

our doubt and uncertainty. Our hearts and affections get roving in the high roads of earthly honour riches or pleasures.—Hence clouds of dust arise; they so dim our sight, and cloud our views, that we can hardly see our way or tell where we are.

Here we are reminded, 1st, that we “were sometimes afar off.” Awful distance. As far as possible from God, because so far from original righteousness. As far off from God as a devil—naturally no more desire to draw nigh to him. Nay, Satan had possession of us, ruled in and over us. We loved our master, hated our God, and delighted at our distance from Him. O be covered with shame, be clothed with humility, yet lift up your head with joy.—For, 2nd, we are brought nigh to God.—O, says one, I wish I was sure of this. It is true in the Word, that sinners are brought nigh to God. You can only know this for yourself by experience. Therefore consider, 3rd, how we are brought nigh “in Christ Jesus.” By the blood of Christ, by the faith of Christ, we are reconciled to God. By the blood of Christ we are justified before God, and are at peace with God. If you are brought nigh to God, 1st, Christ is precious to you. Your heart is towards Him, your hope is fixed upon Him. 2nd. This blood is highly praised by you. You look to His atonement for the pardon of sins, to cleanse your conscience from guilt, and bring peace to your soul. 3rd. By Him you delight to draw nigh to God, making His blood and righteousness your only plea for salvation; and, 4th, you will live near to God in love, and walk before Him in holiness. You will hate the things you once loved, and love the things you once hated. In this way only you can enjoy fellowship and peace with God, comfort from God, and assurance that you are a child of God. Says Christ, “If ye love me, keep my commandments, and the Comforter shall abide with you for ever.” (John xiv. 15.) W. M. 1773.

### THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL.

The Gospel is good news about the “abundant mercy” of that God against whom we have all sinned. It is glad tidings concerning Him, who came into the world to save sinners. It is the proclamation of free pardon to the most guilty. It

is the offer of complete absolution to all without money and without price. “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters!”

It is the Father’s welcome to the returning prodigal, when he is yet a great way off,—however far he may have wandered, and however much he may have sinned.—There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.—“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon,”

It is the royal invitation of One whose gifts are the gifts of a King. “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.—For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. . . . As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.” “Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.”

The Gospel is the “Word of Reconciliation.” For “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” It is His message of peace, assuring us that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins—“having made peace through the blood of His cross.”

It is the “Story of Grace.” “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.” It is the history of a love that was “strong as death;” a love that many waters cannot quench, “neither can the floods drown it.” “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners,”—“when we were enemies,”—“Christ died for us.”

The Gospel is, in a word, the salutation of “grace, mercy, and peace,” from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Triune Jehovah, in whose name we were baptized, and whose benediction is upon all who worship Him in spirit and in truth.