

Paul Hobson { - 1666 }

Authority of God

The measuring or judging of man's ability by the extent of God's authority, which is manifest in his Word, for in all the Scripture God manifests his authority over us, and your mistakes are from his authority to conclude the creatures ability, as in such Scriptures where God saith, "do this and you shall live," and "turn yourselves," or be this or be that, which Scriptures are principally to discover God's authority, but not the creatures ability. When man fell he lost his ability, but this change wrought no alternation in God, if no change in God, then why should any change be in his language? If God had changed that way of his language, the creature would have been apt to conceive, that in man's fall there had been a change of God's power or authority as well as of the creatures ability, which is not so. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Believers in Christ

If you ask me, what I mean by a believer, or by that believing; which is to be in all those that are members of the church of Christ? I answer, I will tell you first, what I do not mean; and then what I do mean. I do not mean a bare professor of truth and faith; for all that profess truth, and are not possessed with truth. Secondly, I do not mean such a believer who is drawn up by the power of reason, from the external declarations of truth, to believe a Christ without; when he doth not enjoy a Christ within; which men may do, and so believe, that they may be brought to submit to an external ordinance. {Though external ordinances are good in reference to the will of God; yet it is not an outward Ordinance, but God in the Ordinance, that is the life of the saint.} But by a believer I mean, a soul who from the enjoyment of Christ within, is made able to believe a Christ without. For believing according to Truth is for a soul from the power of Truth, being overcome by it, and swallowed up into it, and from thence enabled to assent and give credit to it; so to assent and submit to all things presented in it, and required by it; as that they are made able to live to the glory of Truth in every particular act. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Biblical Hermeneutics

Not distinguishing the extent of words and not interpreting one Scripture with another is very dangerous, and a special cause of stumbling; as in the misapplying of things to the subject, that is expressed in a particular Scripture, without understanding that Scripture by another, as in Ezek.33:11, where the Lord saith, "as I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked;" from which particular you conclude all sinners. Now if you look in the Scriptures you will see yourselves mistaken, for there are three sorts of sinners. One sort that sins out of confidence of God's mercy, and upon that account resolves to sin, Deut.29:19, "and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst." Note: We will add drunkenness to thirst for God will be merciful; but see what the Lord saith in verse 20; "the LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven." If so, then this cannot be the sinner that God intends in Ezekiel 33:11. A second sort of sinners are those that sin and are not sensible of their sinning, but rather think it goes well with them when they sin, as the generality of the world doth; and this sort of sinner God speaks of in Jer.44:16-29 & Isaiah chapter 11. Now if you look in Jeremiah 44:26, God there swears that He will show them no mercy. And in Is.27:11, there God doth affirm, he will show no mercy to them. "For it is a people of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour." {Note also that; "the LORD hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." PV.16:4.} Now both these sorts of sinners cannot be those God intends, when he saith, "as I live, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." A third sort of sinners are those that are so in a Gospel sense, and they are those to whom Christ saith, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" as in these Scriptures, Mt.9:13, Mark 2:17, Luke 5:32, I Tim.1:15; and those sinners appear to be such, and are declared to be such, when they have through the gracious appearance of God a discovery of themselves unto themselves, that in the sense of their sins do groan and long after Jesus Christ. These are those that Christ invites; saying, "Come unto

me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Mt.11:28. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Biblical Hermeneutics

And that so much of that Scripture, and so in some other Scriptures, you take one person for another, misunderstanding the drift or scope of what is there intended, as in Hebrews 10:29, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" Now your mistake is, in the taking one person for another, for the Apostle doth not intend in the word 'he' by which he was sanctified, the party that treads the blood of Christ underfoot, but it is Christ Himself that is sanctified. Now sanctification is to be set apart, and it is Christ alone that was set apart through the blood of the covenant, through that God sanctified him, through that he sanctified himself according to John chapter 17. For Christ was capable of no other sanctification, and if any man with an ingenuous heart will but read that verse as it is in the translation, though there is much more to be considered, otherwise they cannot conclude, but the party there sanctified is properly intended Christ, and not he that treads, unless they will overthrow the intent of this Scripture, and makes Scripture to be of private interpretation, which is not to be done. II Pet.1:20. I might mention many other places of Scripture, as to the mistakes of persons, taking all for some, and one for another, I only mentioned these for the rest. Truly, "Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God," {Mt.22:29;} that is to say, the power and authority of Scripture, which all are ignorant of until the Truth of God in Scripture is made good in them. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Biblical Hermeneutics

Another mistake is your not distinguishing of causes, putting no difference between the essential, meritorious, instrumental and final causes; and so it occasions you to conclude that God or some of his eminent acts done in Himself to be subject to something that are but instrumental causes, and so you do bring the efficient cause into subjection unto the instrumental cause, and sometimes the effects of the efficient cause is declared in Scripture as a declarative cause; as, "he that believes not is damned," or as an instrumental cause, "he that believes shall be saved." Now this not understanding causes is an occasion of your stumbling. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Christ – the Truth of God

Thy wisdom {oh saint} is one with Christ; it rises and raises thee in its rising, to be employed in the glorious beholding of Christ. What can thy soul desire more? The mystery of the Father and the Son is the object of thy eye. {John 14:7} This is that which out-glorieth all glory below itself. This supplies thee with all good, when all things depart from thee but itself. Those streams can never run dry, whose fountain always flows forth to fill them. That heart can never be at a loss, who is always employed amongst, and in the enjoyment of eternal gains. This should therefore in an eminent sense comfort all Saints. It should also comfort you against all the oppositions you meet with in the world. Do men labor to interrupt the conveyance of light? Who can do it, if Christ causes as the beginnings, so the increase of light in them? What if men darken expressions, and do what they can to cloud the Truth? {Ez.34:15,16} If Christ be the conveyor of truth, who can hinder? Therein rejoice! Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Christ - the Wisdom of God

He is wisdom, not only as the fountain retaining, and the way causing, and the object in which wisdom is employed; but He is wisdom essentially, for he is not only the cause of the light in us, but he is the cause of life in that light; therefore the Apostle says, "Not I, but Christ lives in me," Gal.2:20; for when once Christ hath enlightened a soul, he is then the life of that light, employing that soul in the understanding of Divine Truth. {Eph.1:17-19} – Is Christ the fountain retaining wisdom for you? Is Christ the way of communicating wisdom to you? Is Christ the object of wisdom? Is Christ the life of that light which is thus called wisdom? Then note first, that Christ is all in all {Col.3:11} to a saints spirit. What hast thou which thou hast not received? {I Cor.4:7;} and what way receivest thou but by Christ? And if so, then give the sole and whole glory of that thy wisdom to Christ. There is no such ingratitude as this, for men not to return an acknowledgment to Him from whence all flows, to glory in

ourselves, is a great sin against Christ; and to make that to be ours which is proper to Christ, so as to give the glory of that good to ourselves, or to anything else besides Christ, is and will be taken unkindly by Him. "But thou didst trust in thine own beauty, and playedst the harlot because of thy renown, and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by; his it was. And of thy garments thou didst take, and deckedst thy high places with divers colours, and playedst the harlot thereupon; the like things shall not come, neither shall it be so. Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them." Ez.16:15-17} Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Church of Christ

By a Church, I mean a company of souls, who through the comings in of Christ {John 14:17,} are made able so to believe in Christ, that they are through that believing, made able freely and voluntarily to give themselves up to Christ, to walk in the acknowledgment of Christ, in, or according to his Word. Rom.6:17, Acts 24:14. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Contemplation of Christ

A saints refreshment flows from the Excellency and glory of what he apprehendeth; and that is the cause why a saint never grows weary of viewing, and never lags in his delight and joy in his beholding, but runs more sure at last, then at first. - Apprehension of the newness in a sense doth cease; but the excellency of the nature of the thing apprehended and enjoyed doth not cease. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Contentment with God in Christ

What is a Saints contentment but to be content with God {"I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Phil.4:11,} and in God in all conditions. Herein is only a true rest; if it be in anything else but God, it is no true rest. If honor, or pleasure, or profit, or credit, or applause, or riches, or anything besides God doth give thee rest, thy rest and contentment is in the creature and not in God. On the contrary; if ye have poverty, disgrace, banishment, or imprisonment and enjoy God, he hath his rest still; because his contentment is not in and with the creature, but it is in and with God. God's will is his rest! He that lives in the will of God, he sees God's will is best for him; and his own will is so swallowed up in the will of God, and made one with it, that he hath no peace but in this. And this life he hath and enjoys not by reasoning himself into this condition; as, for a man to say thus; 'this is God's will, and therefore I must be content; it is but a folly to resist his will; it must be so, and I cannot help it; therefore I had better be content than to fight and strive against it; for I cannot remove it until it please the Lord. Now this is not the contentment of Saints, but that which reason dictates to a man, which a man without grace may reach; and in this state of contentment most are satisfied, and take it to be a Saints submission, and contentment when it is not. But a Saints rest, contentment, and satisfaction is not from reason, but from a sweet enjoyment of God in every condition. His rest is not in this and that, but God in this and that! Paul Hobson {Practical Divinity, 1646}

Conversion & Regeneration

This work of conversion and new birth I shall present it to you thus. It is by the glorious and powerful appearance or discovery of the glory of God in Christ, which doth so seize upon the soul, and convincingly conquers the soul, that the soul in the discoveries of that light is so killed and made silent, and confounded in the sense of his own unsuitableness to God, and undoneness without Christ, that the heart is presently made to loath and abominate itself, and whatsoever was wrought or done before Christ came, and is so restlessly carried out for Christ, that the soul cannot rest till it doth enjoy Him, or enjoy him as his own, which is alone done through believing. Now faith is a supernatural light and life setup in the soul by God's causing the creature to assent to and close with the Authority of God's Truth in Christ, upon which direct application followeth, which is the applying of Christ as his own from the truth of God's word, which is from his peculiar love, which love the heart is made sensible of in that appearance. This appearance of God doth and will kill, make silent, and confound or conquer whatsoever is in the soul before Christ comes. Jer.31:18,19, Rom.7:9, Zech.2:13, Acts 2:37. The believer is so overcome with the sight of this light that he can no longer love, but only loath himself. Job 40:26, Job 9:31, Phil.3:8. It is made able to go out of itself, and give away for, and assent to the Authority and Truth of God's Word. John 3:33, Rom.4:18-20, II

Thes.1:10. It can find no rest in itself, nor whatsoever self did before or can do, but solely waits upon and attends the authority of this discovery. Acts 2:37, 16:30, Song 5:6-8, Ps.63:1, Mt.11:12. It's made able to apply; that is to say, to own a propriety, and to bring home that to itself, as its own, which is as high as heaven, and far above what nature can either reach or attain unto, according to the Scriptures. Heb.11:7-13, John 8:56, I Cor.2:9,10. Now I beseech you to consider what hath been said, and you will see, that the nature of this truth, as we said before, is too high for any improvement of nature to attain unto, before the new birth. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Covenant of Grace – State of Grace

Peace is not a bare grace of peace, but it is a state of peace. It is a state of favor and grace purchased by Christ according to an agreement and covenant made between God and him, into which Christ doth instate all his, in which state they have a perfect acceptance, and are complete in the sight of God. - It must of necessity be a state, because it must be something that is the contrary of what sin by Adam brought souls into. Now that was not a bare curse, but a cursed state of darkness and death; and that sin did bring souls into such a state, you can clearly see in Eph.2:1-3 - applied with the 5th & 6th verses, and verses 11-14,19. The case is clear, for the Scripture is clear in the proof of this. If so, then God's grace by Christ must of necessity bring souls through believing into a state that is contrary to that state; then this peace must needs be a state. Were saints truly informed of this truth, and did really believe it, their comforts would be more sure and firm than now they are. Now poor souls to look upon it, that what peace is today is many times gone tomorrow, and looks upon it sometimes lost by sins and miscarriages, and gained again by repentance and exact performance; and never looks upon this to be a state, a standing state; the sense of which is to recover souls that are fallen, and to spirit souls that grow cold and dead, even the sense and consideration thereof, that though they fall, this state stands - being a rich unalterable state purchased by Christ, and stands upon the unchangeable foundation of God's free grace, and the full and perfect purchase of Christ our Lord and Prince of Peace. O, that my soul, and the souls of all them that fear God, could always believe this Truth; this soul satisfying Truth; this sin recovering Truth; this fallen souls recovering Truth; this grace raising Truth; this God in Christ exalting Truth. Let us study to walk worthy of this unchangeable state, and there is nothing will so much enable us to walk like it as the true knowledge and belief thereof. "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Phil.4:7. And when thou fallest, look on this standing state believingly, thou wilt find it like the Brazen Serpent to heal and restore thy soul. Paul Hobson {Innocency though under a Cloud Cleared, 1664}

Election in Christ

Consider what we mind by election. It consisteth in God's foreknowledge, wherein He was pleased from all eternity in the riches of his grace and love to pitch upon and make choice of some in a peculiar sense to be vessels of glory, whom he elected in the election of his Son, who was the public Person comprehending the whole, and this prerogative of God and privilege to us, is not to be deciphered or discovered, like as other privileges are; for the death of Christ, and our faith in Christ, these have the time of their rise, reign and perfection; but for the other privilege it is done in God and with God, without relation to anything outside Himself. It only depends upon the prerogative of his will, and his good pleasure, according to the Scriptures: Rom.9:16-22, Eph.1:1-8. Therefore when we speak of causes we must make a distinction between what is done by God out of God, and what is done by God in God; and whatsoever is done in the last sense hath no rise but Himself and his own pleasure, and if you give not God this, you must deny His prerogative and prove that he may not do with His own what seems good unto him, which is contrary to the Scriptures: Mt.20:15, Ex.33:19, Rom.9:15,16. Now besides what hath been already said to prove that faith is but an effect and not the cause of election, mind these two reasons. First, if election be before men have faith, then faith cannot be a cause, but it must be an effect; but election is before we have faith. Acts 13:48, II Tim.1:9-10, Eph.1:4-5. Reason 2. God is the first cause of causes, and whatsoever doth take its rise or is immediate from Him hath no other cause, the truth of that you will see from the Scriptures before mentioned, therefore faith must needs be an effect. But besides all the Scriptures and reasons I have brought; do but consider, that election is not capable of being caused by any causes out of God, for we are elected in the election of Christ, and Christ did not merit his own election, for his death is not the cause of election, though it be the meritorious cause, and God's great way to accomplish life and salvation. If so be that faith is the cause of our election, then election is subject to a cause, and if in the lesser than in the greater; but we know that in the greater which is the election of Christ, in which general all particulars are comprehended; it is not caused, nor depends upon any condition or causes out of God, but immediately flows from Him, and all other works and acts of grace and mercy done by God in Christ for us, or by God in us towards Christ, are the fruits of this eternal

fountain. I mean God's love, in which God's owning or choosing is so involved in it, as it is one with it, and both arise from one and the same fountain, which is his own will and pleasure. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Election 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; 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." Eph.1:4-6. "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. "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. The life of the act is that which produceth the form, the fruit of the act lives in the life, and is spoke out, or brought forth by the form. Had not this been so the sin of Adam could never have brought a curse upon his posterity, for the life of his act was in unity, in all that were comprehended in his person, and the evil fruit of his act took place upon all, in that sense, when it took place upon him, but the manifestation or execution of this took place successively as mankind was brought forth, and so it appears the form of the act, was to be made manifest according unto the succession or appearance of forms in mankind, but the life of the act from whence the denomination of the act comes was really acted and executed in Adam; so in the promise of God to Abraham, you are to look upon the life or virtue of the promise, the fruit of the promise, and the form of the performance, which is but the mouth and language to speak out the life by; which was made good when Isaac and his seed successively took place. So in Christ; he was a Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, the life or virtue of the act, which was the efficacy of Christ's death, which did arise from the Author and life of the act, that took place so soon as ever God did promise Christ, the form of the act, which is the language, as I told you before, to speak out the life, that takes place in time, and is not formally presented till actually performed; but the life or virtue of the form, that takes place for us when first promised, and so the death of Christ was effectual so soon as ever the promise was propounded, or else Adam must have died, and none could have been saved till Christ had come and suffered in the flesh. The very same we are to mind in election. The life of the act, which is the essence, took place from the beginning; as to the form we shall mind it in the second particular. Now as to the discovery and the fruits of the act, that takes place in forms, as forms are presented, but the act is as truly alive before the form appears, as it is afterwards, and the truth is, every act takes its denomination from the life, and the antiquity is derived from thence; and so Abraham was a Father of nations, when the promise was first propounded, and so Christ was really slain, as to the life and of virtue, when he was first promised, and election was then done when it took place in its rise, which was God's singular love and good will to choose some to be vessels of glory. Now when the apostle saith, that God "calls things that are not as if they were," he doth not intend the life or virtue of the act, but the form of the act, and he that denies it, endeavors to overthrow the whole tenure of Scripture. For in this sense we are to understand our fall in Adam and our rise in Christ, according to the tenure of the Gospel, and so also the promise to Abraham, and so we are to understand the intent of a Law, as in Matthew 5:28, which declares lusting after a woman to be adultery, I John 3:15; that hatred is murder, which declares the act to live in the life and the virtue though it lacks its outward form, and if so really before the form is brought forth, and in this sense we are to understand Christ's love and rejoicing in the sons of men before the world was. Prov.8:31. Secondly; consider, as the life and virtue of some acts take place before the form, and is really in being before the form appear either of our acts or Gods; so further mind, that whatsoever is done, not only of God, but also in God for us, the life and form of that act, as to God takes place together, and both is in being before it doth appear, though the discovery of that is not, till the object to which the action relates be brought forth, and this is true election, for that is an act done as well in God as by God, and so life and form take place together as to God, though as to the form of the discovery to us, it is not till formable we are brought forth. So this act is not to be parallel with such acts that God doth for us, though by himself yet out of himself, as redemption, or the promise to Abraham is; and therefore what is said from the words of the apostle, Rom.4:17, is not sufficient to overthrow this truth; namely, that election is before the beginning of the world, according to these Scriptures. Eph.1:4, I Pet.1:2, II Thes.2:13. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Election in Christ

Men are said to be truly and really in Christ two ways. First; by election, and so believers are all in Christ, he being the public person in whom all election was comprehended, and all the elect are really in Him, before they are

brought forth, as every man is in Adam before they are born. - Before ever the elect are brought home to Christ in their calling & conversion, they were in Christ in election, or else Christ would not have said "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice," John 10:16; so that they did belong to Christ, as his particular sheep before he brought them in, and that there is such a property and unity before conversion, you will see, if you seriously mind the Scriptures. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Election in Christ

All that are brought over to believe in Him are called sons and daughters, and so they are sons and daughters adopted, and that which gives them the denomination of Christians or sons is because they are elected in the election of God's electing Christ, or Christianized by Christ. - Christ is the public person elected by God, and all that are elected are elected in His election; so Christ is the public person anointed by God; and all that are anointed are anointed by Christ, and from the anointing of Christ. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Exaltation of Christ

Christ receives no additional glory by saints acknowledgments, {"Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous; or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect?" - "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him; or what receiveth he of thine hand? Job.22:2,3, 35:7,} though Christ calls it a glory to him, when the glory in Himself by saints is acknowledged, yet it adds nothing to him, but only doth acknowledge what before was in Him. If so, let this teach us, that the highest of our exaltings of Christ, is no ground for us to exalt ourselves, either in the room of, or with the Lord Jesus Christ; though it's true that Christ cannot be exalted, but a saint is exalted too, but it is the very exaltation of Christ, that is a saints exaltation, and nothing else. {Col.3:4, I John 3:2} Therefore let this teach us, while we exalt him, to lie low before him, knowing that we give nothing to him, but what is his due; and do nothing before him, but what is our duty, which becomes a saint. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Faith

Faith that is produced in obedience to Truth, by the discoveries of the Gospel of Christ is that which nature in the highest improvements before conversion is not capable of performing. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Faith, Godliness & Growth in Christ

Faith which is produced in obedience to truth, by the discoveries of the Gospel of Christ, is not the bringing up of something that is in men before conversion, but it is a peculiar work of God, which nature in its highest improvement is not capable of, till conversion or the new work of grace be wrought, which is God's, not upon common, but a special Gospel account wrought by Him. - All power we have to act or do things, in a Gospel sense is produced alone by the power and Spirit of God, not upon a common but a special account. Abuse of this truth: The best of Saints while they live here have sin; therefore to exhort those that profess the Lord to exactness in duty, or reprove them for any neglect in duty, presently this is replied, 'we can do no more than we have power,' which is a truth in its sense, but it is sadly applied, for when God hath begun to work grace in us, the way to increase in strength is by careful watching and waiting hourly and daily before the Lord, and they that do so wait and walk, have experience that God will not be wanting to increase strength according to these Scriptures: Is.40:31, John 7:17, Is.64:5, Ps.9:10, Mt.13:12, Luke 8:18. And the truth says, were this practiced, there would not be such sad un-saintlike walkings as now appear to be among them that profess the Lord, both in their pride, fashioning themselves after the world, covetousness, frothy language, wanton carriages, and other un-saintlike practices, inasmuch that it is a hard thing to know a saint from a sinner, in his daily practice and conversation, unless you find them in particular acts of worship, which is that which doth sadly wound the Name of God, and the glory of Christ amongst men. I do not speak this for to accuse others only, but also to bear witness against myself for my former unsuitable walkings, wherein my daily watchings and waitings, and exact conforming and cultivating faith, was not kept alive, and therefore I died, {"for if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Rom.8:13, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the

Spirit reap life everlasting." Gal.6:7,8;} but blessed be the Lord who hath discovered the truth of this to my soul. Come to some professors and tell them of their pride, fashions of the world, covetousness, passion, courtly complements, frothy language, manifesting that these things are unbecoming saints, and inconsistent with a growing heart; this presently is replied, 'everyone hath sin, Paul and the rest of the Apostles, the very best of saints had sin, and so I confess that I have.' This they answer, and peradventure they will say that they do grown under it, which is a perfect deceit; for though there is sin in the people of God, yet there is a daily growth and overcoming in Christ by faith in the blood of Christ, and by a diligence in waiting and watching, by which the sin of the heart, or corruption of the will and the mind is kept under, and there is not an allowance of any one sin where Christ is in truth. And therefore those that do shelter themselves under truth, in this sense, and do not daily grow and get power against sin, let them know this from a heart that knows it from woeful experience, that they only live in notions and not in the power and spirit of truth, to be a witness of the truth of the new birth or work of grace which God hath wrought in them that are his. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Fruitfulness in Christ

Every effect is produced by a cause suitable to itself. All our loves, longings, desirings and gaspings after Jesus Christ is not a cause, but a fruit of Christ as the only cause. - This should teach us to give Christ the glory, as our privileges in Him, so also of all the duty we perform to Him, being but fruits from Him. {John 15:4, Gal.5:22} - All may see how sweetly, how evangelically, how heavenly those souls act, that act from an enjoyment of Christ. {Eph.1:19, 3:20} They do not only act to, but in the power of Christ; they do not only act to heaven, but from the power of heaven. {Luke 17:21} Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Godliness

As our heart does represent Christ spiritually in the spirit, so may our actions present Christ's glorious and lovely outwardly amongst men. "Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ." Phil.1:27. It is the duty of saints not to cover but uncover Christ in all their performances; and had I time, I might tell you what the Apostle meaneth, when he saith, "a man should not pray with his head covered" {I Cor.11:4;} but I shall say no more, but {as he saith} the Head of every man is Jesus Christ {vs.3;} and therefore not only in your praying, but in your practicing cover not, but uncover the glory of Christ, by a saint-like walking amongst men. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Gospel Ordinances

Is the presence of Christ in Himself; then 'tis not to be enjoyed elsewhere; 'tis not in fellowships; 'tis not in ordinances, yet simply considered; though these ye are to use to hold forth the discipline of Christ to the world, yet not to rest therein. These distinguish you externally from the men of the world, but you will be as of the world still for all of them, if you enjoy no more than bare ordinances. This I speak, because many satisfy themselves in this, in receiving outwardly the ordinances, and that they are accounted professors, and separated from the men of the world, and because they are found in such and such fellowships, being well thought on by others; but alas, these will do you no good, for all these you may have, yet have no more life than the men of the world. You see no man can live in the bosom of Christ, and in the glory of Christ, but he that is made one with Christ. Saints are not only made perfect hereafter; as most professors run away with; but they are admitted and have some entrance into heaven here; for they live as Saints, they walk as Saints, they trade as Saints and they live with Christ. Ordinances are but shells, but Saints while they are cracking the shell to others, they are eating the kernel themselves, and living thereby. You may be partakers of all external ordinances, you may submit to baptism, you may come into a right order of a Church way, you may frequently break bread together, but what's all this; for it is but the shell of the business, the husk, the bone - but is Christ truly glorified? Paul Hobson {Practical Divinity, 1646}

Gospel Truth

He, and he only is fit to declare Truth, {Gal.2:20, I Cor.2:1-6,} whose spirit is so crucified by the power of Truth, that in his acknowledgment of Truth, he does it singly for Truth, and not for self. "I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." Ps.71:16. But self in no soul is so laid down by the power of Truth, till that soul is actually possessed with Truth; for till then it is not Christ, but self that reigneth. He, and he only is fit to declare Truth, whose reason doth not master notions of Truth, but his reason is a

servant to the power of Truth, being overcome and made silent by the authority of Truth. But no soul is so overcome and made silent by the authority of Truth, but he that enjoyeth Truth. Therefore he, and he only is fit to declare Truth. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Glory of Christ

The glories of Christ are too high for spirits that live at a distance from Christ to acknowledge! Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

God's Promises in Christ

Many times the people of God are hindered in Christ and those promises that are found in Him, because they look upon them through a wrong glass; namely, through their own righteousness and goodness, and when that seems dead, their eyes grow dim, for there is so much penurious proceedings in the best of saints, that they will not, nor dare not touch a promise without holy hands and holy hearts. - So they also do when they endeavor to go to Christ through a promise, and not to a promise through Christ, wherein they move by their own strength, and not by the power of Christ, which is properly the hand to lead them to the heart of all promises. He is the sum of every promise, and all promises are summed up in Him. In him we enjoy every promise, and without him we enjoy never a one; for a promise is the declaration of God's good will; and Christ is the principal declarer, and he is also the thing declared; and so he is the sum of promises, and in that sense promises are summed up in Him. Paul Hobson {Treatise Containing Three Things, 1653}

Gospel Truth

We do not intend a Gospel knowledge in a notoriary way; by that I mean, men's running out to fetch in notions of the truth, and are not fetched in by the power of the truth; and so they rather carry notions of truth than the power of truth carrying them. And that is the cause why some walk loosely in the profession of the Gospel, which is a matter of great grief. But men do exceeding ill in laying these scandals upon the truth, and not distinguishing professors from possessors of truth. Paul Hobson {A Discovery of Truth, 1645}

Gospel Truth

Truth doth and must take hold of us before it can be truly believed by us. That soul that truly by faith sees Christ, sees such transcendent and matchless excellency in Christ, that he is so overcome by it, that he is by the virtue of it voluntarily carried out, to consent and submit to it; and this is the cause, why souls when once they come to see Christ, they see nothing lovely like Christ. Paul Hobson {A Discovery of Truth, 1645}

Irresistible Grace

So the Prophet, where he saith to some that had not the Lord, "seek the Lord and ye shall find him." We are not now to understand it, nor observe it as though our being found of God, was the fruits of our seeking; but we are to understand it thus; that our seeking God is a fruit of being found by God, for none evangelically seeks God until he is found of God; for no soul can act a living act without a living power, but no soul enjoys a living power, till he hath received mercy from God. Paul Hobson {A Discovery of Truth, 1645}

Knowledge of Christ

They only are fit to declare Christ who understand Christ from enjoyment. Others that do not enjoy him, and go about to declare him, only speak of him as one that speaketh of a thing at a distance, and so speak of him at random; and may as soon speak out themselves; for that is the only reason and cause that men's judgments of Christ do so often alter. It is just in this case, as it is with some men that understand the nature of foreign countries by a globe or secondary declarations; and that is the cause men give such sundry descriptions of one and the same place. But he that hath been at those places, and understandeth them not at the second, but firsthand; he only is able to give a right description of places and things. So it is with those men that have no understanding of Christ, but what they fetch in by the strength of natural parts, from external declarations, and not from internal enjoyment. They are not in anyways able to give a right description, or hold forth a true discovery of Jesus Christ

so, but that they may, and do discover more of self, than Christ. But those that so understand Christ from an enjoyment of Christ, that they actually and really live in what they know of Christ, they are only able to discover that love, and loveliness that is in Christ. But I may say of the other sort of men, as the Apostle saith, in I Tim.1:7, some preach the Law, "but they understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm." But {saith the Apostle} "we know" {vs.8}. From thence you may observe thus much, that they, and they only can preach the Law, that understand the Law in Christ, or by Christ; and if the Law, then unquestionably the Gospel. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Law & Gospel Distinctions

Now for the Law; and to those that see it only by a light that flows from it, and not according to the rules of the Gospel, it will not only seem to be contrary to the Gospel, but will cause the beholder to convert the Gospel into a Law, and preach the Gospel as Law, and this be one element wherein Antichrist lives. And that is the reason why we have so many men in these days that preach and press man to make bricks without straw. But passing over that, the Law I must confess, is not looked upon directly from the Gospel, by rules of the Gospel, which darkens to us both the Law and Gospel. But we are to consider the Law thus; that the Law is that wherein God discovers his authority as a God over us, requiring duties of us; and although we have lost that ability to answer Law, yet the Law continues to declare God's authority, but not our ability. And for such expressions in the word, 'you must work, you must do this and that,' it is not to declare our ability, but to declare God's authority, and this is the first rule to judge of the expression of a Law, so as they may not contradict the Gospel. Objection: This seems not to be a truth, because that such expressions in Scripture are not few but many, it is not only at one time but often, to which I answer: Had God withdrawn and made out these discoveries, which manifest his authority, it would have been conceived that when there was an alteration in the creature, that this alteration wrought an alteration in God; and so it might be apprehended that something below God had the power to cause an alteration or change in God; which the Holy Ghost will by no expression admit of such a construction. Paul Hobson {A Discovery of Truth, 1645}

Law & Gospel Distinctions

People legalized by the Law, do not delight to look upon the glorious discoveries of the Gospel, and those that are Gospelized love to see nothing else but the glory of the Gospel. Paul Hobson {A Discovery of Truth, 1645}

Letter - Spirit Distinctions

That Religion which is in reference to a Law without, and not answering to a Law and a power of love within, is as when men have not only the light of reason, but convictions from the light of a Law, which sets men at work, not rightly understanding this Law without, from the power and spirit of a Law within; they in conforming to it, to seek good by it, only working in a low legal way, seeking life by working, and not to acknowledge life in their working. This is such a religion that men who live in it, may fall from it. But those saints who act in religious acts suitable to Christ, the Law being written in them, which is a rule for them; and the Law that regulates them is an act, is the Spirit, and Life and Power of the act; and so Christ is all in all. That religion which is in reference to a letter, is only when men by the strength of reason, trade with the letter, to find out the spirit; and the Spirit doth not trade with their spirits. And the truth is, this sort of way of eyeing Truth, admits of strange constructions that vary from Truth; and that is the only cause why one man is legal, and another man seems to be evangelical, but it is only in the notion, and not in the power. Wherein is the difference between a saint and them? My answer is, that saints understand the letter from the spirit; but the other go about to apprehend the spirit, only from the letter; and in so acting they act in a religion below that divine glory that lives in the mind of the Spirit. And herein doth the privilege of the saints transcend the apprehension of all men that do not enjoy it; the saints are comprehended in the spirituality of the letter, while they understand the letter. The Spirit preacheth Divinity within, and that makes them understand Divinity without. But no man knows this, but he that doth enjoy it. What shall we think of those men that say, no man can declare the mind of God, but he that knows the Original? If by the Original they mean the Original in the letter; then wade as far as you can in that fountain, you are but still in the letter. But if you speak truly of the Original, I say, no man can preach or declare God until he knows the Original; but then we must know what the Original of the Letter is, for it is the Spirit. - Own Truth in the Spirit, and thou shalt understand truth in the letter; but we can never own truth in the Spirit until the truth in the Spirit owns us. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Love of God in Christ

We should live more upon Christ's delighting and loving us, than upon our delighting and loving Christ. One is the stream, and the other the fountain. One is but the fruit, the other the Cause. It is that unchangeable Foundation that standeth firm, as well to raise us when we fall, as to comfort us when we stand. Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Prayer

Prayer is a duty God calls for, and it is a way to acknowledge God; but prayer was never intended to change or alter God, but to change us, and not force God, but fit us for what's promised and purposed of God for us. Prayer is the exercise of God's Spirit within us, pouring out the soul to God, in the Name; that is to say, in the Nature of Christ, and in his interest, pleading with God for supply of wants in answer to his will. So prayer is the language of God in us, not to alter God, but us; not to beget new grace in God, but from his old grace to bring down renewed supplies to us. Paul Hobson {Innocency though under a Cloud Cleared, 1664}

Prayer

Men have an art in these times, to turn the very effects produced by God to make them causes to cause an alteration in God. My meaning is this, that even prayer, which in God's way I much prize; which if it be true prayer, is alone produced by a power from God; the end being, to fit and alter us and not God. Men nowadays make these means, as a way to tie and constrain God, to alter and to change God. Oh how monstrous! Paul Hobson {A Discovery of Truth, 1645}

Prayer

The Scripture clearly discovers that all praying in an outward form is but prating unless it flow from the Spirit of God {Rom.8:26, I Cor.14:15, John 6:44,45,} and that is a truth worth our owning, for if there be 1000 words in our form of prayer, and if there be but 10 words in that prayer which flow from the Spirit, that's prayer, and all the rest is nothing. - Nothing is prayer, but what the Spirit performs; for prayer truly and properly considered is nothing else but the exchanges of God's own language, and it flows from God as well as it goes to God. It is not to alter God, but to change us. - Take notice that I so own this truth of God; namely, that there is no prayer without the Spirit, that I cannot but acknowledge all other sayings or speakings to be but empty and vain; and yet in the second place consider. Though God doth own no prayer but what flows from his own Spirit, and we do well to own it so, yet it is better for us to wait for the power in the form, than to wait for the power without the form; and as it is our duty to conclude the form when we lack the power, to be but a dead carcass; so it is something dangerous to neglect waiting upon God for the power in the form; and truly if we well considered it, there is reason for it. We know we oftener find God, or rather God finds us in the form, than out of it. {Song.1:8, 3:1-4, 7:12} - It is a very bad sign when the apprehension of this truth is accompanied with so long neglect of the form and power; for though the truth teaches that the form without the power is nothing, yet that same truth doth not leave the soul without power long; for though it seems to hide itself sometimes for a season, yet it always comes with a double enlargement; and therefore deceive not yourselves; but the Lord give you power, as to apprehend Truth, so to apprehend Truth truly; and if so, the application will never admit of liberty to looseness, but strong engagements to walk close with God. Paul Hobson {Treatise Containing Three Things, 1653}

Repentance & God

Another mistake is your confining your judgment of the essentiality of God the unchangeableness of his essential will to the visibility of God in his outward word and actions, as they are in our view; and though those things do declare the outward actions of God, as they relate to our actings towards him, yet they are not given to us to judge of and measure the unchangeable love of God in Himself to us by. I mean that goodwill and love that is in himself and hath no dependence upon anything outside of himself; for God is said to repent,{Jonah 3:10;} he is said to forsake, {Jer.23:33,39;} he is said to be grieved, {Gen.6:6;} he is said to go down and see if things were so, according to the cry of the sins of Sodom, {Gen.18:20,21,} as if he had not known before. Now these expressions doth declare the outward acts of God, as they relate to our acting towards Him, or the manifesting the visibility of God, as it is in our view, and not to measure the essentiality of God and the unchangeableness of his love and good

will; for if you do you will both wrong God and deceive your own soul. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}

Secured in Christ

Christ's Church is not a scattered and confused company, but is enclosed. It is the property of idle shepherds to let their sheep go scattered up and down, not knowing them, nor them knowing him; but the Lord Christ taketh care to enclose his garden within the limits of that Light, Life and Glory that maketh known Himself to them, and them to Himself {John 10:14;} that wheresoever a saint is he is enclosed by Christ; he is not without the pale, but he is still within the borders of the limits of that strong wall. And therefore we may say as Christ saith, "a garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse." Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Sin

Sin is injurious to God; but in that consider this caution; God as God can neither be injured by us, nor receive any addition of good from us {Job 22:2,3;} but when we speak of injuries, we are to look upon God in his administrations or appearances towards us, and so God may be said to be injured, and to be honored or dishonored. - Sin brings blackness upon that beauty which God delights to view, for God loves a soul so as to beautify him with the beauties of Himself, and then he delights to view that beauty {Ezek.16:14, Song.2:14;} but so far as any of the people of God do trade in, or meddle with sin or darkness, so far they draw a dark cloud over and throw dirt in the face of this beauty. Paul Hobson {Treatise Containing Three Things, 1653}

Sin and the Sovereignty of God

God is pleased sometimes not to throw down, but to suffer saints to fall, that they may stand more firmly in God's power and live less upon themselves. God in this deals like a wise Father, who is pleased sometimes not to hold the child, but to let it slip, that it may see itself to be weak, and to know that his power or standing is from the Father alone. I fear many people look upon this truth with a wrong eye, forming their reason thus: All power is of God, for in Him we act, move, and have our being {Acts 17:28;} and if so then the very acting of sin must be of God. But as to these people I shall only say this; that they err not knowing the truth, for the action is one thing, and the pollution of the act is another thing. Sin is the variation from a rule in an act; and though actions be caused by God, yet the pollution of the act flows from the condition which is in the creature. But I shall say no more of that, but beg of you to be tender and careful to avoid the embracing of any such thing, as to lay sin upon God; for He is light, in whom there is no darkness; and purity, in whom is no pollution; and you may as well say, that the odious stinks of a dunghill do flow from the sun because it smells when the sun shines upon it, as to say that the sinfulness of an act flows from God, because the act flows from the power of God; but I am confident, those hearts who are saint-like sensible of sin will not lay sin upon the Father, though he doth sometimes suffer them to fall that they may stand the faster when he is pleased to raise them. Paul Hobson {Treatise Containing Three Things, 1653}

Spirit of Christ and Antichrist

I cannot love such a man or woman because they are Presbyterians; others cry out that they cannot endear such and such, because they are Independents. This bitterness the devil hath cast in amongst men, and men would seem to cover it, by laying the difference on the external form, rather than in that spiritual difference that is between them and Christ; but the truth is, were all outward occasions in external forms removed, yet the world cannot love, but must condemn Truth. {Mt.10:22, Mk.13:13} The first reason is, because there is an antipathy between the spirit of the world, and the spirit of saints. {Rom.8:5} The one is the Spirit of Christ, the other is the spirit of the devil; and this antipathy is expressed by God Himself, where he saith, "I have put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent" {Gen.3:15} The seed of the serpent is the spirit of the world; and the seed of the woman is Jesus Christ. The spirit of the world as it is the world's spirit, and the Spirit of Christ cannot close; therefore we may take up those expressions "whom God hath joined together none can separate;" and those spirits that God hath separated, none can join together. Secondly, the spirit of the world and the spirit of Christ are not like each other; therefore the spirit of the world cannot love Christ; for everything loves its like, therefore by the rule of contraries, they will hate that which is unlike themselves. {John 3:20, 8:23} - "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." {II Tim.3:12} - I am sure the ground why the world hates saints

is because saints in their words and actions speak forth the goodness and wisdom of God amongst men. God is pleased to work great things in them, and great things by them; and we may say, when the world scorns and imprisons saints, as Christ said in another case, "for which of the good works" that God hath done in them do they imprison them? But they are apt to exclude themselves, as the Jews did to Christ, saying, "for a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy" {John 10:33;} so they are apt to say, we do not oppose or imprison you for any good wrought in you or done by you, but because you take upon you to declare the mind of God, and walk in this or that kind of form in your professing God, as a Presbyterian, or an Independent form. The truth is, the world cannot bear the weight and worth of a saints spirit, though {poor souls} they think to cover themselves and their practices, with the aforementioned things, yet God will one day uncover them. But let this comfort saints in the consideration, that though the world condemns, yet "wisdom is justified of her children." Paul Hobson {A Garden Enclosed & Wisdom Justified, 1647}

Unity in Christ

Some men say this is the Christian, whilst others say that is the Christian, and both may be mistaken, for they make Christians according to their own fancy; if he do but jump with them in opinion, this is enough to hold him up a Christian. - But Christ's undefiled dove is but one; though they be scattered and divided here to men, yet to Christ they are but one. What folly of many in these days, that they tie their loves only to that congregated body of which they are in fellowship with; and if one differ in judgment from them, they have no love to them; neither do they account them of the number of Christ's one - undefiled dove. This is gross ignorance and proceeds from weakness, pride and folly; and is indeed mere Antichrist! Paul Hobson {Practical Divinity, 1646}

Unbelief & Rejection of Christ

God condemns no man, if you look upon the meritorious cause, not for the creatures inability of exercising a power of believing in Christ, but for that exercise of power in rejecting Christ. Should God condemn creatures for their not exercising a power in receiving Christ, then he did condemn them for what they have not, but he condemns them for their rejecting Christ, which power they have. It is true the Scripture saith, "he that believes not is damned," for not believing is a declaration of an abiding state without Christ, which is a state of condemnation. It is also said that they are condemned "because they believed not the Son of God," but that cause is the declarative cause; but the meritorious cause, which is, that God doth and will go upon to clear up his justice by, is not the creatures refusing to exercise a power in receiving Christ, for that they have not, but it is the exercising of a power of darkness in rejecting Christ, and that men have, and God is just in doing it; and that, that is the ground God will go upon is clear from these Scriptures: John 3:19,20, Acts 7:51, Heb.12:25, Ps.118:22. Paul Hobson {Fourteen Queries and Ten Absurdities, 1655}