

The Heads of Some Sermons Preached at Finnick,
on the 17th of August, 1662, by Mr. William Guthrie

“But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a spirit’; and they cried out for fear.”

Matthew 14:24-26

The fourth doctrine is, that, although Christ seems sometimes to be far distant from his people under their trials, yet he doth notice them in a singular way. He saw them toiling and rowing (as Mark has it) and yet he was at prayer all the time. For clearing you, we shall—

1. Show what way Christ noticeth the trials of his people.
2. Why he doth so.
3. What his noticing doth to his people in their trials.
4. What are the trials, wherein he doth concern himself.

In order to the first, he noticeth the trials of his people, as he hath fore-ordained them in his eternal counsel. Nothing ever befell his people but what was decreed from everlasting. 2. He so noticeth the trials of his people, in making them fall out for several cases, and keeping his eye upon them therein. 3. He hath not only a permissive but an active hand in setting all the instruments of their trials on foot, whether they be devils, or men, or wind, or storm: he sifteth the house of Israel with a sieve, yet not one grain shall be lost. By his providence he tristes a convenient season for the trial, and sometimes (as he did to Peter) gives them warning of it, before the trial comes. Thus the night, “Before the cock crows, thou shalt deny me thrice.” 4. He so noticeth the trials of his people, as to set bounds to them, that they come such and such a length, and no further; as here in the text, he lets the disciples toil on until the fourth watch of the night. 5. He

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noticeth their trials so as he maketh intercession to God for them regarding their trials: as here he was at prayer when they were toiling and rowing in the night-time in the midst of the sea. 6. He so noticeth their trials, that thereby he drives on his own purposes, and makes their trials subservient thereunto.

The second thing is, why he noticeth the trials of his people. Answer. 1. Because he is highly concerned in them: they stand in a near relation to him: they are all the fruit of the travel of his soul: he is engaged to the Father for them, and them therein; and all that befalleth them is committed unto him, and he is to be answerable for the least of them. 2. There are few, or none, but he is to take notice of their trials; for they can do little themselves, and others despise them. 3. His noticing of his people's trial says they were not cast under them by hap-hazard, but with deliberation, and that they are not alone in their trials, although they often-times perceive him not, yea even when they are as beasts, Psalm 73:23, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee."

The third thing in the doctrine is, what his people have by his notice. It says, his people's trials cannot run a full carrier, as otherwise they might: he sets bounds to them, and has allowed the expenses wherewith to debate with them.

As to the fourth thing, what are the trials wherein he doth most concern himself? 1. He noticeth indeed his people's trials, but especially those which their duty has led them to, as here he had commanded them to go to sea. 2. He noticeth all such trials as are above their reach, as to outgate; as here in the text. 3. He noticeth all the trials wherein his people are laboring as much as they are able, though all their labor signify not much. 4. He noticeth all the trials that are hard, and far above the trials they have formerly met with, as here in the text.

Use 1. Then let the people of God comfort themselves with this, that he taketh notice of all their trials in all the fore-mentioned respects, and is much concerned to do so.

Then since it is so, men shall not get all the intents of their heart against his people, but they shall have support under all their trials, and relief from them.

Use 2. The trials of his people in Britain and Ireland are certainly concerned by him: for first, he did engage them in the business, and it is above remedy as to men. 2. It is above all other trials that ever we were under before, and all his people are toiling as they can under them. We may add this as a third, that they are trusted with many notorious indignities done to the king of heaven. 4. His name is singularly concerned in the thing. All nations are looking whether or not our matters will stand; for they have heard that we were a covenanted people with the God of Heaven. 5. He considers he has a goodly remnant and flock in the vessel that is now tossed with the storm. If his people would resolve to drown together rather than to sin by compliance, it would speak much good of the business. But Christ's advocacy is on foot for his people who are engaged for him: he was at prayer when his disciples were at sea: he prayed that Peter's faith might not fail.

Now his advocacy is in order to these things: first, that his people's faith fail not, as has been said. 2. That the sin, which hath brought on the trial, may be forgiven them, and all the circumstances of their trial. 3. That they may not take any unlawful way for their out-gate. 4. That their trial may be sanctified so as to produce its proper fruit with them that are under it. 3. That their want of a right and suitable frame of spirit may not increase their trials, or stop their out-gate and issue, and that it may according to the promise be hastened, as it is in Zechariah. The man whom he saw among the myrtle-trees, that were in the bottom, was Christ interposing for the poor Jerusalem. O for the faith of this, that he is interposing himself for all our trials!

Then I say 1. Study all of you to be of one mind. 2. Let his people comply with him in all the points or his advocacy we have spoken of, and keep up the cause of his concern-

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ments, acknowledging always your sin and short-coming, and choose evermore affliction rather than sin, and study to have the right use of the trial as much as the out-gate. 3. Let this comfort and establish your hearts, that Christ is pleading and advocating your cause before God and his throne in all the fore-said respects, and remember that God heareth him always, and that he will not lie unto David, but will keep covenant with him, even when his children transgress, and that is a good thing, sirs, Psalm 80.

Now from their toiling and rowing observe, that his people must be in the use of any means God has left them, although the use thereof signifies very little for their outgate. They wrought here against wind and weather, although to little purpose. The disciples brought the four or five loaves to Christ, although it seemed to them a vain thing to feed so many. For amplification, we would remember these things: 1. That in the worst of times God has left some means for his people to use. 2. Remember that the Lord by these silly means sometimes works great things, so that his people should not be altogether hopeless in the use of them. 3. We would remember that the Lord one way or another blesseth the diligent use of ordinary means, how small so-ever they be. 4. When God hath left no ordinary means proper for producing such and such effects, he has appointed his people to pray, and stand still and look for his salvation. When Israel is brought to the Red Sea, and the Egyptians are pursuing them, and no means are left, Moses cries unto the Lord, and bids the people stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. 5. Remember that it is ordinary for God to reduce his people to very small means in their straits, and yet they are commanded to use them; and by this he tries their loyalty and obedience, and this also teacheth them not to idolize the best of means. Then let his people in all their straits look what means God hath allowed them to make use of, and be diligent in the use of them. 2. They would not despond, when the means appear very despiseable, for God uses to bless the

lawful use of small means. 3. When no proper means is left, then be in the use of prayer, for that is your duty, and that may breed peace. Let God do what is good in his sight.

Now we come to the third thing, and that is the out-gate of the disciples, and all the circumstances of it: when they began to drown, they were but four miles from land, and not until then, and in the fourth watch of the night, and that is near the morning. Then love sets forward, and Christ comes without their entreaty, and worketh by his omnipotency upon the waters, which he made like a beaten floor under his feet: then, when he comes, they mistake him, and are afraid; and so their trial groweth to a greater height: he speaks to them, and inhibits their fear, and allays it, by telling them that it was he. And so in this their new trial they got a new discovery of him, and then he comes to the ship. And next ye have Peter's seeking a singular evidence of this, if it was Christ that spake to them.

Then observe this doctrine: Sometimes when we think our trial great enough, Christ is pleased to screw it up a great deal higher. They surely judged their trial at a great height before, with wind and storm: we may think it was at a great height before the fourth watch of the night, and yet he is pleased to drive it to that length.

For clearing of the doctrine, consider that his people soon think their trial at a great height: First, because they measure it by former sufferings they have met with, or by former trials, not remembering that the Lord intends to have his people further tried, and that the latter trial will be sharper, and possibly darker, as to the out-gate, than the first was. 2. They compare their trials and measure them with the trials of his people, that have not been with the highest, but with the lowest; and that makes them think their trial high enough. 3. They often measure their trials with their present felt strength, not remembering that he gives out expense according as the trial groweth. 4. They often compare their trials with the means that are left them for out-gate, not remem-

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bering that God useth sometimes to lay-aside all means that people have their eyes on, and create new means for their out-gate and deliverance. 5. They often measure their trials by their own fore-casting one resolution for it, whereas the trials sometimes swell to a greater height than his people apprehended it to go: and because the trial soon goes to such a height, we think it will go no further, and so we err, not knowing the power and counsel of the Lord.

Next ye would consider that the Lord has different ends in the trials of his people, which they know not, and different thoughts. 2. He is master of their trials, when it is above their reach, for he intends to magnify his power in their weakness, and to give them singular proofs of his love towards them, which his people were not expecting; and to drive them to such things as are not soon set on foot with them. 3. As this makes him wind-up their trials to an higher pitch, so we would beware of some mistakes that are about his way in this: first, we must not think that this is for want of love to the party tried. Or 2. That he forgets them, as they are apt to fancy: for here he saw them toiling and rowing, and yet he was praying for them, as has been said. 3. We would not think it undutifulness in the party tried, for here the disciples were toiling and rowing as they could. 4. We would not think but less trials would be sufficient to lay us on our back, if we were left to ourselves, and had no supply from him. Then learn 1. To judge of your trials aright, and to measure rightly: for that will prevent many unsuitable complaints and despondency of spirit. 2. When ye think your trials at a great height, and at the highest pitch you can bear or be recovered from, to your apprehension, leave room to him to wind them up a pin higher, and mistake him not, though he do so.

The next doctrine is, that though the deliverance of his people may be delayed, yet it sets forward in due time, Christ at length comes; and there is great reason for his delays many times, as was shewed before: and here we shall speak 1. How

it may be said he comes in due time, though he delay. 2. What way he comes, so as it may be said he comes in due time. And first, he comes in due time, when he comes seasonably to prevent the ruin of his people, as Psalm 94:18, "When I said, 'My foot slippeth,' thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." 2. He cometh seasonably, when he doth trist with their fit condition: for as soon as they are desperate of help any other way, and begin to look to God alone, Psalm 142:4-5, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me; refuge failed me: no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O lord, I said, thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living." Then 3. It cometh seasonably, as it's measured out, to prevent any sinful course for out-gate, which his people are ready to split upon in the time of trial, Psalm 125:3, "For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous: lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity." 4. It cometh seasonably, as the deliverance cometh forth, when it is sweetest to the party tried. O! How cheerful were they, when he came unto them? And how affectionately did they receive him into the ship?

The next thing we shall observe, shall be the things which appeared in their deliverance, 1. When he comes, they were toiling in the use of the means they had, though it did signify little for the time. 2. He comes without much entreaty on their part: all this time we hear not much of their prayers. 3. The delivery comes as a fruit of Christ's intercession: he had been praying, and now as the fruit of his intercession he is sent himself as the deliverer of the party that could do little for themselves, but were all dead men in their own estimation. 4. The deliverance cometh paving-out the way to its self through difficulties, which nothing but free love and omnipotency, and almighty power could or would have done. No difficulty stands before him, when his people's case so requires: he puts forth omnipotency for a refuge to his people that he has engaged with hazards. 5. The deliverance ap-

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peareth in Christ's dominion over that which did trouble his people: now he cometh trampling upon the sea which was ready to swallow them up: he proveth himself to be Lord over that which did affright them, although they were not as yet delivered from it. 6. Their deliverance cometh with new proofs and discoveries of Christ's love to the party, and of his sovereignty over that which was their fear, and sets them free from all that which made them afraid. Then for—

Use. Let his people take courage to them, and set their face to the storm, for their deliverance will come in good opportunity and season, in all the foresaid respects.

Use 2. Let his people make use of any means that he has left them, and all of them pray and wrestle with him a little while yet.

Use 3. We must look for more out of his compassion and pity, and as the fruit of Christ's intercession, than from all our own devotion and diligence.

Use 4. Although difficulties be unsupportable, as to us, yet we are to wait for singular casts of his power, if the case so require.

Use 5. Let his people wait for discoveries of him, for he is worthy of all their toil and sufferings; and this shall not be the least discovery of him: yet he shall appear trampling upon those that keep us captive, by his omnipotent power, when he thus appears, then lift up the head for deliverance cometh near. And whether I be dead, or alive, I charge all the godly to act faith in him, when he is setting his foot on our sea, when he shall begin to out-will his enemies, and divide them among themselves, and break their purposes among their hands, and to intricate them with their own work, and confound their purposes, and to execute vengeance here and there upon them. There ye may conclude he is beginning to set his foot upon our sea, and ye are to look for deliverance to his Church!

A Sermon on Matthew 14:26.

We were speaking of the out-gate of the disciples from a sad trial, and that their deliverance did not appear, until the fourth watch of the night. He is pleased to wind-up the trials of his people higher than they thought they would ever have born-out, but though he delayed a long time, yet now he sets forward, and comes to them. I told you that the deliverance of his people doth come in due time: now when Christ sets forward, they apprehend him to be some spirit or devil. So it holds-out this doctrine:

1. That many times when the Lord sets forward to the deliverance of his people, they do exceedingly mistake him, as is eminently clear in the text, and as it was in the case of his people, when Moses brought them out of Egypt. And here I shall show you, in what cases his people mistake him, when he sets forward to deliver them. 2. What causeth them mistake. First, they mistake him, when they are under great affliction of spirit, and sorely beaten with trials, then they are ready to mistake him; and in that case they are unfit judges of God's appearance, or what he doth or saith for their help and good: they are under such a frame of spirit, as to expound all he doth or saith, to be wrath. When Israel was in Egypt, they were so sorely beaten with affliction, that they would not give an answer or an ear to what Moses said unto them, because of the anguish of spirit they were under, they had been so injured with affliction for a long time. And when a soul hath been sorely beaten with the evidences of his anger a long time, and the terrors of hell hath compassed them about, ye will not readily persuade them of anything that is for their good; they are not fit judges.

2. They mistake him, when they are under deep apprehensions of their own guilt, for then they measure everything by their own deserving, and speak as Peter did, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man": ye will say, 'It's a good word, but it doth not belong to me.'

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3. They readily mistake him, when he moves in their deliverance in some strange and unbeaten path; and so it is here, for Christ came to them walking on the sea, which was an uncouth way. Think ye but Jonah doubted his delivery, when he was swallowed-up by the whale? It is natural for all men to mistake the God of Heaven, for his ways are not like our ways; for men savor of the things of the Earth, they take up everything in a natural way: so that, except they be helped by God, they cannot take up anything aright that he doth, there is such a natural inclination in them to expound all things wrong. So it is no strange thing that people do not take him up. The truth is, it is a more strange thing that they take him up in anything right, because of the bensil of their natural spirits. 2. We have a miserable way of shaping God by the creature, and all his ways like the creature's ways: the disciples think it cannot be a man who walks upon the water, it is some phantasm or devil. He was a wise man, who said, 'Is this the manner of men? Indeed not, David, there is not a man in all the world that would have taken you from the sheep-keeping, and made you a king.' And if that principle were out of the hearts of the people of God, they might come to much sweetness; no doubt that is the thing that always speaks within them, 'There is no man that would do this with me.' Indeed that is true, but yet it is the way of God for all that: and ye must conceive his ways are far above men's ways, as the heavens are above the earth. The third thing wherein we mistake, is, we are ready to lay down a way for him to come, and if he come not that way, then we mistake him. This was the great part of the mistake in Christ's disciples at the resurrection, they thought he should have risen so glorious, that all the world should have fallen-down before him presently: 'And now,' say they, 'he is three days dead,' and they had not seen him. Yes they saw him, but they thought they would have seen him another way, and so they mistook him, they look sometimes for him in such a mercy, and he comes in another way than they look for him;

they look sometimes for him in a temporal mercy, and he comes in a spiritual mercy, in loosing the bonds of the spirits of his people, they think he will come in such a means, and he comes in another that is as good. And thus—

Use. Then leave latitude for him to deliver his people from their bondage spiritual or temporal, any way he will, and do not confine him to this or that means: for ordinarily he comes not that way that his people would have him to come, as has often been made out in the experience of his people; so that they have been sometimes afraid to speak of the way they would fain have had him to come, lest he should have come another.

Use 2. Put a favorable construction on everything he doth, and that will prevent your mistakes of him and his way of coming for the deliverance, whatever it be. His people would inure themselves to this way, which indeed is much our duty, for charity thinks not evil, and it is want of love to God that makes us think evil of his dispensations. God loves a cheerful giver, and not a churl: he loves always the man that bodes well.

Use 3. When your trials are at a great height, and the Lord is taking strange ways and casts of providence, be sparing to speak your judgment and apprehension, until you see what the result will be: for the dispensation may look ragged-like at first, yet will produce a great mercy to the Church.

The next doctrine is: Sometimes when God is setting the deliverance of his people on foot, he useth then to screw up the trials a degree higher than they were before. The disciples were afraid of the sea before, but now for an evil spirit: it's said they cried-out for fear, which they did not before, and yet he is coming for their deliverance: there is nothing more true in the many deliverances God wrought for his people in Scripture than this. Ye may remember Moses is sent to Egypt to deliver the people, but indeed their trials grew never great, until Moses came; and when they got out of Egypt, they are

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not far off, until the enemy and the sea, and the mountains were on every side of them, and yet their deliverance was on foot really.

There are these reasons of the doctrine: First, that he may decry all means, and bring them down in the people's conceit, that he has called them to set on foot, and that their eyes may be only set on God. Moses would have been a great man, and likely idolized by the people, if his enterprise had not first broke in his hand: if Israel had not been first broken before Benjamin, they would have idolized their number of men; but God gave them on their finger-ends once or twice, that they might not lean to their multitude.

2. He doth so, that he may prepare his people for the deliverance, though such be his pity and compassion, that he waits not for his people's frame to deliver them. Ye will say, 'The people are not fit to be delivered.' Yes, it is true: but God will do as much in the delivery some one way or other, as will fit them more than seven years trouble would have done. A little trial in the deliverance itself will do much good, it hastens the delivery before it comes: it may be there will be something in the delivery that will break your heart and humble you more than all the trouble of conscience or estate ye have met with before.

3. He doth so many times, to make the adversaries cruel and insolent, and quickly to fill up their cup. When the trial is betwixt his people and their enemies, he makes the delivery to take an halt, of purpose to make the enemy insolent and proud, and then to turn up their heels in the midst of their pride. Wherefore did Israel's delivery halt in Egypt, but that the enemy might grow more terrible and insolent?

4. He doth so, to make the delivery more sweet to his people than ever it could have been, if they had not met with that trial. O, but Christ was welcome to the disciples now! And this new trial made him a great deal more welcome than he would have been, that they apprehended him to be a spirit.

5. He doth so, that there may be fit counter-weights upon his people in their deliverance, that they may carry soberly, and evenly under their receipt; for if his people lack some counter-weight, they are so light-headed, that the delivery would make them stark mad: therefore he will let some worthy instrument fall in the delivery of his people, that the loss of them will almost counterbalance the deliverance. Then,

6. He doth so, to perfect some business, to debate with some persons, who are exceedingly concerned in the difficulty, that falls on his people; and he avengeth the particular that he pursues in that case: and many such things are with him, although I grant the comparison holds not in all, in that deliverance that David met with from his son Absalom and his men, he overturned Absalom's heels, which in David's account did countervail the deliverance itself. Well then, sirs, seeing this is God's way to make the deliverance halt, and to screw up the trial a pin higher sometimes, then for—

Use. If it pleases the Lord to let you see your deliverance dawning like day upon the mountains, then think that your difficulties are not all over. I will not say what way God may take to deliver us, but I am very apprehensive that whenever the deliverance shall come, there shall be multitudes of difficulties interwoven, that it shall be hard to discern it, whether it be a deliverance or not, it will look so like the contrary. And this I have thought many times, 'What if there should a party appear for the work of God in the fields, and be broken all to pieces, and yet that same party's breaking contribute for the deliverance of the Church?' So I say, when the deliverance first begins to dawn, 'Do not think that your difficulties are over, ye may meet with something in the delivery that may be worse than all the trouble ye have seen, that ye will wish rather to be as ye were before than to abide it.

Use 2. I would not have the people of God to think that their deliverance waits upon their frame of spirit for it: I say, there may be something in the deliverance that will give you a frame of spirit; if the Lord gives you a frame of spirit be-

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fore the deliverance come, it is well; but I am very apprehensive there shall be something that will humble his people in Britain and Ireland more than ever ye have yet met with these bygone years. God may do that in a night that will put them more to their prayers than all they have met with before.

Use 3. I would have you to think that the deliverance will not come, until all the means be laid aside. Now ye may be mistaken in that: but for the instrument ye are afraid to idolize, fear not that, for in the deliverance God shall make you quite of these, which shall accrese to your trial. Or, sirs, is there any of you that have the faith of an out-gate of the people of God in these lands, then I say, make your account and prepare your hearts to meet with greater trials than ye have met with formerly, and that even in the dawning of your deliverance. The disciples were affrighted even almost out of their wits, when they saw Christ come walking upon the water: now he comes to them, and he had some little thing to do with Peter, before they were fully delivered, he behooved to have a proof of the strength of his own faith and Christ's sufficiency to help.

The next doctrine is this: that the people of God are very subject to slavish fear, when new difficulties appear to them. It's said, when Israel fled before the men of Ai, their hearts melted, and became like water. O! But they were afraid! I grant the people of God take sooner with their sin than any other people. I shall speak,

1. What this slavish fear is.
2. Why his people are so subject to it.
3. What is the prejudice they have by it.
4. What may be the cure of it.

As to the first then, what this slavish fear is that his people are troubled with. It arises from the misbelief of what God hath said, and forgetting what he has said concerning them.

2. It flows from their fixing on his providence, and puts the

worst construction on it. 3. It flows from despondency of spirit and heartlessness, and that weakens their hands in the use of lawful means for bearing their own trial and working for their own out-gate; they think they will do no more good than dip their singer in water, and their faith and hope and all goes to wrack: and upon this there follows an inclination to follow some unlawful means for their out-gate, and if they follow not that, then the heart is kindly laid out for such a temptation; for ordinarily complaints are the fruits of slavish fear. Slavish fear then stands in this, *viz.* in an atheistical putting of the creature in a channel of independency on God, as if the creature could come and go of its own accord without commission from him, Isaiah 51:12, "It is God who comforteth: who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall die, &c.?" The truth is, they had forgotten the omnipotent power and sovereignty of God, and thought men could do with them what they pleased without God. When ye are so, it is an hundred to one if ye make not haste to get from under the trial some unlawful way.

For reasons of this: first, there is the great ignorance of God's interest in his people, that is the cause of all their slavish fear, and that which he challenges his people for, 'Thou hast feared every day, and hast forgotten me: who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall dye?' We take up ourselves as standing alone without God. There feared they, where no fear was: for God is in the congregation of the righteous: some take it that it's the enemy, because of God's being among his people. Yea but some take it also, that his people feared although God was among them. 2. There is unbelief. 3. Atheism, a growing sin; his people apprehending God to be like the creature, and the creature to be like God, that he can work what he will without the creature, and the creature what it will without him: he puts God above the creature in some things, and the creature above him in some other things.

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The fourth reason is, because his people too soon yield to this fear: ye think in no case ye do it without reason. Yea but ye are bound to shut-out those things, when they come-in upon you. When slavish fear begins to mutter in our bosom for harboring, it makes it prevail.

The third thing is the prejudice of a slavish fear. 1. It weakens the hands of his people in all duties; for when they begin to fear out of measure, they lose all, and grow indifferent whether they do duty or not. No man will bide by his duty, when his faith faileth him; and if he go about any duty, it will be but as a rat-rime, like the papists, when they tell their beads. The second prejudice is discouragement of soul: nothing can comfort the people of God, where this prevails. The third is the discomposure of their countenance, to the prejudice of religion: whenever it gets upper-hand, it makes them look as if they served an hard master, who puts his people to undergo such things as he will not allow expense for. The fourth is, it disoblige God to work for their out-gate and deliverance from it, as it's said, "He could do no mighty works, because of their unbelief." 5. It puts them in an incapacity to understand their own mercy, when it begins to appear. This slavish fear made them in Egypt that they could not understand what Moses said touching their deliverance from it. And when they are in such a case of slavish fear, all duty is a burden to them: it is better for them to bear the stone-barrow than for them to go-about duty that may tend to their out-gate. And sixthly, whatever God may do to his people in his sovereignty and mercy, the man, that is under slavish fear, has not a promise in the Bible to look to that God will help him in such a case. James 1:6-7, "Let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord, because he asketh not in faith."

The last thing in the doctrine, is the cure of this disease: the thing that cures the disciples' fear is Christ's approaching to them in favor. Behold he cometh, but they mistake him. There is none of the people of God, but bring Christ and

them together, he will heal them of all their disputes and diseases, Christ approaches to them, and speaks friendly to them, and still they heard that word, 'It is I, be not afraid,' together with his approaching. Will that do it? No: Christ adds his authority, rebuking their slavish fear, although they themselves have ground to be quieted? Yet they can not, until he says 'Be not afraid, it is I, I command your devil to sit within yourself,' will that do it? No: there are some of them that are peremptory, they will have a special confirmation, and Peter steps out before the rest, 'If it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water, otherwise I will never believe.' Well Peter, must ye have a confirmation? Ye shall have it, but ye shall not crack much of it, ere all be done; it may be ye be at a greater doubt, before the end of the day. Then that which completely allayeth all their fear, is Christ's in-coming to them, and nothing else doth it.

Use. For use then, let all the people of the Lord know there is such an infirmity attending them: when difficulties are renewed upon you, and slavish fear labors to take possession of you who are fled to Christ, guard against it, and know the evils thereof, encourage yourselves against it. When your fear grows in a cloud, and dark day, to prevent it consider—

1. What interest God hath in his people, they are set as a seal upon his heart, and written upon the palms of his hands; he hath said, he that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye. Would we be afraid, if we believed that any that troubleth the people of God, do as ill as if they took God on the looking face? Indeed and in truth if we believed that, we would think them won gear.

2. Believe this also, that whatever the Lord doth or suffers men to do, shall work together for the good of his people. It is a common truth in everybody's mouth, yea but I may say the least believed truth in all the Bible. Ye will not question the truth of the promise, but yet ye stand at the application. I offer you that instance, and put yourselves to it, if ye can

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solidly acquiesce with it in your heart, that all the distresses and afflictions his people are under in Britain and Ireland shall work together for their good: then if it be so, as I do not doubt of it, why then do ye not believe it, and are quiet?

3. Believe this also, that there is nothing that befalls his people; but what is by his providence: ye say, 'It's true, but there are many things, that we meet with, that God doth not allow.' I say there is nothing ye meet with, but that which is either by his active or permissive providence. There is no evil done in the city but what the Lord knoweth. That the ministers in Britain and Ireland are put from their houses, kirks, and lands, and banished out of the country, is all his providence, and shall work together for their good, and if it be, then ye are to be silent.

4. Know this and believe that there is nothing to be feared, but God and an evil conscience. As a man in Ireland said to a bishop, when he threatened to imprison him, he answered, 'I know no such prison as an evil conscience,' and so if ye resolve to fear nothing but the God of Heaven and an evil conscience, ye need not fear men, for the fear of these will quiet all your other fears.