

2. The Gospel imparts to man deliverance from the guilt and power of sin. Man is everywhere to be viewed as a guilty and polluted sinner against God, universally exposed to the curse of the Divine law, and those threatenings of that law which are finally to inflict their penalties in the torments of futurity. Now the main design of the Gospel, as a system of blessings and benefits, is to present and open up the existence of a provision, which, when embraced by man and applied to man, shall be the means of averting the dangers by which he is surrounded, restoring him to the enjoyment of acceptance and favor with God, and causing him to wear His image, that he may be morally prepared and made meet for His glory. This great provision is secured to us by the death of Christ. When He died upon the cross, He quenched that fire which had been lighted up to desolate—which had run along the surface of the earth, finding fresh fuel in every folly and every crime of man, and which (had it not been for the interposing power of his Maker) would have reduced the habitations of our race to ashes, and wrapt the universe in flames. The death of Christ is to be regarded as the propitiation and atoning sacrifice for sin, the application of which to man, through the appointed medium and instrumentality, is to effect everything that can be desired for the well-being and restoration of the soul. "We are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that it is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God—to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness, that He will be just and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus."

Now the belief of the testimony which God has given regarding His Son, is the appointed means for applying to man, in state and character, the whole benefit of the provisions of the atonement. Faith is the appointed instrument of imputing the righteousness of Christ, for the sake of which is granted the blessing of justification and acceptance with God. Faith is the appointed instrument for overcoming the world, and purifying the heart, so that men are made personally meet

for the inheritance of the saints in light. Compare the difference between a state of condemnation, on the one hand, and justification on the other—between a state of pollution and a state of purity and holiness—and can any one fail to see that here are given, through the Gospel, blessings so vast that no intellect can compute them—so boundless that no imagination can conceive them? Oh, if the Gospel did not communicate forgiveness through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, its other announcements would amount to absolutely nothing, and the sound of its glad tidings would be hushed and die away into the stillness of an everlasting silence. But the Gospel, having communicated blessings like these, has invested the sphere of human destiny with a bright and imperishable grandeur, and must even now inspire those deep songs of joy, whose high and rapturous harmonies are to resound through the temple of heaven for ever. For what are the raptures of immortality but the pouring forth of thanksgiving, on the part of the redeemed, for fulness and triumphant efficacy of the atonement?

3. The Gospel imparts abundant consolation and support amid all sorrow. I need not remind you that the present life is a scene of protracted sorrow and distress—that sorrow is the portion of those who have received an interest in the power of the everlasting Gospel—that, in fact, they are the persons on whom often the tempest of worldly persecution pours the fury of its most bitter and deadly storms. But the very fact of the consciousness of an interest in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, is of itself like a cordial and balm to the spirit, whatever may be the nature of the sorrows and agonies it may be compelled to endure. And there are sources of consolation arising from these communications of Gospel mercy which remove the sting from all sorrow, and which render sorrows, in all respects, but blessings in disguise. The power of the Gospel to administer such consolation has been abundantly exemplified in the history of thousands. The Apostle, speaking of the delightful anticipations which himself and his companions enjoyed in the prospect of the divine glory, speaks thus in Rom. v., "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Now, it is not extraor-