when at one time he prays, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me;" but in another case, he uses a different style, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." So, when we pray for the coming of Christ's Kingdom, and the spreading of the Gospel in the world, we may ask in bold and positive terms; but for the same blessing, in any particular place, or to any individual persons, {even supposing them our own children,} we can only present a submissive desire. So long as any soul remains uncalled, or so long as his calling is not so manifest, as for him to know his election of God, it is impossible for him to appropriate to himself, any of the special promises of God; for he can only draw nigh, as a sinner pleading for mercy upon the general Declaration of Grace made in the Gospel. But when he is manifestly passed from death to life, and not before, he may appropriate to himself every promise in the Word of God, and boldly plead with the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit, for all the spiritual blessings given in Christ Jesus to his Church. "For all the promises of God in him are yea; and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

## **Preaching the Gospel of the Grace of Christ**

Our work is not to preach moral duties, legal requirements and human performances; in fact, to preach anything as the matter of Salvation, or to encourage any soul to hope for relief from anything; "save Jesus Christ and him crucified," is to deceive souls and dishonor God by attempting to frustrate his Grace; "for if righteousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain." It is not consistent with the ministry of the New Testament to admonish and exhort persons to work spiritual operations in themselves, as faith, repentance, love, holiness etc., for these blessings proceed alone from the Grace of God in Christ; and if we suggest that they are the works of the creature, by calling and commanding persons to their performance, and with the next breath declare, that they are gifts of Grace, we shall appear like a trumpet that gives an uncertain sound; as if the word of Christ was yea and nay; for though it is the work of every minister of the Gospel to direct, invite and encourage every brokenhearted, heavy laden, mourning, thirsting soul to look to the riches of the Grace of Christ for life and salvation, according to the light, strength and earnest desire which he finds impressed upon his soul by the essential work of the Spirit; yet, to command, exhort and warn persons to come to Christ, to believe in Christ and to close with Christ, with such an air as to insinuate that it is a performance required of them or a condition of their acceptance with God; and so to enforce it with the dangers and dreadful consequences in case of neglect, &c., this is not to direct them to Christ, but to send them to themselves to seek a Savior; and the very words, come to Christ, receive Christ, embrace Christ, believe in Christ, close with Christ, make Christ welcome, get an interest in Christ, &c., when spoken in that light are a mere jargon of senseless words; and in effect, are as much as to say, go from Christ to yourselves, trust not in Christ but in yourselves, seek not to Christ but to your own hearts to perform the work in you. Such exhortations may buoy up a haughty soul full of himself, who never knew what it was to be under the searchings of the penetrating word of God, {which is like unto fire or a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces;} but has his carnal life yet whole in him. It may stimulate his pride to imagine that he can, and will and does perform these things for himself; and when he has fermented his mind into some passionate agitations he thinks that the work is done; but they can never be of any use to a trembling contrite heart who is crying out, "woe is me, for I am undone; God be merciful to me a sinner!" The only effect such preaching can have upon these souls is to fill them with deeper horror and distress; to wound, distract and drive them to depression, as many a poor soul hath felt and has had reason to say of such preachers, "miserable comforters are ye all!" For no greater impossibility can be attempted under heaven than to believe in Christ for life and salvation, before faith be wrought by the Holy Spirit, or to come to Christ, except we be drawn by the Father. Nor is it included in our commission in setting forth the unsearchable riches of God in Christ to exhort and admonish sinners, or a promiscuous audience to the performance of duties; to caution and warn them against sinful practices, and to teach and instruct them in the regulation of their lives, &c. Our commission is not to preach the Law, but the Gospel; and were we to neglect our proper work, and spend our time in admonishing sinners to reform their lives, to mend their ways, to practice virtue and religion, to regulate their conversation, to tread in the paths of piety, to spend their time in serving God, to imitate good people in all their godly actions, &c., this would not have the least tendency to convince, but rather to seduce them, by causing them to imagine that their Salvation depended on a moral reformation; for these things may be done {in the sense the world takes them} without a spark of spiritual Grace; and when persons hear them insisted on as the main branch of the Minister's work; and when they comply with the admonitions and practice the duties recommended to them {which is an easy thing for a carnal man to do} they naturally substitute them in the room of the Salvation of God. But our work is to strike at the root; to open the purity and perfection, extent and intent, perpetuity and severity of God's holy Law, exposing the corruption of nature, the plague of the heart and the moral infection of sin, with the wrath,

curse, vengeance and damnation due thereto; the ruined, miserable, helpless and hopeless condition of every sinner; also the depravity and imperfection, the emptiness and vanity, the perverseness and hypocrisy that cleaves to all the natural virtues, moral actions and religious performances that can proceed from a fallen nature; and the impossibility of Salvation to any soul, any other way than by the Son of God alone, whose Righteousness is imputed by the Father for Justification, and whose vivifying grace is applied by the Holy Spirit in regeneration. For anything short of this is only scraping the outside of the sepulture, while the rotten carcass is within. So the apostles of Christ when they preached to a promiscuous multitude of dead sinners did not spend their time in that which the world calls practical preaching, while the persons were utter strangers to that power which can excite to practical walking; but they preached Christ, the Salvation of God; and when it pleased the Lord the Spirit to open the hearts of those sinners to receive the word, then and not before, they instructed them in the practice of all things whatsoever Christ had commanded them. So every Gospel Minister ought to keep this distinction perpetually in his eye; to sinners, he is to use all means to engage their attention, and to preach Salvation to them through Jesus Christ and him crucified, waiting upon God to send a blessing, to make the word effectual; and where it has been made effectual to the soul, he is to use all means for further instruction and edification. John Johnson {Faith of God's Elect, 1754}

### **Preaching the Gospel of the Grace of Christ**

The work of the Ministry, appointed by Jesus Christ, and given in Commission to all his faithful messengers, is to preach Glad Tidings; freely to publish Grace, Peace, Salvation, and Eternal Life alone through his Name; or to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God, and no other thing. 1. The Commission which the Lord of glory received from his Father was to preach the Gospel. "The Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that his commandment is life everlasting." "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings, &c" "I will declare thy name unto my brethren - I have preached righteousness in the great congregation - I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation." Here we see the Name, Righteousness, and Faithfulness of God, and good Tidings of Everlasting Life, are the things which the Son of God was anointed and Commissioned to preach; and in the performance of this work, his Glory appears. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings." 2. Christ gave the same Commission to his apostles. "And as ye go, preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." "Go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his Name, among all nations." "And ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the outermost part of the earth." In these orders nothing appears but Pure Gospel; for that repentance which accompanies remission of sins is an Evangelical blessing, a gift of Special Grace. "Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." "To give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Again, the Commission given in the mountain of Galilee, where Jesus met his disciples by special appointment, and where it is probable the five hundred brethren were present, contains no direction for preaching anything but the Pure Gospel. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world." The doctrine to be taught, must certainly be that into which the converts were to be baptized; that is, the name of the Sacred Three, which is the very quintessence of Gospel Marrow; and the things which afterwards must be taught them to observe, were such as had had the Power of the Gospel for their Foundation; being the commandments of Christ to his disciples, and having the promise of his Presence to encourage them therein; so that Grace is first and last. 3. The Apostles who received this Commission from the lips of

the Prince of Light, understood it to intend the Gospel only. "The ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." "Called to be an Apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God." "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." "To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen." "That I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable Riches of Christ." 4. The apostles strictly attended to their Commission, making it their constant practice to preach the Gospel, and nothing else. "Daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." Saul at Damascus, "straightaway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." Apollos in Achaia, "mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures, that Jesus was Christ." Paul at Rome, "expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the Law of Moses, and out of the Prophets, from morning till evening." And, "two whole years in his own hired house - preaching the Kingdom of God, and testifying those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ." And he declares to the Corinthians, {among whom he had resided a year and six months,} that, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And to the Ephesians, among whom he had gone preaching the Kingdom of God for three years, had kept back nothing that was profitable, nor shunned to declare all the Council of God; all that he showed and taught publicly, and from house to house, and testified to Jews and Greeks, is summed up in this, "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," which is nothing else but the Grace of God exhibited in the Gospel. 5. It was the Gospel of Christ alone which the Holy Ghost was pleased to bless to the primitive churches. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the Word." "When they heard this they were pricked in their heart." "When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women." "When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Paul at Thessalonica, "opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead, and that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is Christ; and some of them believed, &c." "In whom ye also trusted after that ye heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation." "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." "He called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." And the Apostle, to convince the Galatians of this truth, and of their folly in being bewitched from it, thus interrogates them, "this only would I learn of you, received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of Faith?" We do not find anything to be preached but the pure Gospel of Grace, either in the Commission which Christ received from his Father, or the Commission which he gave to his apostles; nor do we find that the apostles understood anything else to be contained in their Commission, or that they practiced any other thing in their ministry; neither do we find that ever the Holy Ghost blessed any other doctrine to the calling of sinners, or to the edification of Saints. I do not say there is nothing to be mentioned but Christ, Grace, Gospel, Life, Peace, Salvation, &c., for these would be a set of unmeaning words, if they were not illustrated by the other things which are contained in the Scripture. But I say, as the Word of God is now digested into one perfect System, and every part, whether it be History, Law, Devotion, Prophecy, &c, is made subservient to Christ, and his glorious Gospel. "The Law was our schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ." And considered in its true Light and full Intent, the Scripture is a consistent chain of Divine Truths, all conspiring to magnify the Excellency of the Son of God, and the rich Grace given us in Him; and consequently those sacred Oracles, and all things therein contained, under the sanction of Gospel Grace, unite in one entire stream of Evangelical Blessings, to preach the Glad Tidings of Life and Salvation by Jesus Christ alone. Ministers must needs represent the Holiness, Justice, and Perfection of the Law, as a killing Letter to all that are under it, otherwise they cannot set forth the Perfection of the Righteousness of Christ; they must administer ordinances to believers, {which is only

a different mode of preaching Christ,} for the enlarging of their souls, and drawing forth their minds in the things of the Kingdom of God; they must teach them to observe all the commandments of the Lord, to the glorifying of rich Grace, whereby the righteousness of the Law as Fulfilled by Christ is declared unto them. Thus, the fullness of Christ is the first and the last; the whole and alone design of everything contained in the ministerial Commission, and everything which is to be explained, performed, taught, enforced, or anyway touched upon in the work of the ministry is purely appointed in subserviency to the Gospel of Christ; therefore every individual things spoken in the Bible, {directly or indirectly,} contributes to the preaching of the Gospel; but it is the Gospel alone that is preached. Hence I take assurance to repeat the words for which I am reprov'd. 'Nor is it included in our Commission, to exhort and admonish sinners, or a promiscuous audience, to the performance of duties; to caution and warn them against sinful practices; and to teach and instruct them in the regulation of their lives, &c. Our Commission is not to preach the Law, but the Gospel!' 1. The ministers of Christ have no Commission to preach the Law. To preach is to publish, declare, or hold forth some certain Fact; or publicly to represent some message to the people, upon which some matter of consequence depends. As the enemies of Judah charged Nehemiah, saying, "thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, there is a King in Judah." When it is understood in the name of God, it is a publication of his will to men; wherein a plan of peace is represented between God and his creatures; which was fully implied in the Commission given to Jonah, {and was understood by the Ninevites, when they heard his message;} "go unto Nineveh that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." And this is either a proposal of conditions, whereby God shall be glorified, and men made happy; or a proclamation of Free Grace from God, whereby that salutary End shall be answered without conditions on man's part. The former of these has been tried, in the preaching of the Law; for, "the man that doeth those things, shall live in them;" but it hath not answered the desired end; "for by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Wherefore, the latter is now appointed to be preached in the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ; "that the Righteousness of God without the Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets." Wherefore the Law is no more to be preached, or represented as the subject of our Embassy; yet is always to be retained, as a witness to that more glorious system of Sovereign Grace which now succeeds it. The Law is to be expounded in its Holiness and Righteousness, the intent and extent of its Spirituality, its Authority and Immutability; that the exceeding Riches of Justifying and Purifying Grace may appear in its native Lustre. But whether it be the Law, or any other thing, that may be retained, occasionally introduced, or treated on in our preaching, it is still in subserviency to the main Design, either by way of introduction, and illustration of the glorious Doctrine of Grace, or for proof of its Efficacy, or the obligations brought upon us thereby, or the obedience required in consequence thereof; for it all begins, ends, and centers alone in Sovereign Grace. For no other thing whatsoever is represented, as of itself answering any salutary end; only introduced for the magnifying the grace of God in Christ, and to render the glory of the Gospel of Christ more conspicuous, and used only as necessary concomitants in preaching the Gospel. Therefore, in a strict sense the Law is never to be preached, but the Gospel only. When our Lord gave that spiritual explication of the Law upon the mountain, he was then preaching the Gospel. "When he was set, his disciples came unto him." It was to them he addressed himself; to whom he says, "ye are the salt of the earth - ye are the light of the world." And often repeats to them, "your Father which is in heaven." And upon these souls, who had received Gospel Grace, he begins with pronouncing Evangelical Blessings; and to them who by Grace had the Righteousness of the Law written in their hearts, he expounded the letter of the Law in its spiritual purity; that the righteousness of the Law being fulfilled in them, they might walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. But suppose him speaking to the multitudes, {which in a great part of the sermon he could not be,} he was only expounding the Law, maintaining the Equity, Justice, and Perpetuity thereof, to convince them of the imperfection of their obedience; and to lead

them to Himself, by whom alone the Law is fulfilled, both for his people and in them. "Think not that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled." And if we attend to the main scope of the sermon, from end to end, he was preaching the Gospel, and expounding the Law in subserviency thereto; for himself the Fulfiller of the Law, the Grace of his Heavenly Father, the Kingdom of God, blessings of Gospel Grace, and instructions peculiar to the Saints, run through the whole. And when the Apostle Paul explains the nature, and asserts the authority of the Law, as a covenant of works, with its curse and condemnation to all the breakers thereof, he was truly preaching the Gospel; showing the insufficiency of all obedience to the Law for Justification; and the absolute necessity of Gospel Grace, to save the sinner; so that this was not preaching the Law, but the Righteousness of Christ. And when he urged the necessity of believers being under the Law to Christ, and discoursed of the various duties which are incumbent on the Saints, and exhorted them to the practice of those duties, {I am asked, therefore I answer,} this was not preaching the Law, but preaching the Gospel, and establishing the Law; forasmuch as it is the Law in the hand of the Mediator, by grace become a perfect Law of liberty; and all the motives to obedience are evangelical. "For the love of Christ constraineth us." "I delight in the Law of God, after the inner man." "Neither count I my life dear unto me." "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Thus every precept of the Law is taken under the sanction of Gospel Grace; therefore the Gospel includes all that is to be taught by ministers, and all that is to be learned and practiced by Christians. Christ is Alpha and Omega, and Grace is the cry to every stone in the building. 2. Admonitions to the world in general, or to mankind considered in a state of nature and sin, to leave their sins, reform their lives, and practice goodness, are not any part of the work of a Minister of the Gospel, nor included in his Commission. All the commands, promises, and threatenings contained in the Law, and all the admonitions, exhortations, and persuasions used by the preachers thereof, have been found utterly ineffectual to turn one sinner to God, to cleanse the conscience from one pollution, or produce a spark of real holiness in the heart. This work has been fully demonstrated to be "what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh." But in the preaching of the Gospel all the human species are considered as they really are, dead in sin, shut up in hardness and blindness, beyond the reach of any influence but what is absolutely Divine. And the Gospel is sent as a sovereign Remedy; "for it is the power of God unto salvation." Therefore, the Ministers of Christ are not sent on such a fruitless message, to call upon corrupt trees to bring forth good fruit, to admonish thorns to bear grapes, or exhort thistles to produce figs. The Gospel is an entire stranger to any such empty inconsistencies, as to call upon carnal creatures to perform spiritual acts. And as for such acts of moral virtue, or performances in religion, as a natural man is capable of attaining to; these are only the productions of a carnal mind, and consequently must be utterly foreign to that Word of Grace which is Spirit and Life. And as the Holy Ghost assures us, "the carnal mind is enmity against God;" therefore it can have no affinity to the Gospel of Peace; nor produce any fruit in conjunction with the Word of Reconciliation. The Gospel is a Declaration of the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God, wherein all things are made new, and no old thing can possibly remain; but the highest attainment of a natural man, or the greatest improvement that he can possibly be brought to by any commands, promises, threatenings, or persuasions of any kind whatsoever, cannot ascend one step higher than to mend the old, nor to that in reality; for whatever appearances it may have before men, it is impossible for the carnal mind in a natural man, by any of his own endeavors and improvements, to become a whit better in the sight of God, "for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be." Therefore, it is incompatible with the glorious message of Gospel Grace, and with the Commission given to the Ministers thereof for them to spend their time in teaching sinners to mend old things, when they know it is impossible for them

to be mended; and were it possible for anything to be mended, it would still be impossible for any mended thing to enter that kingdom which they preach. "He that sat upon the Throne, said, behold, I make all things new." The Commission is, "go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." The Gospel is the Unsearchable Riches of Christ. Sovereign Grace, plenteous Redemption, ample Salvation, and Everlasting Life in the Son of God, which being preached in demonstration of the Spirit, and accompanied with the Power of God to the heart, communicates new life to the dead soul, according as it is metaphorically represented in the vision of the dry bones; where the whole house of Israel, after all the legal messages, warnings, and instructions sent to them from God, continued insensible, without life and motion, and utterly destitute of all spiritual blessings. "In the open Valley, and lo, they were dry." But the message which God now sent must be effectual; therefore it did not consist in cautions, exhortations, and admonitions; but in a Pronunciation of Sovereign Blessing from the Fountain of Life, spoken with Divine Authority from heaven; "prophesy upon these bones." The Prophet, who was a type of Christ, first pronounces the almighty Word, or powerful Benediction; "O ye dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord." Being in substance the very same as Jesus himself spake, "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." And this Word of the Lord was a Full, Free, and Pure Declaration of the Good Pleasure of God towards them, and of the Good Tidings which he would do unto them. In the vision, and in the explanation thereof, no other language is spoken but that of Sovereign Grace; "thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live &c." "Thus saith the Lord God, behold, O my people, I will open your graves, &c," which is the very language of the Gospel of Christ. "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." "You being dead in your sins - hath he quickened together with him." All the sons and daughters of men are by nature dead in sin, "being alienated from the life of God." And it is not possible they should be made alive unto God any other way than by a Direct Communication of Life from Christ. "This is the true God and eternal life." And he has not appointed any other way of Conveyance whereby Life may be received from his fullness, but by the Gospel, the Word of Life, by which Word, under the Influence of the Holy Ghost, God reveals his Son in the hearts of his elect. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." But there is a common objection, which I have often heard, to this purpose, 'the glad tidings of Gospel Grace will not give life to dead sinners, unless it be attended with the Energy of the Holy Ghost; and exhortations, admonitions, and excitements to come, &c, may answer the same end, if attended with the same power.' I reply: This objection is a flat contradiction to the Word of God; for notwithstanding the Holy Ghost is pleased to bless exhortations, and admonitions, and to make them of excellent use in their proper place, yet never for conveying Life to the soul, for they properly pertain to the Law; and the Holy Ghost saith, "if there had been a Law given which could have given life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law." God cannot deny himself, nor be guilty of contradictions; therefore he cannot produce an Evangelical Operation by giving Energy to legal means. The more energy is given to anything, the more effectually it will operate according to its own nature. Power given to frost will not cause it to burn; and frost added to fire will not cause it to freeze; nor will the greatest strength cause the edge of a sword to heal a wound. If God is pleased to give Energy to his Law in the heart of a sinner, it will operate as a killing Letter to wound the conscience and rend the soul to pieces. And if he is pleased to give Energy to the Word of his Grace, it is Life from the Dead; and this is so familiar and experimental to all that have passed the new Birth, that it is impossible there should be one believer under heaven that does not know it in his own experience. Therefore when I hear persons talks such incoherent stuff, I know assuredly that they are either utter strangers to the Power of the Grace of God themselves, or else their minds have been infatuated by some vain conversation received by tradition; so that they inconsiderately express the undigested sentiments of other men, rather than the result of a mature deliberation, in comparing what the Lord hath wrought in their souls with what he hath

spoken in his Word. But let us come to the real matter of fact; for a just conception of the nature of the Gospel, and of the true Design of the Preaching thereof cannot fail to form our conceptions right with respect to what is, or what is not, included in the ministerial Commission. To preach the Gospel of Christ is the same thing as to preach the Kingdom of God; and the intent thereof is to bring sinners out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son; and to edify and establish saints in all things pertaining to that Kingdom. The power and the success is of God; but the appointed means is the Preaching of the Gospel; therefore whatever means is in the Minister's power to use, which has a natural tendency towards drawing souls from Satan unto Christ, or towards the edification of the Saints, so as God may be glorified, or in any way to promote the Kingdom of God in Truth; such means must of necessity be included in the Commission; and in consequence, in whatever Light admonitions to repentance, and exhortations to duty, &c., may really tend to any such salutary End, they must be the Ministers indispensable duty. Admonitions and exhortations, in their proper place, and justly adapted, have their special use; but in the way that many preachers apply them, they tend directly to invert the Purity of the Gospel of God; when they jumble them in such a confused manner, that the hearer cannot tell what the preacher intends by them; nor even guess whether he has any determinate meaning himself; or whether he intends to direct them to saints or sinners; or whether he calls upon them to keep the Law in its perfection, or only to make use of all the power they have, to imitate it as far as they can; or whether he calls upon them to work spiritual grace in their own hearts, or only to make use of the power and opportunities they have, in the use of all means waiting upon God for the blessing. And I have observed many of those preachers, when conversing on these points, that they shift from thing to thing, so that it is difficult to find out where they intend to fix. And I've often been told, 'that if persons are not to be called upon to perform impossibilities, we must use no exhortations at all, because neither sinners nor saints are able to perform anything of themselves;' but this is idle talk, for we never suppose a creature to do anything independent of the sustaining Power of God; and yet there is a special difference between those works which are proper to a creature to perform in that strength or capacity which God has given, and those works which are peculiar to God himself; and also between the nature of those things which a natural man is able to perform, and those things which a believer may perform under Divine Influence. The Ministers of the Gospel have no Commission to call upon any man to perform impossibilities; for this is directly the reverse of Gospel Grace, or of preaching Glad Tidings of Liberty. Nor have they any Commission to preach Eternal Salvation, in connection with anything which is in the power of man to perform; for this is to make it of Works, and not of Grace; and unless due distinctions be retained respecting these things, the Trumpet will give an uncertain sound. If we see our fellow creatures pursuing a course of sin, and have a proper occasion or opportunity put into our hands, {as Lot with the men of Sodom, Daniel with Nebuchadnezzar, &c.,} it is our duty to reprove, and admonish to Reformation; showing the hideousness of such crimes, and the misery that is likely to ensue upon such practices; but this is no more than that friendly part, which is the duty of every Christian, as well as Ministers; and therefore is not a part of the ministerial Commission, inasmuch as an external Reformation has no immediate relation to the Kingdom of God. And if we should suggest, that an outward Reformation from notorious sins, lays any Foundation for Eternal Life, we should then seduce them into a more damnable error than that we admonish them to forsake. So that it cannot be our duty to spend our time in these kind of Exhortations under any pretext whatsoever, to the neglect of the great Embassy which Christ hath given us in Commission. If we set forth the Law of God in its commands and threatenings, and call upon men to fulfill it; this is to preach the Law, and postpone the Gospel; and to the soul, whose eyes are not open to see the Law in its Spirituality, it naturally tends to establish its own Righteousness, by encouraging him to imagine it is in his power to perform it; and if he is told that it is utterly out of his power, and yet hears it laid upon him as a task, and himself called to fulfill it, this naturally tends to confound his understanding and harden his

heart. And if the soul is sensible how Perfect, Holy, and Righteous the Law of God is, this kind of preaching is sufficient to sink him in utter despair. If we call upon persons to repent, believe, and come to Christ, in such an undigested way, as to convey to them an idea that they are called to perform those works in themselves which are inseparable from Salvation; or to cause them to conceive of these things as Conditions of Salvation to be performed by them; this is to preach man's free will, and postpone the Work of the Holy Ghost; and to the soul, whose eyes are not open to see the excellent greatness of Spiritual Grace, it naturally tends to settle him in his carnal conceptions, to imagine the special work of God to be only some human performance, and consequently that himself may do it, and receive the Glory; and if he is told that it is of too high a nature for himself to perform, and yet hears himself called upon to do it, this naturally tends to alienate his mind, and cause him to look upon the Gospel as a Chain of Inconsistencies; and if the soul is sensible of the carnality, blindness, and hardness of his own heart, and the extent of his alienation from God, such preaching is sufficient to drive him to distraction, for knowing how impossible it is for him to work these things in himself, it naturally tends to deprive him of all Hope. But as Ministers are sent as the Ambassadors of Christ, to declare the Royal Proclamation of the King of Glory; it must necessarily belong to the execution of their Commission, to use all proper measures to attract attention to the Message they are sent to deliver. 1. They are to assert the Divine Majesty and Excellent Glory of their Sovereign Lord; which manifestation is attended with Authority, and is an immediate Call to all mankind wherever the Gospel comes, to pay Divine Adoration to his Name. For where the true God is revealed in Christ, there is an indispensable obligation upon men to forsake all idolatry, and all false worship taught by men, and to attend diligently to that Revelation which God is pleased to make of himself; and hence Paul declared to the Athenians, "God - now commandeth all men everywhere to repent;" and showed the things which they were to repent from; idolatry, superstition, and ignorant worship; and what they were to repent unto; "that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him;" and to the same effect he spake to the people at Lystra, "that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God;" that is, to attend to his Word, and hearken to the Record given in the Gospel. 2. They have authority to call upon men to hearken to the Divine Declaration, "be this known unto you, and hearken to my words - ye men of Israel, hear these words - men, brethren, and fathers, hearken - men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience." 3. They have authority to call upon men to repent, and be converted from those practices whereby they have hardened themselves against the Heavenly Message; as Peter did to the Jews, who had "denied the Holy One, and the Just - and killed the Prince of Life." And so Paul declared that he did, at Damascus, at Jerusalem, in Judea, and to the Gentiles, showing, "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." The Jews contradicted, and blasphemed, and the Gentiles mocked, and rejected the Word of the Gospel; which sins he showed that they ought to repent from; and that it was their duty to turn to God, by a serious attention to that Word of Salvation which God had sent unto them; and that they should do works meet for repentance, by casting off all those vanities which they had followed, and hearken to the Revelation of Infallible Truth; as the Ephesians did, when they confessed their deeds, and burned their books; and the Bereans, when they daily searched the Scriptures. But in all these Admonitions we may observe, that they respected such sins as the Admonishers were witness to, and could distinctly point out; that they called for practical Repentance, such as the people were capable of performing; and that the design was only to bring them to a submissive adherence to the Preaching of the Gospel; and in all the ministry of the Apostles we do not find any such thing as a promiscuous calling upon men to a general Repentance, Reformation, and to live religious lives, &c. It never was the design of the Gospel merely to change men's manners; but that by the Power of Special Grace they should be translated into the Kingdom of God, and thence begin their whole lives anew. The work of a Minister of the Gospel is like that of a recruiting officer, who has no direction to reform the people in the streets, but to draw the attention of all, to hear the

Proclamation which he is commanded to make in his Majesty's Name; and when any one is encouraged freely to enter, then he instructs him into all things pertaining to the military life; so, in the Church of God, where souls profess subjection to King Jesus, it is the proper work of Ministers to teach them all the Commandments of Christ; and they have authority to warn the unruly, to reprove, exhort, and admonish as occasion shall require; and herein the Apostles of Christ have manifested their Faithfulness, both towards societies and individuals. And even with those that sinned, they continued using all proper means to reclaim and restore them, so long as they did not appear incorrigible in their iniquity. As Peter, when he was convinced that Simon the sorcerer was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; yet as he had professed to believe in Christ, and was baptized in his Name, he was a subject of the Apostle's care, and he did not treat him as a common sinner, but admonished him as a brother. But the common objection is, 'that to call upon men in general to leave their sins, to admonish the whole world to reform their lives and practice piety and religion was a great part of the work both of the Prophets and Apostles.' To which I reply: That to read the Scriptures carelessly, and assert things unadvisedly is the work of too many. The Bible does not furnish us with one instance of any such thing in one of the servants of God in any age, unless there was some special occasion, or particular reason more than a general address to the world. Jonah being sent with a special Commission to a particular city of the Gentiles, is no instance of such a promiscuous call to a religious life; nor had his Message any relation to the Spiritual Kingdom of God, but to the destruction or preservation of the city. The warnings and admonitions sent by the prophets to the house of Israel, were under immediate Direction from God, and had respect to such particular sins as that people were guilty of at that present time; and however wicked that people might be, they were the visible Church of God, and considered in that capacity, in all the messages which God sent to them; and under that legal dispensation, the promises and threats annexed to those Admonitions related not to eternal Life, but to the tranquility of Israel as a nation. Therefore, here is no precedent to Ministers of the Gospel to exhort the whole world. John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus himself, and his disciples, preached that men should repent; but it was not the Gentiles, nor the Samaritans, but it was to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who were still considered as God's Church, until the Death of Christ. And the repentance called for was not the groveling notion of leaving some gross immoralities, to betake themselves to a religious life; but to completely abandon the false foundations which they had built to themselves, of having "Abraham to their Father," and "trusting in themselves that they were righteous;" and that they should attend to the Preaching of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. But we often hear of the Parable of the Great Supper, where the servant received this Commission, "compel them to come in;" and hence they argue, 'that ministers are to compel sinners, by urging, persuading, &c.,' but as this discovers the Objectors unskillfulness in the Word of Righteousness, to dream of sinners being brought into the Kingdom of God, by urgings and persuasions; so it discovers his inattention to this Parable; where it is easy to observe, that there was no Servant sent but one; and this Servant knew all the seats, and for whom they were prepared, "yet there is room." So that the thing intended is, the Father's Commission to Christ. I know, that for Ministers to exhort, persuade, and call upon persons in a general way to mend their lives, to practice virtue, be religious, live godly, &c., is the most pleasing method of preaching, to persons who have a natural inclination to religion, affecting the form without the power; provided that they be not touched too close, for they cannot bear the Gospel Probe. They are not displeased to be called upon, and told what they ought to do, and how they ought to live; but they cannot bear the searching Word, to distinguish between Flesh and Spirit, for their carnal life is yet whole in them. And I am well assured that it is a very easy matter with many persons to be stimulated into a religious zeal, voluntary humility, external devotion, and reformed to a strict reservedness in their behavior, through a fond conceit of being saved, pleasing God, obtaining heaven, human applause, &c.; and yet be no more than stony ground hearers, carrying lambs without oil, or plants which the heavenly Father hath

not planted. But this only proves the depth of the deceitfulness of sin; for such must needs be the more prepared for the unclean spirit to inhabit in a different form; and it does not give me any better opinion of human nature, or to conceive any less of its depravity and corruption; no more than the art of the serpent gives me a better opinion of him, while I observe into how many different postures he will turn himself, but still retains his poisonous nature. And this is the very thing which I insist upon; that sin lies so deep in our nature, that nothing short of Sovereign Grace can change it, or bring us the least step nearer to God. The Ethiopian may change his garments, and the Leopard his position, but the skin and the spots remain; so does the pollution of nature, whatever change may be wrought in appearance by moral suasion. But where the Pure Gospel of Christ enters the heart, in Spirit and Power, the soul is by Faith {experimentally} united to God's Holy One; and this vital union with Christ cannot fail to produce righteousness and true holiness, both in heart and life. A hypocrite, a formal professor, or one that is carnally religious, may be an Antinomian in the worst sense of the word; making a vain pretense to the Righteousness of Christ, and despising the Holiness of God's Law; which in my judgment deserves no better a name than a devil incarnate. But it is not possible that a real believer in the Lord Jesus Christ should be such; "because he is born of God, and is a new creature;" which new man "after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," and therefore "the Law of his God is in his heart." For this motto remains upon all the Saints, engraven with the Finger of God, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD. These things, holy brethren, I leave you to try by the Word of God; and may the Holy Ghost guide you into all Truth. Amen. John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, 1758}

### **Predestinating Grace in Christ**

The election of God, in his free choice, according to his own good pleasure and infinite delight, proceeding spontaneously from Himself, absolutely independent of any creature, thing or action outside Himself, and perfectly above any influence from anything beside Himself, that ever was, is, or shall be in heaven, earth, or hell, in time or eternity; having no other Fountain but his own Bosom, nor any motive but his sheer Sovereign Will. {Eph.1:4,5, Eph.1:9, Eph.1:11, Eph.3:11, II Tm.1:9} This Counsel of God is a consummate immutable Plan of Infinite Unsearchable Wisdom, founded in the Eternal Inconceivable Depths of Divine Love. {Rom.11:33,36, I Cor.2:7, Eph.3:9, Col.1:26, I Jn.3:1} And in the opening of this glorious mystery, there is a most resplendent manifestation of Divine Perfection; and all the Attributes of the Godhead do shine forth in the fullness of unspeakable Glory. {Ps.90:1,2, Is.41:4, 44:6, 48:12, Heb.1:1-3, 8:1,2, Rev.19:6,7} The elect of God, in his beloved Son, in whom his soul delighteth. {Is.42:1} For none else could be the Object of his eternal choice, but Him that is his own Essence, and his own perfect Image, the mirror of his Majesty, in whom all his superlative Perfections shine forth in the most effulgent rays of Light and Glory. This is He by whom all things were created, by whom all things consist, and whom God hath appointed Heir of all things. It is him whom the Father delighteth to honor; and to whom alone he hath given the Preeminence that he should be his ELECT. And under this character God speaks of his Son, the true David, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant." {Ps.89:3} "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen." {Is.43:10} And the Jews understood this Title to belong to the Messiah, when they mocked him, saying, "let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." {Lk.23:35} And the Apostle Peter calls him, "a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious," the "chief corner stone, elect, precious." {I Pet.2:4,6} The assembly of saints, or Church of the firstborn, is God's elect; yet not another elect, or a different election; but the elect members are included in the elect Head, as the elect Queen is included in the election of her royal Husband. "According as he hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world." {Eph.1:4} Neither election, nor any other blessing of grace or glory, was ever given

to any of the peculiar seed, in a separate capacity, but only as they are considered in connection with Christ who is their Life. "According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." {II Tim.1:9} For if there were two elections, of Christ, and his Church; or so many elections as the body of Christ consists of individual members; this could not coincide with that Unity which is frequently expressed by the Holy Ghost. {Rom.12:5, I Cor.6:17, 12:12,13,27, Eph.1:22,23, 2:16,18, 3:14,15, 4:4-6, 12, 15, 5:23, 30, Col.1:18} But all the eternal councils originally terminate in Christ, and all Divine blessings reside in Him and devolve upon His chosen in consequence of their union with Him. {Eph.3:11, Col.1:19,27,28} Therefore he says to his Father, "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one." {Jn.17:22} Thus, God in his own immutable Self is the Author; Christ, in the amplitude of his own Perfection is the Object; and all his little ones, in the right of inseparable union are joint heirs with Him of all the blessings contained in the Election of God. {Rom.8:17} And as for those persons whom God has chosen in his Beloved Son for his own inheritance, he blesses them in due time, "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;" so as they shall be perfectly qualified for that Felicity and exalted Station to which they are appointed. They are redeemed, justified and pardoned by the blood of Christ, and so completely acquitted from all condemnation that no sin can be laid to their charge. {Rom.3:24, 8:33,34, Eph.1:7, Col.1:14} They are enlightened with heavenly light. {Jn.8:12, 12:46, II Cor.4:6, Eph.5:8} They are spiritually united to Christ by faith and love, whereby they enjoy a communication of the fullness of his grace, so as they are transformed into his image. {Eph.3:17, Jn.1:16, Col.3:10} And they shall persevere in the Truth, growing in grace, "unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." {Jn.10:28,29, Eph.4:13,24, I Jn.2:27} They shall be raised up at the last day, by Christ mighty power, in his heavenly likeness. {I Cor.13:10,12, 15:42-44,49, Phil.3:21, I Jn.3:2} And they shall be blessed in his immediate presence, filled with his inconceivable love, and elevated in his glory, world without end. {Ps.16:11, 17:15, I Thes.4:17, Jn.14:1-3, Rev.21:2,3, 22:4,5} Thus, according to the Eternal Plan, the structure is raised to perfection in the hand of Jehovah. "He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." {Zech.4:7} John Johnson {Election of God Undisguised, 1759}

### **Protestant Reformation**

Perhaps some conceive of these seven thunders to be the thunderings of the first Reformers, and Protestant writers, against the abominations of the Roman Church, which they call thundering against Antichrist. And we find their writings full of thunders against the most gross tenets of that great whore; such as the supremacy of the pope, and infallibility of the church of Rome; keeping the people in ignorance, prohibiting the reading of the scriptures, and having their worship in an unknown tongue; adoration of saints and angels, and worshipping images; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats; the priests assuming authority to grant pardons and indulgences; transubstantiation, or priests pretending to change bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ; the doctrine of purgatory, and praying for the dead, &c. &c. &c. Yet these are only amusements, to draw people's minds from the life and substance, by making them imagine, that if they escape these gross abominations, they are free from Antichrist, whereas a man may avoid all these, and yet be as far from the very truth, as it is in Jesus, as those that are involved in the depth of them. Howbeit, the grand point which the angel of the covenant had in view, he would and did accomplish; to bring forth the scriptures of truth into full and open light. Yet the prince of darkness followed with another of his devices, persuading the people, that notwithstanding they had the gospel light set open before them, they must not pretend to understand it, nor expect the illumination of the spirit of truth to guide them into it; but must depend on the learning of schools and universities to inform them what was the

meaning of it; and to this all the people in general were content to submit, and to shut themselves up in darkness as close as the pope had shut them up before. And as the fathers did, so do the children to this day, they are willing to abide in darkness, and be lulled into a dead sleep, with the word of the living God open in their hands. Again; it may be, that some think these thunders to be a number of worthy and gracious men, who were thunderers against Antichrist; such as John Wickliffe, Jerome of Prague, John Huss, Peter Waldo, Martin Bucer, Luther, Calvin, &c. But what zeal soever these men might show, in testifying against the innovations and heresies of the church of Rome, they were not of the number that dwelt in the wilderness, or that had gone out without the camp; for they endeavored to make a figure in reforming the camp, or the city Babylon; a work which it is utterly out of the nature of things for a faithful minister of Jesus Christ ever to attempt. It is the work of every faithful minister of the gospel, to the utmost of his power, to open the blind eyes, and to turn men from Satan unto God; to call them out of the world to the knowledge of the Father and the Son; but I am persuaded there is not a man living under heaven, who truly understands the nature of a gospel minister's commission, that could be made to believe, that a minister qualified and sent by the Lord Jesus could ever attempt a thing so foolish as to reform nations, countries, cities, or national churches. To reform the world belongs only to the men of the world, and had these famous men come in the simplicity of the gospel of Christ, they never had been famous; for had they not brought some mixtures adapted to the carnal mind, they had never been renowned in the world, we probably had never heard of their names. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Redemption by the Blood of Christ**

The cup was presented; that is, the liquid therein contained, which was wine, for the Lord afterward called it, "the fruit of the vine;" which is a significant representation of the blood of the Lamb, by which we are redeemed. As the red wine has much the resemblance of blood, it is called, "the pure blood of the grape." It is the virtue of the vine and of the grape which makes the wine so rich and salutary, so it is the perfection of the precious nature of the Son of God that gives such efficacy to his blood. It is called God's own blood. {Acts 20:28} Therefore by this blood we have redemption, peace, remission of sins, justification, purification of conscience and access into the presence of God. Not that any man in the use of his reason can imagine that blood should pertain to the essence of the Godhead; but Christ being God in our nature, man filled with the fullness of God, Emmanuel, God with us, all that he is, all that he spake, all that he did, all that he suffered, all that he communicates, or whatever pertains to him, or proceeds from him, hath in it all the perfection of the Divine Essence. But when we ascribe all this virtue to the blood of Christ, we do not consider his material blood as separate from his Person, but we intend the perfect sacrifice of Himself, his sufferings, his death, the laying down of his life, which terminated in the shedding of his precious blood, by which our redemption is purchased. John Johnson {Believer's Confession of the Son of God, 1781}

### **Remission of Sins**

Remission of Sins is to be considered judicially; as it is a legal acquittance in the court of God's justice; or the judicial sentence, whereby the sinner is pronounced righteous, his person justified, his sins remitted, and himself acquitted from all indictment, charge, guilt or condemnation in the sight of God; a consequence of the full atonement, and ample satisfaction made by the blood of Christ; as the Surety and Representative of His people; who strictly personated the offender, and properly suffered in his name, in his place, and on his behalf; and hence it is, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." For God himself is Judge, and Jesus Christ is Advocate; and the cause

appearing perfectly obvious; that Jesus Christ stood as our proxy, that our sins were actually laid to his charge, that our justification or condemnation depended entirely upon his success in the engagement that he undertook; and that the sacrifice of Christ was absolutely perfect, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" that he, "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God;" and that, "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Therefore, in the perfect court of God's omniscient judicature; where everything appears in Divine light; Christ, "the Lord our righteousness," and we, "the righteousness of God in him;" the sentence must pass in truth and all the chosen of God must be pronounced, "justified from all things;" and their sins blotted out forever; which is the same with remission of sins, in a Law sense. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Thus Jesus, by his death, justified us, in bearing our sins; and by his life, he justifies us, in appearing as our Advocate in the presence of God. "Who was delivered over for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." John Johnson {Evangelical Repentance, 1776}

### **Romanism**

"And he saith unto me, the waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." {Rev.17:15} The hierarchy of the Roman church, the body of her clergy, and most unholy orders, may very justly be called a great whore; forasmuch as she pretends to be the spouse of Christ, when she is only the paramour of Antichrist. Her whoredoms have prevailed in Europe, and filled it with such abominations, as all other parts of the earth where Antichrist has not been, are strangers to. For no people under heaven can be so deeply polluted, as those that are defiled with the whoredoms of a false Christ; and in the church of Rome, the abominations of idolatry have been improved to the highest pitch, therefore the greatest multitude of nations have been ensnared to drink, and have been intoxicated by her alluring cup. For she is devoted to Antichrist; and she is such an enchantress, that she not only seduces kings and nations into the filthiness of that beast, but to become her dupes and supporters; so there is a quadruple alliance, the dragon, the beast, the whore and the kings of the earth. No wonder then, that the whore, who is maintained by the other three, should make such a brilliant appearance, as to bewitch a multitude of nations to become her vassals, and pay their homage to her. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Romanism**

"Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." {Rev.17:1} This angel points out the great whore, the most famous false church; not the only false church, for there be many false churches, or at least, many distinct branches of the false church; but there can be no more than one true church. {Song 6:9} By a whore, in a spiritual or mystical sense, is meant a false church, or a body of false worshippers; and by the great whore, is intended that church which hath vaunted, boasted, exalted, and magnified herself above all the rest; and that this is the church of Rome, needs no proof, being visible to all the world; for though the whores of this kind are very numerous, none has been supported by such multitudes of people, as are here represented by the waters on which she sits. "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication." {17:2} {Impure connections and mixtures of the different sexes, where there is no true relation to each other, is fornication; so to join, to mix, and confound the things of men with the things of God; to set men's wisdom, power, or righteousness, as taking a

part with the wisdom, power, and righteousness of God; or anything of man to bear a part with Christ, either in doctrine, worship, or in our acceptance with God; this is mystical fornication. Also to feed ourselves with fancies, that we are accepted of God, that we have the grace of God, and that we belong to Christ, because we find in ourselves some certain marks, signs, tokens, good desires, heavenly motions, virtuous dispositions, &c. this is satanical fornication. Ezek.43:8} Her fornication is her corrupt pernicious doctrine, and abominable delusions in regard to God; and her absurd practices, under presence of the worship of God. The wine is the vain fancies, and intoxicating traditions of men, so invented, so mixed, and so sophistically maintained, as to amuse the imagination, and gratify the carnal mind. The other whores have their intoxicating cups, whereby to ensnare persons into their fornication; but some of their wine is so much of one mixture, that it will not please the taste of all; but the church of Rome has outdone them all; for her wine is of so many kinds, and mixed with so much art, as to please, allure, and intoxicate persons of every call, even so far as to obtain the name of universal. The art and study of whores, is, by intoxicating potions, to draw men into infatuation, so as to become a prey to their filthy embraces; and all false churches are the same. "So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness; and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." {17:3} The saints must be carried in the power of the spirit of holiness, and in the light of the word of truth, to take a distinct view of the abominations of the mystery of iniquity, and of the righteous judgments of God against idolaters. Here we are taken away from seeing and hearing what proceeded from the temple and the altar, into the wilderness, to see a whore of an uncommon character, and of an enormous size; whom, therefore, God will judge in an uncommon way, with punishments adapted to herself. As she has not only fallen to idolatry, worshipping devils in the place of Christ, but has been guilty of crimes the most flagrant, both against God and men, setting her mouth against the heavens, and insulting all the nations upon earth; therefore she shall be punished according to her sins, not only with the pouring out the vials of his wrath, as he will do upon all false harlots, but for her open abominations, God will pour upon her his open vengeance. This woman is the Romish body of popes, cardinals, archbishops, bishops, priests, clergy, and unholy orders; who reign over, sit, and ride upon the people, who are only vassals, to bear their burden, and uphold their grandeur. The beast which carries her, hath a twofold signification. That which sustains her idolatry is the same beast spoken of before; that is, the delusions of Satan, formed into a system of religion, upon the plan of a perverted gospel, or the truth of Christ turned into a lie; but that which supports her external dominion is the worldly powers. Yet these are become one beast, for the earthly principalities have been made drunk with the abominations of the counterfeit Christ. These seductions are the soul, and the secular powers are the body, which is actuated thereby, and these constitute the beast which carries the whore. It is of a scarlet color, to show the deep dye of the abominations; full of names of blasphemy, having adopted all the blasphemies of Antichrist, not only in their worship, but in their civil orders, calling almost everything by the name of Saint, by the name of the Trinity, by the name of Jesus, by the name of the Holy Ghost, &c.; thus profaning every sacred thing, to make the name of the Most Holy become common, contemptible, and ridiculous. The beast has seven heads and ten horns; for all the heads and horns of the Antichristian beast are in it; and yet it has another signification, pointing to the seven heads and ten horns of earthly power, by which the state of the whore is maintained. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Sanctification**

Sanctification is ascribed to God the Father, as Jude directs his Epistle, "to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." A thing is said to be sanctified, when it is appointed, devoted, or consecrated, to an office, or condition of holiness. In which sense, the Father sanctified all his people from eternity. "For whom he

did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." The image of his Son is holiness; inasmuch as he is the Holy One of God. Therefore in this purpose of God, they were appointed to holiness; sanctified to himself in Christ. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." {Eph.1:4} As also it is said again; "but we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." {II Thes.2:13} And yet more, to the same purpose, this character is given of the children of God, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." {I Pet.1:2} Thus the true origin of sanctification rested in the eternal bosom, when there was no creature in being, with whom he might take counsel; or from whom he might receive instruction in that affair; and forasmuch as this foundation stands impregnable, the superstructure irresistibly rises therefrom; and according as he hath chosen them to be, so they are. "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." {Deut.14:2} Sanctification is ascribed to the Son; as it needs must be, if it proceeds from the Father. "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." {Jn.5:19} Therefore Paul directs his Epistle, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." {I Cor.1:2} But though it be ascribed to the Son, actually {as the Executor of his Father's Counsel} it is still ascribed to the Father, originally. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." {I Cor.1:30} So it may be said, the Father sanctifies his elect by his Son. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." {Heb.10:10} And it is said again, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." {Heb.13:12} Thus it appears to proceed from the will of the Father, in the blood of the Son; yet the influential sanctification in the conscience is wrought by the special application of the word of Truth; not as a different operation; for the virtue of the word lies in this, that the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son; the design of the Father, and the execution of the Son; the gift of the Father, and the conveyance by the Son; or the incomprehensible riches, which is in the Son, and in the Father, is thereby made known to us; and we are made partakers of those inexhaustible treasures by the word. For the glorious riches of grace which the word reveals, is the life of the word; take away the truth which it contains and the word has no existence; the word of God, is the truth of God; that is, God himself in the revelation of his Will. So then, whatsoever is ascribed to the word of God is ascribed immediately to God himself; only holding forth to us the manner in which God performs the operation; or what part of the work is intended, the determination, or the execution; whether in his own purpose, in the Person of his Son, or in the hearts of his people. To the Ephesians, this truth is intelligibly expressed. "Even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." {Eph.5:25,26} Here, Christ giving himself, or sanctifying his Church with his own blood, is laid as the ground of his sanctifying it by the word; he did the one, that he might do the other. He sanctified, or presented them to God, in the virtue of his blood; having made reconciliation by the blood of his cross; and in consequence thereof, the Gospel of Peace proclaims life and salvation, by the virtue of which glad tidings, their hearts are reconciled, and united to God, and holiness becomes their delight. Thus, it is the work of the Son of God; both by the sacrifice of himself, in which he took away the condemnation due to their sins; and by the Gospel of his grace, whereby he removes guilt from their consciences, through faith in his blood; and alienation from their hearts, by revealing the streams of overcoming love. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." {Rom.5:8} Yea, and as the Father sanctified them, by

adoption, or fixing them in a near relation to Himself; "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself;" the Son likewise, in consequence of that near relation, sanctifies them, by manifesting to them their adoption, embracing them in a vital union, and giving them to enjoy spiritual communion with Himself. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren." {Heb.2:11} Sanctification is likewise ascribed to the Holy Ghost; and so it needs must be; for whatsoever proceeds from the Father, and dwells in the Son, is communicated to the saints by the Spirit; and no spiritual blessing ever was enjoyed by any creature upon earth, or ever will be enjoyed by any creature in heaven, but what is equally to be ascribed to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are One." {I Jn.5:7} Whatsoever the Father doth, in the inconceivable tremendous Councils of his own eternal bosom; the same doth the Son, in the majestic execution of his mediatorial office; and the same doth the Holy Ghost, in the efficacious, illuminating, quickening, transforming operations of his grace in the elect. For God, in his Sacred Word, has plainly revealed himself to us, under three distinct personal characters; and each of these, stand in their peculiar relations, and perform peculiar offices; yet so as nothing ever was, or ever can be performed by any one of them, but what is performed by all the three. For God is ONE. But while the aspiring, presumptuous, vain boasters of orthodoxy, attempt to describe things that are not revealed; intruding into those things which they have not seen; and torture each other's mind, with metaphysical reasoning, about the distinct subsistence of the Three Holy Ones, in the Divine Essence; or in the Being of the Godhead itself; the believer, with meekness and profound reverence, receives the simple truth as the word expresses it, and believe it with all his heart; and employs his mind upon the glories of this stupendous truth, in the light that God has been pleased to reveal it, to the unspeakable joy of his soul. For concerning this great mystery of godliness, everything is clearly opened, and fully expressed, that can possibly yield us solid comfort, or spiritual edification. Therefore, sanctification being from the bosom of the Father, through the medium of the Son, it must become effectual in the children of God; and this efficacy is by a special revelation thereof in their hearts, by the Word of God; which word was indicted by the Holy Ghost, as "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost;" and the truth and power of that word can only be applied by the same Divine Spirit, by whom it was indicted. "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost." {I Thes.1:5} So that sanctification, in its internal influence, is entirely of the Holy Ghost; yet, the Son prays for it, unto the Father. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." {Jn.17:17} That is, as it is originally from the Father, and proceeds through the Son, who is the truth of the Father, or the Father's word; and as the Holy Ghost, who is the effectual operator in the saints is the gift of the Father. As he had said before, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever." {Jn.14:16} For, to be sanctified, and to be filled with the Spirit, is one and the selfsame thing. And for that reason, this title, or epithet, HOLY, is joined to the Spirit; not because it is possible for him to be more holy than the Father, or the Son; but because that holiness which proceeds from the Father, and the Son, is, by the Spirit communicated to the saints. And thus the Apostle speaks of the Three, in strict conjunction; though he ascribes sanctification immediately to the Spirit. "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." {Rom.15:16} Thus it appears that sanctification is from God alone. Through the whole counsel, manifestation, and operation, he is the Alpha and Omega. Sanctification is a copious subject; and taken in its largest extent, comprehends all spiritual blessings, or all the holy illuminations, all the holy communications, all the holy operations, and all the holy relations, stations, enjoyments, and displays of Sovereign Grace that are necessary to, or can be enjoyed by any creature; or all that is done for a soul, to bring him out of a state of sin, and bless him with life and salvation, until he be complete in

consummate felicity; or eternally established in the full enjoyment of the glory of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. God is essentially, infinitely, eternally and immutably holy; for as nothing can proceed from him but what is holiness, all the blessings whereby a creature is prepared for, advanced unto, or perfected in eternal glory, proceed from God alone; therefore all that is done for, in, or upon any creature, whereby he is delivered from the anguish of the lowest hell, and possessed of the glory and felicity of the highest heaven; is no other thing than sanctification, or the going forth of the holiness of God towards him, in, and upon him, through Jesus Christ our Lord. John Johnson {Evangelical Sanctification or True Holiness, 1776}

### **Sanctification in Christ Alone**

The high priest was to purify the sanctuary, and to sanctify the people from all their uncleanness. {Ex.29:36,37, Lev.14:4-7, 20, Num.19:3-6} The Lord of glory, the High Priest of our profession sanctifies his Church, purifies the hearts of his people and purges their consciences from all pollution. Without perfect, spotless purity, no creature can possibly stand in the presence of him whose name is HOLY. {Is.57:15} "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." {Rev.21:27} And none but the immaculate Lamb of God can possibly perform such an operation upon such a creature as man, who is altogether become filthy. "Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." {Jn.13:8} But he who is the great, the consecrated Sanctifier is all sufficient to perfect that which he has undertaken. "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." {Jude 24} And he is thus able, has faithfully promised. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." {Ez.36:25} And that he is faithful in performing, and does in every deed purify effectually, every soul that believeth on him, we have undeniable testimony from infallible evidence. As the Scripture testifies of him. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." {Tit.2:14} Christ said to his disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." {Jn.15:3} Paul said to the Corinthians, "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." {I Cor.6:11} The twelve apostles testify, that God had put no difference between them and the Gentiles, "purifying their hearts by faith;" and the Holy Ghost affirms, of the whole collective body, the Church, "In their mouth was found no guile; for they are without fault before the throne of God." {Rev.14:5} Now it is to be observed, that in the ceremonial purification of the leper or unclean person; there was, besides the absolution on the flesh, a sacrifice offered, to make the purgative application effectual. So it is in the virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, that the Spirit of holiness operates by the word of truth, to the purgation of the heart by faith. It is said that, "Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it." And this is laid as the foundation of the purification operation, afterwards expressed. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." {Eph.5:26,27} This purification which is wrought in the souls of all the saints, is always ascribed to the Son of God alone, as the great Refiner, and the Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. But the operation is variously expressed or attributed to different agents or influences. Sometimes to the blood of Christ, sometimes to the word of God, sometimes to the Holy Ghost, and sometimes to faith; but these are no contradictions; nor, in fact are they different influences; but a united chain of agents; one in, and by another, communicating their conjoint influence to the producing of one pure operation. These are the very same that are mentioned by the Apostle John. "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the

Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." {I Jn.5:8} For in this place, {as well as many other places of Scripture,} the water, means no other thing, but the word of God; and to receive the witness, is the selfsame thing as to be given faith. The thing, therefore, is exceeding plain. It is the blood of Christ {or his life, which is the same thing,} that is given as a ransom for our sins; whereby guilt and wrath is taken away in God's sight. And so soon as this is clearly manifested to the soul it removes guilt and wrath from the conscience; but not only so, but such a scene of Divine love is thereby opened, and shed abroad in the heart; as effectually conquers the affections, expels the enmity, unites the soul to God, and makes it delight in holiness; and thus the mind is purified from the power of sin; as it is genuinely expressed by the Holy Ghost, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" {Heb.9:14} This is the purifying fountain. But as the word of God is the stream of conveyance, whereby the virtue of the blood of Christ is communicated, or revealed unto us; therefore the effect is ascribed to that word. And as it is alone by the power of the same Spirit that indicted the word, that the Gospel becomes effectual in the heart; or that the truth of Christ takes place in the soul; therefore it is justly ascribed to the Holy Ghost. As faith is the evidence of the Spirit of God, according to the word of truth, in the conscience; the testimony received, or the truth of Christ residing in the heart; therefore it is ascribed to faith. Thus the work is ascribed to them all; and were any of these to be excluded, the purification of conscience would be impossible. For, exclude the blood, and there is nothing for the word to declare; exclude the word, and there is no truth for the Spirit to apply; exclude the Spirit, and nothing can produce faith, or convey the truth of Christ into the internal faculties; exclude faith, and the soul is destitute of all spiritual influence. But our great High Priest leaves nothing imperfect; therefore everyone that believeth in Him receives effectual sanctification. Not like the hypocrite, who knows not how his sanctification came, or by what streams it flows; nor whether it be real or imaginary. For the believer knows from whence it comes, and how it operates; and experiences its effects, as familiar as he knows his right hand from his left. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." {I Jn.3:3} John Johnson {Christ - the Great High Priest, 1776}

### **Sanctification in Christ Alone**

Holiness of consecration is the distinguishing work of God in choosing, pointing out and sanctifying to Himself whomsoever he will, as his own special property, or to any other peculiar use. So it is said to Israel, "the LORD hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people;" and, "for thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." {Deut.14:2, 26:18} More particularly, "I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel." {Num.3:13} Again, God said, "thus shalt thou separate the Levites from among the children of Israel; and the Levites shall be mine...for they are wholly given unto me from among the children of Israel. {Num.8:14-16} The Levites, God separated to the holy service; and from among them he sanctified Aaron and his sons to the office of the priest; from among the priests, God sanctified Jeremiah and others to be prophets. Likewise, he chose Saul, David, Jehu &c. to be kings. This was a holiness of appointment; whereby those persons were pitched upon and selected to those high stations or sacred employments. In the same manner the Sabbath is holy; not by nature or communication, but by appointment. But these were all typical of the special consecration of Christ and his Church; wherein God hath chosen and sanctified to Himself his beloved Son, his peculiar delight, and all his elect in Him to be kings and priests unto God. God consecrated or sanctified his people in Christ from eternity; in that he chose them in him, that they should be holy; gave them to his Son, and their names were written in his Book of Life before the foundation of the world; {Eph.1:4, Rev.13:8;} in which holy appointment God gave to them and secured

for them in Christ the holiness of special Grace by spiritual communication. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." {II Tim.1:9} {All blessings proceed from the Father by whom they are given to Christ, in whom they center, and by him, and in his behalf they proceed to his Church, which he hath purchased with his own blood.} So that God's elect were everlastingly holy in his sight, beheld in the perfection of God's Holy One. God loved them with an everlasting love, and his delights were with them before the foundation of any of his works. {This unchangeable love of God the Father to Christ and his Church, election of Christ, and his Church in him; Sonship of Christ, and his Church in union with him; the indissoluble union between the mystical vine and the branches; and the infinite fullness residing in Christ for the eternal supply of all his members, must in some respects be more extensive than Salvation, inasmuch as it is the fountain from whence Salvation springs.} "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." {Jer.31:3} But a Holy God cannot delight in anything that is unholy; for though God loves his chosen in Christ, and loves them while in their sins, {otherwise they would never be saved from their sins,} God does not, nor ever did, nor ever can love sinners. As sinners he may pity them, but cannot love them as such. He loves them only as they are sanctified in Christ. {Eph.1:4-6} Christ also sanctified himself, or devoted himself to be a sacrifice for his people, that they might be sanctified in him; or, "that he might sanctify the people with his own blood;" "he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." For by his atoning blood sin is blotted out and purged away; all wrath, curse and condemnation is removed, and a way is opened to the Throne of Grace; and now in Christ Jesus, "they that were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." Thus, they whose sins {in justice} held them at the utmost distance are brought to stand in a holy nearness to their Heavenly Father; and when this holy blood of the Holy Lamb of God is by the holy Gospel, through the power of the Spirit of holiness manifested in the conscience, it purges it from guilt and pollution, giving the soul a holy boldness in the presence of God, sanctifying the affections to delight in God, strengthening the heart to trust in the Righteousness of Christ, and graciously inclining the soul to wait for and obediently to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" {Heb.9:14} But the sanctification of atonement and consecration, or a spotless presentation of the elect unto God in the offering up of Christ for them is prior to the application and sanctifying influence of this blood upon the conscience. Likewise the Holy Ghost consecrates the children of God by the word of Grace, calling them out of the world, separating them from all other people, and distinguishing them by his special anointings, as sons of God and heirs of glory. {Deut.14:2, II Cor.6:14-18} They are sealed with the signet of their Father's kingdom, being made kings and priests to their God; therefore they dwell alone, and are no more reckoned among the nations. But this branch of consecration, or special separation, is accomplished by the communication of spiritual Grace, whereby all the powers of the mind are sanctified unto God. John Johnson {Faith of God's Elect, 1754}

### **Sanctified in Gospel Truth**

There is a sanctification in relation to our understanding; that is, when the mind is enlightened into the spiritual knowledge of Divine Truth; and this light dwells, and abides with special influence, and sweet savor. Christ himself is this Light; for he is called, "the true light;" {Jn.1:9, I Jn.2:8;} and again, "in him was life; and the life was the light of men." {Jn.1:4} Hence it is plain that Christ alone is eternal life, and he alone is superlative light; for this is his character. "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God," whose character likewise is this, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." {I Jn.1:5} So then, as the

life and light in him are one, no man can receive life from him, or in him, but through the illumination of the understanding, and no man can receive true light in his understanding, but thereby he receives {in his perception as pertaining to that understanding whereby he beholds Christ the light of life} eternal life. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." {Jn.17:3} And thus the Holy Ghost, by the Apostle John, states this truth in ample order. "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." {I Jn.5:20} This Divine light, whereby the elect of God are sanctified, shines entirely in the written Word, and cannot possibly be derived from any other fountain; for as there is no light but in Christ, so there is no medium whereby this light is conveyed to us, but the Scripture of Truth. The sacred writing, indited by the Spirit of Christ, testifies of the Son of God, revealing the mysteries of his kingdom; and is a perfect vehicle, wherein is contained all the glory of God, the fullness of Christ, and the riches of his grace; and whereby all the blessings of eternal life are manifested and communicated unto us. Christ is called the Word of God, because he is the wisdom and truth of God, and that because the love, life, grace, salvation, and glory of God perfectly shines forth in Him, and is revealed to us alone by Him. And for the selfsame reason, the revelation of God in the Holy Scriptures, {that is, the matter therein revealed,} is called the Word of God, because the very same wisdom and truth of God shines therein; or because Christ himself, in all his fullness, excellency, glory, and perfections is the substance thereof; and thereby alone is revealed unto us. But some persons tell us that, "there is a difference to be made, between the eternal Word, and the written Word of God;" but this sophistical distinction is a vain amusement; and has no foundation in the Sacred Record, and can have no tendency to edify the Church of God. Is there any word of God in the Scriptures that is not eternal? The trivial objectionist will say, "yes, a thousand things are mentioned in the Scripture which shall have an end;" but let the serious judge. The question is not, whether a thousand perishing things are circumstantially mentioned in the Scripture; but whether any part of the truth of God, which those things are designed to illustrate shall ever vanish away? Is it not the same wisdom and truth of God which is in Christ that is written in the Scriptures? Is it another light, life, grace, and glory that dwells in Christ, than that which shines in the sacred writings; or is there any other way, whereby any soul can either know, or enjoy the riches of grace and glory in Christ, but as it shines in the written Word? It may be said, "the Holy Ghost guides into all truth." It is true, he opens the heart to attend to, and the understanding to receive the word of life; and so guides the mind into those things which Christ hath spoken in the Scriptures. He is both the Heavenly Inditer and Applier of that word. But since that sacred volume was complete, did the Holy Ghost ever communicate any branch of Divine knowledge to any creature, but from that Word alone; or if any should pretend to have received any such revelation, by what rule will he pretend to convince us, that it is not a delusion of the devil? But they tell us, "Christ Jesus, and the Holy Scriptures, are not one and the same thing." It is true, the writing, the paper, ink, sound of words, or arrangement of letters is not Christ; but the subject matter, which is written, recorded and manifested to us in that holy book is Christ. The truth, will, wisdom, power, love, life and grace of God in Christ are the selfsame thing with what is contained in the Holy Scripture. Therefore Christ, the Truth of God, in his own Divine Person, and the Truth of God, in the Scripture is one and the same Eternal Word. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." And it is by the Divine truth, which, for our learning and admonition, is written in the Scriptures, that Christ sanctifies his Church. "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." {Jn.6:63} "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." {Jn.17:17} The understanding is sanctified, when with full assent and consent of all its powers, the soul receives the knowledge of the Word of God, so as to distinguish it from all false lights. As saith the Apostle John, "we are of God; he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us; and hereby know we the

spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." {I Jn.4:6} And saith the Lord, "the sheep follow him; for they know his voice; and a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers;" {Jn.10:4,5} and this distinguishing knowledge of the Word of truth is inseparable from the knowledge of Him that dwells therein; the great Jehovah, who thereby shines forth, in the glory, majesty and perfection of his holiness. This Word declares his majestic greatness. "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods; who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" {Ex.15:11} God declares himself, "thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy." {Is.57:15} "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." {Is.66:11} "Do not I fill heaven and earth; saith the LORD." {Jer.23:24} And to express his absolute, infinite, eternal and immutable perfection, he takes to himself this character, "I AM THAT I AM." And we find the sublimity, preciousness, excellency and holiness of his nature, fully manifested in his pure Word. "God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." {Jn.4:24} The bright seraphs which stand before the throne, veil their faces, and cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy." {Is.6:3, Rev.4:8} "Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy." {Ps.99:9} This branch of the knowledge of God is received from the sacred Word by everyone that knows that word of Truth; and it enters the deepest recesses of the heart, in the efficacy thereof. The superlative glory and perfection of God is so powerfully revealed to the mind, that God is indeed and in truth, sanctified, adored, blessed and magnified in that soul. "Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness." {Ps.150:1,2} "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness." {Ps.29:2} "Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." {Ps.97:12} This enlightened mind trembles before the exceeding glory of his Majesty, with reverence and godly fear; and wants to know his perfect will. "My heart standeth in awe of thy word." {Ps.119:161} It presumes not to approach him under any other character but what he has given of himself in his Word; nor takes liberty to come before him in any other right, than what God himself has granted; or to worship him in any other order, than himself has prescribed. "I will hear what God the LORD will speak; for he will speak peace unto his people." {Ps.85:8} "I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope." {Ps.130:5} "Show me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me; for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day." {Ps.25:4,5} John Johnson {Evangelical Sanctification or True Holiness, 1776}

### **Spirit of Antichrist**

"And 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." {Rev.12:15} As the blessings of grace proceed out of the mouth of Christ, in the word of his gospel; so the serpent sends out of his mouth a perverted gospel, or a stream of seduction, under the name of the gospel. He now found it in vain to contend by repellent force; therefore he comes behind her, and sends the flood after her, and the stream moved the same way that she went, that she might be the more insensibly carried away. This can be no other than his counterfeiting gospel doctrines, and gospel worship, with much appearance of truth, to come as near as possible to the word of God, in sound and show; yet so as to retain a lie in the right hand, or a deceivableness of unrighteousness concealed therein, by cunning craftiness, lying in wait to beguile; by subtle arts, and sophistical glosses, coloring over the truth of the gospel with a false paint, as to make falsehood pass for truth, and the wisdom of men to be esteemed as the oracles of God. And for these kind of deceptions, perhaps there never was an age more prolific than the present. Do the children of God declare Christ to be the alone object of their faith? We see parties crying loudly for the Lord Jesus Christ; but come to examine who this Christ is,

and we find only a sound of words. Do they confess the Holy Scriptures to be the alone guide to truth? We find numbers crying up the Scriptures; but enquire for what they value them, or in what light they view them, we find little but the historical part, or that they imagine they find something to countenance some peculiar favorite opinion, or they admire some beautiful striking expressions, but no true regard to the solid foundation of truth. Do the saints confess the glorious doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost? We hear a great noise about the Trinity, but examine the ground of it, and it generally proves a vague opinion, gathered from old creeds, without any distinguishing light, or any solid foundation for our faith. Do they confess righteousness and peace alone by the blood of Jesus? We hear great acclamations of the blood of Jesus; but if we come to enquire after the virtue, power, and benefit of that blood, it is only a dry relation; and the righteousness and peace enjoyed thereby is only imaginary, or a vague uncertainty. Do the children of God confess their being born of God? We hear great stories about regeneration; but enquire what this operation is, they only intend some vain amusement, some enthusiastic fancy, some occult impression, or agitation of the natural passions, that has no relation to the kingdom or truth of God. Do believers acknowledge, the baptism of the Holy Ghost? We hear great pretenses to the Spirit, but ask wherein it consists, it is some improvement of the principles of nature, some unintelligible impulses of the mind, something visionary or miraculous, or something foreign to the life and power of God. Do the saints pray for sanctification? We hear a great noise about sanctification; but see to what it amounts, it is either a strict attention to some moral virtues, or an overflow of zeal for religion, or some extraordinary diligence, or abstinence, according to some task which the person has laid upon himself, thereby to perform some work of supererogation, or something caused by painful fear, &c. &c. &c. Thus, by subtle devices, the serpent seeks to beguile; pretending to acknowledge whatever the saints confess, to draw them into a snare, by being made to believe that his children worship the same God that they do; {"Then they came to Zerubbabel, and to the chief of the fathers, and said unto them, Let us build with you; for we seek your God, as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither." Ez.4:2;} that being drawn into a good opinion, they may contract an intimacy, and so be led away to embrace the truths of the gospel in the same sliding manner, and in the same delusive light, as anti-christians do. But the Holy Seed, who shall bruise the serpent's head, has otherwise taught his children. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." {Note: Nothing angers the hypocrites more than this, to see the things of the kingdom of God measured by the line of the truth and Spirit of God, whereby they and their religion are left out. But this the children of God are commanded, and this they do, that they may escape being carried away with the spirit of the world. For they know that the world, or the protestant nations in general, or professors of every particular denomination, are no more truly Christianized than the papists; for notwithstanding their high pretenses to reformation, they still continue to follow their harlot mother, in treading down the holy city; and so they will continue to do till the time pointed out by the Holy Ghost, when the reign of the beast of Antichrist shall come to an end.} John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Spiritual Idolatry**

Idolatry is not confined to professed heathens; or to such as publicly avouch a multiplicity of gods, openly denying the Scriptures of Truth, or adore real stones and stocks; for whatever men pretend to, if they worship God under any other character, than that by which he is represented in the Holy Oracles; according to anything gathered from human tradition, or conceived in their own imagination, or by a rash construction taken from Scripture expressions, without due attention to the true signification of those character qualities which God gives of Himself; the being they worship will prove an Idol; that is, in plain terms, a devil. For what we know of God, is from the characters whereby he is described in his Word.

"And no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Therefore, whatever conceptions, ideas, or opinions are formed of God, beside what is clearly expressed in his own written Word, must needs deviate from the Truth; and the being worshiped under any such imaginary characters cannot be the true God; forasmuch as our groveling reason, cannot possibly form ideas adequate to the Infinite Perfection of the Eternal Jehovah; and the thing we conceive of in our hearts is the thing we worship. We cannot worship at all, without some conceptions of the being we address; and our worship cannot ascend any higher, than the conceptions formed of the divine being in our minds. So then, if we form different conceptions of God to that perfect character by which he is described in his Word, we are not worshiping the true God. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God." For whosoever does but presume to give any description, or form any conception of God, beside those delivered to us, by Himself in his own Word of Truth is an idolater! "Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Supralapsarian Glory of Christ**

According to the Sublapsarian conception, Christ had not had the Preeminence to be set up prior to all the works of God, and all things to be made for him, and his Church to be given him out of his Father's own bosom, of the pure will of God alone; for then the people had been first, and Christ had been afterwards raised up in subserviency to their felicity; not as the production of God's original counsel, but as a supply introduced through necessity, to heal a breach, or support a sinking structure; and thus God's Holy One, and all the Grace and Glory that shines in Him superior to all the creation, and in subserviency whereunto all things in heaven and earth received their being, is represented as an invention, introduced subsequent to the creation; yea, subsequent to sin and misery; for if the Council of God respecting the choice and adoption of his people in Christ was under the consideration of the Fall, it must needs be under the consideration of their Creation. So then, that Kingdom of eternal glory which the elect shall enjoy in Christ, which is no other thing but the enjoyment of Christ himself is only an accidental thing, as they were not originally designed for it in their creation; and if so, God in his first view of mankind, must behold them all standing in an equal relation to himself, before he beheld any of them in the peculiar relation of children; and those that are now his elect, were then no more his elect than the rest; for he must have beheld them out of Christ before he beheld them in Christ; beheld them as objects of his wrath, before he beheld them as objects of his delight. This undigested scheme is perplexed with as great absurdities as the opinion of the Arminians; that makes the Divine Will to be determined according to the good or evil dispositions of the creature. This represents his Councils of Grace as occasioned by sin and misery; and they both come in to one in this, that the purposes of Jehovah, relative to the Eternal Glorification of Emmanuel and his bride, do not proceed entirely from his own will, exclusive of any motive from without himself, or from the creature; but if the fall was prior to the grace of adoption, the giving of Christ and his Church to each other, and the settlement of eternal glory upon the elect Head and Members, as one perfect body in the Father's immutable counsel; how came this grace into existence? This supposes it to have some kind of beginning, and whatever had a beginning, might possibly have an end. And if anything whatsoever was prior to Christ Jesus, in the Father's Counsel, then He is not the same yesterday, and today, and forever; for then a change must have passed upon the will of the Father, the station of the Son, and the residence of the Holy Ghost, inasmuch as something new is supposed to rise up in the Divine Mind, and a new relation to subsist between the Eternal Jehovah and the heirs of glory; which strikes a more absurd figure than the Arminian scheme; for the Arminian does not represent the Most High as taking new resolutions and purposes, but as having one unalterable purpose to conduct himself by certain rules towards all his creatures,

so as their eternal happiness or misery may be determined, according to their virtuous or vicious dispositions; which mistake arises through lack of due attention to the difference between the covenant of works, in which all mankind are considered as servants, under which the non-elect eternally remain, and the Covenant of Grace, in which the elect are considered as sons, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. For the tenor of the first covenant is, "the man which doth those things, shall live by them," but the second runs thus, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;" and by keeping the former in their eye, without attending to the greatness of the Glory, as it shines in the latter, they lose the Excellency of Sovereign Grace, and confound the dispensations of God towards his sons, with his dispensations towards his servants. But they do not represent God so immediately changing in Himself, or new Counsels introduced in his own mind. Christ was set up from Everlasting, because he was the Father's delight. His people were chosen in Him, and given to Him, because the Father loved them with the same love. "Thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." That according to his eternal counsel to glorify his Son, and his Church together, therefore he created them; for "this people have I formed for myself." That for the sake of his Church, all other blessings in heaven and earth were created; "for all things are yours" - all things are for your sakes. And notwithstanding, by sin God's elect were sunk as low as any part of the creation, and became obnoxious to the highest condemnation; yet in the more early counsel of God, the unchanging love of the Father, the indissoluble relation between Christ and his chosen, and the treasures of inexhaustible grace already given them in Christ, and secured for them in his infallible hands, these heirs of God are amply provided against all events. The eternal I AM is their portion, sufficient to answer every circumstance that is possible for them; "for it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell." Therefore, neither sin, wrath, death, nor hell can possibly hinder the original Grand Design, nor prevent their enjoyment of God in eternal glory. And in this view of things he must know how much his soul has been enlarged, established, and comforted; drawn forth in love to God, and melted in humility. What a bright consistency he now beholds through the whole System of Grace, and with what composure and serenity of mind he now contemplates thereon, compared with what he ever enjoyed while he conceived of the Councils of Grace as introduced under the consideration of the Fall! So that whatever regard he may have to those who differ from him in this point, it can never appear to himself as a matter of mere speculation! If the grace through which we are chosen to sonship, and eternal glory, had not contained an ample provision against every intervening obstacle that was possible to oppose, or attempt to prevent the consummation thereof, the Council of Election had not been complete; so that we are chosen to salvation, and chosen to be vessels of mercy, as mercy is a fruit of electing love, but election is not a fruit or act of mercy, and to speak of a number of creatures chosen, without immediate regard to the First Elect of God, his only begotten Son, his chief delight, in whom all the body of elect members are chosen conveys a very mean and unsavory idea of that Eternal Glorious Act of God. John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, 1758}

### **Suretyship of Christ**

The Savior by whom this deliverance is accomplished by God alone without the concurrence of any creature, for the depth of the misery, none can reach, but the everlasting arms; and the perfection of the redemption, none can touch, but the infinite Jehovah. The foundation was laid in the eternal councils of God the Father, the work was complete in his unchangeable purposes, and secured in the stipulations of the Everlasting Covenant before the world began. {Note: Blessings of Spiritual Grace and Heavenly Glory were never lost, nor restored, but secured unalienable in Emmanuel, and conferred upon God's elect in the time appointed of the Father, according to the Fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, "but now is made manifest to his saints."}

Col.1:26. The eternal kingdom was prepared for God's elect before the foundation of the world; and it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared; for it is secured in Christ, to them who are heirs thereof by virtue of their indissoluble union to him, and not through their relation to Adam; nor had it ever the least dependence upon any created power, or upon the good or evil of any creature. For the plan was fixed in Him in whose hands it could not miscarry; for it pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell. In his all sufficiency, he is prepared for all events; and in his immutability, he is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.} The work was laid upon Christ in his Surety engagements before the foundation of the world; by him the Great Propitiatory, atonement was made, sin was taken away, and everlasting Righteousness brought in, when he appeared on the earth. By him the great High Priest who appears now in the presence of God for his Church; pleading for them, the virtue of his own blood; their cause is honorably maintained and their persons accepted before the throne of God. – It is true, Jesus Christ, having entered into Covenant stipulations and Surety engagements for his people; did, by a perfect atoning sacrifice make satisfaction to the Law. For as he was become our Sponsor, and our sin was imputed to him, the Law now deemed him as the real offender, or guilty person; demanded his life, and took it. For the sheep went astray; the shepherd made their case his own, and put himself in their place; therefore the same Law which required their lives, justly required his; which being a life of such excellent dignity and preciousness, it made such ample satisfaction to the demands of the holy Law; that in Righteousness he might take it again and his sheep be set free; but the Law knew no variation in its demand, but required the very same thing from the Surety, as from the principal; nor did it except any other satisfaction, but what it first insisted on; namely, the life of the offender. When all the wrath of God had been poured upon him, and his whole soul and body had suffered all the anguish due to sin, and the Law had taken its full vengeance on him, it found no more to feed upon. He sustained all the darts of indignation by his eternal power; and absorbed all the poison of the cup of God's fury against sin by his infinite holiness. Therefore having made an end of sin, he brought in everlasting Righteousness. Who was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." {Dan.9:24, Rom.4:25} John Johnson {Faith of God's Elect, 1754}

### **Synagogue of Satan**

"Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee." {Rev.3:9} Wherever Christ has a church, Satan will have a synagogue; but this synagogue is not what some persons foolishly call so, as a brothel house, a den of thieves, an assembly of riotous wicked persons, &c., for these are conventicles of the sons of Belial, practicing unnatural abominations, and the vengeance of God is upon them. But a synagogue of Satan is of a different nature, and is always established in religion; with all the complicated devices of men and devils, to make counterfeits resemble the true gospel, and lies to pass for the truth of Christ. They call themselves Jews, that is, {in New Testament language} believers, devoted to the glory of God, as his peculiar people, but they lie; being only deceivers, deceived. This sort of people are always the most inveterate haters of the truth, as it is in Jesus, because they are impostors, endeavoring to pass their counterfeits for the truth of Christ; and the more the real truth shines in its purity, the more it discovers the baseness of the cheat; the deceit and falsehood of their doctrines. Therefore {in their way} they are the most violent persecutors of those that keep the faith of Christ. And the children of God look upon them as the most execrable of all the offspring of hell, because, coming nearer to the truth in appearance, it makes their delusions the stronger and more dangerous. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." {Mt.7:15} These had doubtless shown their virulence against those that kept the word of the Lord, after using all their arts to seduce them, and

finding they could not prevail upon them to deny his name. And the Lord assures his saints, that he will make this band of the sons of hell, to come and bow before his people, and confess the difference between their deceptions, and the truth of the grace of God in his chosen. John Johnson {Book of Revelation, 1779}

### **Traditions of Men**

The traditions of Men have spread themselves in the nominal Christian Church, like the Army of Gog upon the Mountains of Israel; as a Storm, and as a Cloud covering the Land. This Smoke of the bottomless pit hath so darkened the sun and the air, until men grope at noon day, as in the night; or as those that have no Eyes. And this infernal Idol "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, showing himself that he is God;" and gives such life to his worshippers, that they proclaim his magnificence, as much as the Ephesians proclaimed that of their Goddess; saying, who is like unto the Beast? Who is able to make War with him? All Denominations of Protestants {in the general Bulk} are as much bigoted to their own traditions, as Papists to theirs. There may be some differences between the Traditions which reign most in Britain, and those most in vogue in Italy. But whether they be of the established Church, or Dissenters; tradition is the governing Principle; and each one having imbibed their own popular system, are devoted thereto, more than to the Word of the living God; and though they profess to make the Word of God their alone Rule; yet, their leaders have followed the opinions of one another, until their sentiments pass for Oracles; and whosoever shall stand up for the Sacred Word, in opposition to their Traditions, shall straightway be esteemed Heterodox. And either through admiration of famous Men, or through having those things constantly sounded in their Ears; the People receive them as unquestionable Scripture Truths, even though they never read them in the Bible. Thus, the real Difference between a Papist and a Protestant {in the common Run, of every Denomination} is only this; the Papist believes himself not obliged to pay attention to the Scriptures, because his priest tells him that the Judgment of the Church is sufficient. The Protestant receives human teachings as divine Truths, because his minister tells him that they are taken from the Scriptures. And to plead the very Word of God, in contradiction to these celebrated Protestant 'Divines,' is as great a profanation, as if it were done against a Conclave of Cardinals. This usurper, Human Tradition, is the most formidable Adversary against the Kingdom of Christ, of any that bears a banner in the Camp of Abaddon; and it is from this very Adversary, that every faithful Minister of Christ experiences the greatest resistance in his work; and every tender Lamb in Christ's fold, finds the fiercest opposition to his establishment in the Truth. John Johnson {Propositions of John Huddleston, 1766}

### **Trinity in Unity**

In order to understand the truth, it is necessary to have just conceptions of that special doctrine of the New Testament, which is the foundation of all evangelical truth - the Trinity in Unity; and which is to be mentioned with all reverence, and in the simple terms and phrases used in the Holy Scriptures, lest our minds imbibe gross ideas of the sublime mystery, which has been most horribly profaned by the logical inventions of the schools, and by their metaphysical subtleties, distinctions, and sub-distinctions; of substance, mode, personality, essentiality, &c; and by forming an image, and working it with their graving tools, have so mangled it, that sometimes there has come out three gods, and sometimes no god at all. In like manner have they done by every doctrine of the sacred word, as it hath come in their way, in every place, and in every time that theology has made a school science. For the Truth of God is absolutely above the reach of all their arts, reasonings, searches and researches. "The world by wisdom knew not God." Nor did the Most High God

ever make himself so contemptible as to subject the deep mysteries of his Kingdom to their apeish reasonings. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." For because they have found arts and sciences very useful, for improvement in natural things, they have grown so arrogant, that they will needs make the knowledge of the Holy, a dupe to their sciences. Not content to build a city for their own commodity, but they will also make a tower, "whose top may reach unto heaven." Therefore the Holy Ghost hath called the name thereof, MYSTERY BABEL. "Because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth." Jesus Christ, the wisdom of God, hath not appointed anyone to teach the knowledge of the Father but the Holy Ghost. "He shall teach you all things." Nor any rule whereby it is to be taught, but the word of his truth. "To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Nor is there any school where it is to be learned, but in the congregation of the saints. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee." They therefore that desire to understand the glorious mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, must receive it alone from the Living Oracles wherein we are undeniably assured that, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." - In all the Scriptures we find Three Holy Ones distinctly mentioned; and expressed by personal characters; yea, this stupendous truth shines conspicuous through the whole New Testament; and in every place, Divine attributes are ascribed, and Divine honors given to them all; yea, to each of the Three is ascribed all the Glory and the Majesty that pertains to Him that rideth on the heavens, and is extolled by his name JAH. Therefore they are absolutely and indivisibly ONE. This is the very life and glory of the righteousness, peace, salvation, joy and hope of all the saints; nor is it possible that any soul that is born of God should ever lose the sight, or disbelieve the truth of this precious doctrine; for it is that foundation truth, upon which all the saints are built; against which, the gates of hell never shall prevail. This truth being abundantly revealed, the believing soul embraces it in the light in which God has been pleased to express it in his Word; he bathes and delights in the open streams, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb; whilst the hypocrite, the vainly curious, the worldly wise, and the presumptuous {blinded with their own pride and conceit, and not discerning the Glory that shines in the Word of Life} assay to trace it beyond what is revealed; to discover the secret rise of these rivers within the throne; intruding into those things which they have not seen, and pretending to enumerate this mystery in the Godhead itself; telling of a Father eternally begetting, when there was no actual production; a Son eternally begotten, when nothing was visibly manifest; a Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son, when there was no other being in existence, for him to proceed unto, &c. These, and many such like things, concerning which, in Scripture there is profound silence; being only produced from the chambers of men's own imagery; the inventions of them that are idol-makers; for whatever is asserted of God, which is not manifest in his Word, must be an image formed in the brain, or a similitude drawn from our own imagination; and is a full violation of his commandment. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." Therefore we ought to take the utmost care to avoid either speech or conceptions of God, which may detract from the excellency of his glory and majesty; but this, there is no way possible to escape, if we go beyond, or vary from, what is fully revealed in his Written Word; for the understanding of a man is so gross, and the nature of God so sublime, that so certain as we wander from his own declarations of Himself, we shall fall into idolatry. The wisest man upon earth is as ignorant as any stone or stock in the world; any further than he is informed by the Holy Scriptures. Notwithstanding, many of the haters of God, after they have learned from the Scriptures, so much as is consistent with their inclinations to acknowledge, reject all the rest; denying the Scriptures to be of Divine Authority, and pretending that those things which they are pleased to assent to, were discoverable by natural reason; though in truth, they are things which never were known to any man, but from the Scriptures alone. Where the true fear of God is, the soul stands in awe; and searches the Sacred Record with profound reverence; not daring to be

positive in asserting or denying anything, until the Divine Spirit does enlighten the Word, and is therein led forth to ponder it, being convinced of the strength and clearness of the Scripture evidence, for, or against it. They humbly sit down at the feet of Christ, as learning disciples, to receive the truth of the kingdom of God, as little children; and take due heed, that what they embrace for truth is grounded upon the infallible testimony. Not being determined merely by the sound of words, to the ear, for many words may be alike in sound, which differ in signification; but deliberately attending to the genuine scope and design of the Holy Ghost in what he has been pleased to reveal in the Scriptures; and see that they receive those things, and no other, which are given in express intelligible words and sentences; or which are the natural and necessary consequences of the things expressed; so that the truth thereof, is really contained therein. Christians are not denied the use of their natural faculties; but, in due subjection to Divine Authority, obliged to employ them; and may frequently see certain truths fully implied in, and to be naturally deduced from, some portion of Scripture; which are not distinctly expressed. For instance, it is said that, "God created the heaven and the earth." Divers truths, which are not expressed in these words do therein undeniably appear. As, that God is omniscient, and omnipotent, or else he could not have done this work. That God must exist, prior to the creation. That heaven and earth had a beginning. That they are dependent on their Maker, &c. But then, we are to observe, that we are not to draw propositions from our own imaginations, and palm them upon the Scriptures; but to see that the inferences drawn from the Word of God are the natural, genuine, undeniable consequents of the truths declared; either from some particular sentences, or branches of the sacred word, or from the whole plan, or universal system of Truth as contained and set forth in the Holy Oracles. And the sincere soul, thus earnestly seeking after the knowledge of God, and submitting his judgment to the Divine dictates, is led by the word of grace, under the guidance of the Spirit of truth into the light of life. "And unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." John Johnson {Word of God, 1776}

### **Unity of the Brethren in Christ**

Therefore I am certain, that it is impossible that there should be a believer under heaven, but he understands my language; and I understand his, because we have both been taught by the same Master. We have both learned the same volume of truth, into which we have been guided by the same Spirit; and in the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ by the special power of the Spirit of truth, we are led to have just conceptions of God the Father. His tremendous Majesty, his flaming Holiness, and his unchanging Righteousness, which we behold with the deepest reverence, shamefacedness and trembling; and we see ourselves, {as considered in ourselves, as creatures, but especially sinners,} at an infinite distance; with the impossibility of ever coming near. But his superlative love, and sovereign grace in Christ, we behold with the most exalted joy, wonder and gratitude. This invites us near. For while it has the most powerful attractive influence upon our hearts, it yields the strongest ground of encouragement; and presents to us an inexhaustible treasury, with an uninterrupted flow of the riches of all blessings as a residing in the bosom of the Father, and freely opened in the Son. This animates our souls, with love, desire, and hope; in drawing near to the God of all grace, to be made partakers of these blessings; and with all our hearts, all our souls, and all our intellectual powers, we approach to God in prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings; waiting upon God, hoping in his Word, and pouring out our very selves into his bosom; and this we do with the eyes of our mind instantly fixed on the Son of God. Having our entire dependence, on the excellency of his Person in the sight of God, the relation he bears to his Church, the virtue of his blood shed for our sins, and his prevailing intercession before the Father, to give us access, and make us acceptable in his presence; and in this way we find a door open, which no man can shut; and come boldly to the throne of grace. Our souls find admission within the veil; "whither the Forerunner is for

us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest forever." Thus every believing soul stands in the presence of God, in the Perfect Righteousness of Christ, exempt from all condemnation; for he knows in whom he hath believed; and who has borne his iniquity, and who shall present him to God, "faultless before the presence of his Glory, with exceeding joy." John Johnson {Riches of Gospel Grace, 1776}

### **Word of God**

All Divine Faith is by the Word of God. Jesus saith, "the seed is the Word of God." And praying for his disciples, he adds, "for them also which shall believe on me through their Word." And again he saith, "he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting Life." And forasmuch as all Grace is contained in the Word, and all faith comes thereby; the Gospel of Christ is called, "the Faith," "the Word of Faith," and "the hearing of Faith." Faith is ascribed to the Word of God in its first commencement, called Regeneration, or being born again. "Being born again - by the Word of God." And it is ascribed to the same Word in its increase and duration; "as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word that ye may grow thereby." By every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live. And likewise in its power and stability; "ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you." Nor doth the Scripture hold forth any heavenly blessing or spiritual grace whatsoever, of which it is possible for any soul to partake while in this mortal state, any other way than by the Word of God. I say, the Scripture doth not hold forth any such thing; for I never pretend to peer into God's secret cabinet; but I avow that, if there be any Spiritual Grace which it is possible for any soul to partake of, any other way than by the Word of God, it is a profound secret to all living. For before the writing of the Holy Scriptures, when God revealed himself to the Prophets, it was by his Word. It is always said that, "God spake;" and in what manner soever the Revelation was given, it is still called His Word; and to this Word the effects are ascribed. "Thy Word hath quickened me." "Now ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." "I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." And it is certain that faith cometh by hearing the Word. "Hear, and your soul shall live." "And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed." "Unto you that hear shall more be given." But hearing is not confined to the Preaching of the Word in a public audience; for when the Word of God is attended to, and received into the heart, it may be said to be heard, whether it be by preaching, reading, conference, meditation, recollection, or in what way soever it comes to the Mind. For in whatever method God has been pleased to reveal his Word, it is called by the general name of preaching. "The Scripture - preached before the Gospel unto Abraham." So in whatever way the Word is brought to the Understanding, it is called by the general name of hearing. Neither is this hearing extended to all that hear the Word of God in the outward sound, or read it in the letter; but to such, whose ears and hearts the Lord is pleased to open, and to cause his Word to enter and dwell there. And I am well assured that no Fountain can produce a stream of a nature different to itself. Therefore, whatever the Word of God is, Faith is of the same nature; for faith is nothing else but the Word of God dwelling in the heart, filling the intellectual powers, incorporating with the faculties of the soul. But to assert, that the Word of God is not a Direct Communication of God Himself is utterly false. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." But to this there is a common reply, which having been received by tradition, and by often hearing, and often repeating is taken for granted by many, as if it were an incontestable truth. It is this, that the essential Word of God and the written Word of God are two distinct things. I confess, both this and many other undigested expressions, by often hearing and reading from those whom I esteemed persons of superior abilities, I have before now taken up and used without due examination; which when I have come more deliberately to scan, I could not find any Foundation for them in the Holy Oracles. Why do we not first inquire,

whether the Holy Ghost has made any such distinctions? Is there any Word of God that is not essential? Every Word of God is pure! Why is Emmanuel called the Word of God? Is it not because he alone reveals the Father's will? And is it not that very mind and will of God revealed by Christ Jesus which is committed to us in the Gospel? The Word of God itself, and the form in which it is committed to us, {whether as it is written with paper and ink, or as it is preached by ministers,} are two distinct things. But the mind and will of God as it resides in his Son, and the mind and will of God as it is spoken in the Scriptures by the Holy Ghost is the self-same thing. Jesus said of the words which he spake to his disciples, "the words that I speak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life." And the disciples acknowledged those very speeches to be the "words of Eternal Life." Again he says, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." And again, "the Word which you hear, is not mine, but the Father which sent me." These are the things spoken by his lips, and they are nothing less than the Truth and Faithfulness of his heart; or they are God himself, in the manifestations of his Grace. The Gospel of Christ is by the Holy Ghost called "the power of God unto salvation," "the Word of life," the "Word of his grace," "the wisdom of God." Consequently, wherever this Word of God is received God himself dwells. Therefore to have faith is to have the Truth and Power of the Word of God abiding in us; and to have the Word of God in us is to have the Riches of the Grace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as it is revealed in his Word replenishing our souls. The Grace of God in Himself, the Grace of God revealed in his Word, and the Grace of God manifest in and to his people is the selfsame thing under different considerations. As the sap and life of a tree is in the Root, in the branch, in the bloom, and in the fruit, is the very same, only it subsists, operates and manifests itself in different modes, so the same grace which is in the Father shines forth in the Son by the Gospel of the Grace of God, and by the Power of the Holy Ghost becomes efficacious in the soul, whereby the soul enjoys the heavenly blessings, and brings forth fruit unto God. But some persons are shy of acknowledging all spiritual blessings to be received by the Word of God, lest they should detract from the Special Energy of the Holy Ghost; for they retain a conception in their minds, that the Word of God, and the influence of his Holy Spirit are two things, and so they are indeed, if we form such low conceptions of the sacred Word as too many do. But if we conceive of it in the light in which the Holy Ghost gives it, the more honor we give to the Word of God, the more we magnify the Grace of the Holy Ghost; for he is the Author of the Revelation. "All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God." It is the mind of the Spirit, and all his Divine Operations are wrought by the Word of his grace. All his will is laid open in his Word, and becomes Life to our souls by his special influence. As it is observed of Lydia, "whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul." And of the Thessalonians, we read that, the "Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost." It is according to the experience of all the children of God, that every spiritual blessing, strength, comfort, joy, peace, hope, &c., and every spiritual impression, as humility, reverence of God, patience, tenderness of conscience, &c., proceeds from the Power of the Word of God in their hearts; nor are they ever produced any other way. Yet it is the Power of the Holy Ghost, making that Word efficacious. As the fire upon the altar burnt the incense, but the sweetness of the incense caused the perfume; the seraph's hand carried the live coal from the altar, but the fire in the coal touched the prophet's lips; Jehu's strength drew the bow, but it was the arrow he shot that pierced Jehoram's heart; so, all the Operations of Grace are from God the Father, in the fullness of Christ, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; but never take place in any soul but by the Word of the Gospel. But though every regenerate soul in the world might easily judge of these things; and, {could they disentangle themselves from all preconceived notions, and ideas formed upon conjectural speculations,} clearly understand how every Spiritual blessing, or Divine impression, that their souls ever tasted or felt, was and is by the Word of God alone; yet I doubt not, {were the question abruptly to be asked,} but that many gracious souls would be at a loss to return an answer, how their own souls came to the enjoyment of life in

Christ; partly for want of having their senses duly exercised in spiritual things, and partly through the un-digested instructions which they have unwarily taken up from others. For many persons make a kind of separation between the Word of God and the Work of the Holy Spirit, whereby many of the weak lambs of Christ are confounded, and their minds wander in expectation of some occult imaginary operation, they know not what. I have conversed with many, who talk of something wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, without the Word. They call it by various names; as a principle of faith, spiritual life, regeneration, &c., and often seem at a loss what name to give it; and all the arguments they use in favor of it are only conjectural; but the two main points concerning it I could never learn, though I have often urged for them; that is, some account of it from the Scripture, or some description how it operates, what effects it produces, or what the soul experiences, tastes, or feels from this separate operation. And until I can obtain a more intelligible definition of it than I have ever been favored with, I shall esteem it a chimerical fiction. The things of the Kingdom of God are mysteries, because they are of such a spiritual nature as the carnal man understands them not; and because they are so exceedingly sublime, that the greatest saint stands astonished, and cries out, "O the depth! What hath God wrought!" But the mystery is only in consequence of the inconceivable Greatness, the inaccessible Height, the unfathomable Depth, and the immeasurable extent of the Heavenly Excellence thereof. For there is nothing pertaining to the Kingdom of God of an occult, unintelligible, or enthusiastical nature. All those kind of mysteries are diabolical delusions; for "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Therefore whatsoever creeps into the Church of Christ, which cannot bear the scrutiny of the Quick and Powerful Word, and according to that Word admit of a clear demonstration, is the offspring of hell; the serpent going upon his belly. For the true Light hath said, "he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness." The spiritual man does not feed his imagination with phantasms; and when he speaks of the work of faith, or the life of Christ in his soul, he forms no enthusiastical conceptions, nor endeavors to convey any chimerical ideas to others. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." The soul who is blessed with faith does feel and enjoy the Word of God in his heart; and in the truth of that Word he enjoys the living God, and he can tell us how he enjoys him; for he feels the Word of God take place in such a manner that he receives it as the very infallibility of God; and he finds such love, grace, and salvation so gloriously and excellently displayed therein, that he approves, embraces, and delights in those Divine Truths, with all his intellectual powers, and receives those things preached in that Word as the very Life and Satisfaction of his soul; and his heart is drunk up therein. This is to have the Word of God dwell in us; and in this Word is held forth the Rich Grace of the Three-One, which he necessarily receives in receiving the Word; for he that receives the Word, must receive the Truth contained therein; so that the heart is filled with the enlarging, comforting, attracting, and establishing views of the love, wisdom, power, and boundless Grace of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and is enabled to trust in, to live upon, and rejoice in this grace with all his powers. Thus God dwells in him, and he dwells in God. The love of God is shed abroad in his heart; and all his mental powers are taken up in, and devoted to God, who is his life, his joy, his hope, his all in all. Thus he can declare in an intelligent manner, that Christ liveth in him, and that he lives by the Faith of the Son of God. John Johnson {Evangelical Truths Vindicated, 1758}