



Fire and Ice Sermon Series

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Fifteenth Sermon on 2 Thessalonians Chapter Two

By Thomas Manton

Which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.—2 Thes. 2:16.

WE come now to the second branch, the ground of audience and success in prayer: 'Which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.' Where three grounds of acceptance are intimated:—

I. The first is taken from the rise and foundation of all the love of God: he *hath loved us*.

II. From the matter of our comfort: he *hath given us everlasting consolation*.

III. From the way whereby we receive it and entertain it: and *good hope through grace*.

The first relateth to our redemption by Christ. The second to the new covenant.

The third to the disposition of our hearts, and how we are affected in the reception of these things, as will appear more in the explication of each branch.

First, I begin with the rise and foundation of that grace which we expect and beg of God in prayer: he 'hath loved us.'

Doct. That God's love to sinners, manifested in our redemption by Christ, giveth great boldness and encouragement in prayer.

1. I shall prove this is the love here intended.
2. That this giveth boldness in prayer.

I. That this is the love here intended, for these reasons:—

1. This is a visible effect and demonstration of his love to us: 1 John 3:16, ‘Hereby perceive we the love of God to us, in that he laid down his life for us;’ and 1 John 4:9,10, ‘In this was manifested the love of God towards us, in that he sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live by him. Herein was love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.’ From these places I gather, that to found our confidence and hope, it was needful that the love God had to us should show itself by some manifest and real proof. How can we tell how God’s heart standeth affected to mankind but by the effects? Whatever benevolence or good-will he has towards us, it is not evident to us till it break forth into some action, and real performance of some great thing for us. Now this was fully manifested in giving his Son to die for a sinful world, that he hath a love for us, and doth really desire our salvation. There is a hidden love of God, which is his eternal purpose and decree; and there is an open and declared love, and that is first and most seen in our redemption by Christ. In predestination his love was conceived in his heart; in redemption it is manifested in the effects; that was the rise, this the visible demonstration and sign of it. Now the apostle would not reason from what was hidden and secret, but from what is open and manifest.

2. This is not only the demonstration and visible proof of the reality of his love, but an ample representation and commendation of the greatness of his love: Rom. 5:8, ‘But God commendeth his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.’ A thing may be demonstrated to be real that yet is not commended or set forth as great and glorious. But God would express his love in such an astonishing instance, that we might admire the greatness as well as believe the reality of it: John 3:16, ‘God so loved the world,’ &c.; that is, so unspeakably, so inconceivably would he express his love to mankind, as to send his Son to assume our nature, and die for our transgressions. He doth not tell you how, but leaveth you to admire at it, and rejoice in it. What may we not expect from this love, this great love? If God loveth us at such a rate, surely he is in good earnest; his heart is set upon our salvation, or else he would never have taken this course of giving his only Son to suffer an accursed and shameful death. Now when the apostle saith ‘God hath loved us,’ he meaneth it of the great instance of his love. *Analogum per se positum, stat pro suo significatu famosiori*— words not restrained by the context must be interpreted in the most famous and known sense.

3. This is the first motive to draw our hearts to him: 1 John 4:19, ‘We loved him, because he loved us first.’ The first motive of our affection is not his special electing love to us above others, for that we cannot know before we love him; but his common love and mercy to sinners, and that was manifested in Christ’s being sent to be a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. This is that which is propounded to us to recover and reconcile our alienated and estranged affections to God: 2 Cor. 5:19,20, ‘God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto him.’ This grace God offereth to us, as well as others; namely, that for Christ’s sake he will pardon our sins, if we will lay down our weapons and enter into his peace. None are bound to believe that God specially loveth them, but those that are specially beloved by him, for none are bound to believe a falsehood, and a falsehood it is to us, till we have the saving effects and benefits. Therefore, it is not the special, but the general love which first draweth in our hearts to God yea, the saints, after some testimonies received of God’s special love, still make this to be the great engaging motive Gal. 2:20, ‘I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.’ Well, then, this is most likely to be meant by the apostle.

II. This must needs give great boldness in prayer.

1. By this we see that God’s love is not a cold, ineffectual love, that consists only in raw wishes, but an operative, active love, that issueth forth to accomplish what he intendeth to us, though by the most costly means, and acted at the dearest rate. God ‘is good, and doth good,’ Ps. 119:68. He hath a love to us, and will do good to us. Our love many times goes no further than good wishes or good words—be warmed, be clothed, but giveth not those things which are needful to the body, James 2:16; but God resteth not in kind wishes, but giveth a full demonstration of it. If Christ be needful to the saints, they shall have him; ‘if God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?’

2. It is an act of such infinite love in God to give us Christ to die for us, such as may raise our wonder and astonishment. God’s love is an immeasurable love, and so enlargeth our expectations and capacity for the reception of other things: Eph. 3:18, 19, ‘That ye may comprehend with all saints to know what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.’ There is such an immensity in the love of Christ as raiseth our desires and hopes to expect all other things from God that belong to our duty and happiness. If God will do this, what will he not do for those whom he

loveth? He that hath given the greatest gift will not stick at lesser things. He that hath given a talent, shall he not give a penny? He that hath given Christ, will he not give pardon to cancel our debts, grace to do our duty, comfort to support us in afflictions, supplies to maintain and protect us during our service? Finally, will he not reward us when our work is over? Reconciliation by his death is propounded as more difficult than salvation by his life: Rom. 5:10, 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.'

3. It is a gift in order to other things, and therefore he will complete that gift. Christ came to purchase all manner of blessings for us the favour of God, the fruition of God, the everlasting fruition of God in glory, and all things by the way necessary thereunto. There are two arguments implied:—

[1.] That God may now do us good without any impeachment of his honour. His justice and holiness is sufficiently demonstrated, the authority of his law, and truth of his threatenings kept up: Rom. 3:25,26, 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.'

[2.] That after God by an antecedent bounty hath laid the foundation so broad and deep, the consequent bounty, which is as the upper building for which this foundation was intended, will be laid on also. It was said of the foolish builder, that he began and was not able to finish. Surely the wise God, if we be qualified, and put no impediment on our part, will finish what he hath begun.

4. Because the giving of Christ sheweth how freely God will give all things to us. He gave Christ unasked, unsought too; in this instance we see his free and undeserved love. This was love to rebels and enemies. When the world had corrupted their way and cast off God, then Christ died for us; a consideration which serveth to support our confidence, notwithstanding the sense of our unworthiness. In the covenant of grace, great and wonderful mercies are given out to a world of sinners, and to ourselves among the rest. We see how loth God is sinners should perish; that sins may be pardoned if we will accept God's terms, that hath given such general testimony of his love to mankind, his love to miserable sinners, that is willing they should be reconciled; that there is not so much difference between us and others as between him and all. Now this encourageth us to fulfil the conditions of the gospel, notwithstanding our unworthiness of the privileges thereof.

Use 1. Is caution. Let us not have wrong thoughts of God when we come to him. We think of God the Father as one that is all wrath and justice, and unwilling to be reconciled to man, or brought to it with much difficulty. No; Christ came on purpose to show the love and loveliness of God to us; for our redemption came first out of the bosom of God; and Christ's mission into the world; and dying for sinners, was the fruit of his love; and mainly for this end, to give us a full demonstration of the love of God, and his pity to the lost world of sinners, that when our guilt had made him frightful to us, we might not fly from him as a condemning God, but love him, and serve him, and pray to him, as one willing to be reconciled to us: therefore take heed what picture of God you draw in your minds. Light and heat are not more abundant in the sun than love is in God.

Use 2. Of direction to us how to conceive of God in prayer, as one that loveth us. We have gained a great point when we are persuaded of this, and can come with this thought into his presence, that I am praying to a God that loveth me, and will do me good. You will say, If I could come to that, I have gained a great point indeed. But what hindereth? There is, I confess, a twofold love,—his general love, and his special love. His general love, which intendeth benefits to us; and his special love, which hath already put us in possession of them. His general love to the lost world; and his love and mercy to us in particular, putting us in possession of the saving benefits purchased and intended.

1. The general love to the lost world, that is a great thing the devil seeketh to hide and obscure, the wonderful love of God revealed in our Redeemer, that we may still fly from God, as more willing to punish than to save; and many poor dark creatures gratify his design. We are still seeking signs and tokens of God's love, something to warrant us to come to God by Christ, and to persuade us that we shall be welcome if we do so; and because we cannot find anything in ourselves that he will admit us, we are troubled. But all this while we are but seeking the sun with a candle. What greater evidence of God's willingness to receive you than the death of Christ, than the institutions of the gospel? This is above all evidences, that he sent his Son to die for us. This is like the Jews, who, when they had seen Many wonders wrought by Christ, would still have a new sign: the greatest sign is given already, Christ dying for a sinful world. Men and angels cannot find out a sign, pledge, and confirmation of the love of God above that. Yet, if that be not enough, we have another sign, the promises and invitations of the gospel, which show his willingness to welcome sinners. Salvation is offered, but not to named, but described persons. Therefore, if we are willing to come under these hopes upon God's terms, this may satisfy our scrupulous minds; there is no

bar put to us but what we put to ourselves by our refusing the grace as God offereth it. Certainly God's love and mercy to lost mankind is our first motive, and his willingness to impart good things to them upon his own terms; and surely he is well pleased with our acceptance of them.

2. There is special love where this grace is applied to us: Eph. 2:4,5, 'But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us, when we were dead in trespasses and sins.' He did not begin to love us when we were converted—that is of a more ancient and eternal rise—but then he did begin to apply his love to us; and this is no ordinary, but great love, when God was angry with us, and pronounced wrath on us in the sentence of the law, and appeared as an enemy in the course of his providence, and the apprehensions of our guilty fears, then to be reconciled; and surely this is a great advantage to draw nigh to God as a reconciled Father. This is the object of our everlasting love and joy: Rom. 5:11, 'And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.' And this is a prop of confidence in prayer. Could we once believe that he dearly loves us, and is reconciled to us, and taketh us for his children, that he delighteth in our prosperity; oh, how cheerfully could we come into his presence! John 16:27, 'The Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and believe that I came out from God.' They have not only his intercession, but the Father's especial love, which is the ground and hope of audience. Now this particular interest dependeth on something wrought in our souls by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord mentioneth two things—their faith in Christ, and love to God. (1.) Faith in Christ, or a thankful acceptance of him as our Lord and Saviour, therefore called receiving Christ, and entitling us to the privileges of Christ's children: John 1:12, 'To as many as received him, to them gave he liberty to become the children of God, even to as many as believe in his name.' (2.) Love to God: John 14:21, 'He that hath lay commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him;' and ver. 23, 'If any man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' We cannot perceive our interest in the special love of God but by our sincerity, faith in Christ, and love to God. When we see God's love taken in our hearts, we may know that he loveth us, especially the latter; for by the latter the former is manifested also: Gal. 5:6, 'Faith worketh by love.' Now the evidences of sincere love to God are seeking after God and, delighting in him; if you cannot find the latter, the former will evidence it to you: Prov. 8:17, 'I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me.' The *desiderium unionis*, the desiring, seeking love, if it be serious and earnest,

it is sincere, though you find not such delightful apprehensions of his grace to you. Clear that once, and when you come to prayer, you may know God loveth you; and the dearest friend we have in the world hath not the thousandth part so much as he: yea, the highest angel doth not love God so much as he loveth the lowest saint. God loveth like himself, becoming the greatness and infiniteness of his own being; and with this persuasion pray to him.

Secondly, The second ground of audience is from the fruit of his love, as demonstrated in the new covenant, wherein we have the matter of everlasting consolation. Surely this clause respects not the effect and sense in our own hearts, but respects the matter and object of our comfort; for he prayeth for the application of it afterwards: 'Comfort your hearts,' &c. And besides, nothing is more fleeting and oftener interrupted than our comfort in this life. It would contradict plain sense to call that comfort which Christians feel, and actually enjoy, everlasting comfort. Therefore I understand it of the matter, and observe this doctrine:—That God hath given all true believers solid ground of perpetual and endless comfort.

I will prove it by three arguments:—1. The comforts propounded are of an everlasting tendency and benefit—pardon and life, to free us from everlasting death, and to bring us into the possession of everlasting happiness, when our souls and bodies shall be for ever glorified in heaven. Now the consolation grounded on the promise of eternal life, whatever it be in our feeling, is in its causes and foundation eternal. The scripture often insists upon this: 1 John 2:25, 'And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life;' Heb. 5:9, 'And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.' We have by Christ deliverance from sin, and all the consequents of it, not only for a time, but for ever; eternal peace and felicity is our portion. So it is said, Ps. 119:111, 'Thy testimonies have I taken for an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart.' It is not an heritage to lean upon for a while, as all our worldly comforts are, but for ever: so Ps. 73:26, 'God is my portion for ever;' that is, when all other things fail, have spent their allowance, can afford us no more relief, then we begin to enjoy our true and proper portion. It were endless to heap up places. Man for his sin was cast out of paradise; but surely in the other world there is no change of estate: for men are past their trial, and must be what they are for ever. If you could imagine (as some have had the large charity to conceit it) that the condition of the wicked should be changed, yet there is no reason at all why the state of the godly should be changed, who have passed the pikes, and are triumphing with God, that they should ever lose that estate again.

2. They depend on everlasting foundations, such as are these:—

[1.] The everlasting love of God: Ps. 103:17, ‘The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on them that fear him.’ Not only from the beginning of the world to the end of the world, but from eternity to eternity. It was an ordinary form of praising God in the Old Testament: ‘For his mercy endureth for ever.’

[2.] The everlasting merit of Christ, which never loseth its force and effect: Heb. 9:12, ‘He hath obtained eternal redemption for us.’ Not that Christ is always propitiating. No; the work was performed in a short time, but the virtue of it is of everlasting continuance.

[3.] There is an eternal and unchangeable covenant: Heb. 13:20, ‘Through the blood of the everlasting covenant.’ Though the covenant made with Israel was abolished, yet this is everlasting, and continueth for ever, and shall never be altered; because it was able to reach the end for which it was appointed, which is the eternal salvation of man. That was a temporary covenant, this eternal. Now, because this is the main circumstance, and the next ground of our eternal consolation, the covenant of life and peace that God hath made with us in Christ, I shall prove the eternal truth and immutable constancy of this covenant. That a promise be immutable, certain, and firm, three things are required:—

(1.) That it be seriously and heartily made, with a purpose to perform it.

(2.) That he that hath promised continue in his purpose without change of mind.

(3.) That it be in the power of him that promiseth to perform what he hath promised. Now, of all these things there can be no doubt.

(1.) God meaneth as he speaketh when he promiseth to give eternal life to those that believe and obey the gospel. There is no question but he is so minded, when he sent the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven to assure us of it by his doctrine, to die the death to purchase it for us, and afterward to rise again and enter into that happiness that he spake of; and as soon as he was ascended up on high, gave gifts to men to give notice of this blessed estate to be had upon the terms of his new covenant, his Spirit attesting the truth of it by divers signs and wonders, partly to alarm the drowsy world to regard it, and assure the incredulous world that it is no fable; and because they live not for ever, did inspire those holy men, before they went out of the body, to write a book of this salvation for the use of the world in all ages. To think that God is not serious in all this, is to make him a liar indeed; yea, to establish a falsehood with the greatest solemnity and demonstration that can be offered to mankind; yea, to make a lie

necessary, not only to the governing, but sanctifying of the world. Surely, then, there is a truth in that great promise which he hath promised us, even eternal life.

(2.) That God doth continue in his purpose without change of mind. There is no doubt of it, if we consider his eternal and unchangeable nature: Mal. 3:6, 'I am the Lord, I change not;' James 1:17, 'With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' And what should alter his purpose? Doth he meet with anything that he foresaw not, or knew not before? No; this is a weakness incident to man; God doth never repent and call back his grant, which he hath by this condescending act of grace insured to the heirs of promise. 1 Sam. 15:29, 'The strength of Israel will not lie nor repent, for he is not as man, that he should repent;' Ps. ex. 4, 'I have sworn, and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.' Christ is by oath instated in full power of entertaining and blessing his faithful servants, which shall never be retracted and reversed. To take off all doubt, he hath given double assurance —his word and his oath: Heb. 6:17,18, 'God, being willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it with an oath; that by two immutable things, wherein it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before us.' That we might know that the new covenant is unchangeable and irrevocable, and so our comfort be the more strong, certain, and stable, God was pleased to give sincere believers this double assurance, by his word and oath, having regard to our infirmity, and those many doubts wherewith we are haunted about the world to come. God hath ever been tender of his word; above all that is famed or believed of him, this is most conspicuous: Ps. 138:2, 'Thou has magnified thy word above all thy name;' and Mat. 24:35, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away;' and an oath is *megisth par' anJrwpoiV pistiV*; and the apostle tells us it is *teraV antilogiaV*. It is interposed usually indeed in a doubtful matter. But though here it needed not, God would show his extraordinary care for our salvation; we see his good-will in the promise, his solicitude in the oath; in short, God would never be so fast bound, but that he doth and will still continue his purpose.

(3.) That he is able to perform it. Faith looks to that also; for this was the ground and prop of Abraham's faith: Rom. 4:21, 'Being fully persuaded that what God had promised he was able to perform; 'so must all Abraham's children that would give glory to God in believing. The way of salvation is so rare and mysterious, and so many difficulties object themselves to our view, that we are soon puddered, unless we reflect upon the power of God. God is able to find out a way whereby sinners may be reconciled, our corrupt hearts sanctified, and our sins subdued by his Spirit, whereby his

interest in us may be preserved against the assaults and temptations of the devil, world, and flesh; he is able to receive our souls to himself after they flit out of the body; and finally, he is able to raise our vile bodies after they are eaten out by worms, and turned into dust: Phil. 3:21, 'Who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be like unto his own glorious body; according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.' Matters of faith being wholly or mainly future or to come, and difficult to be performed, and in the meantime, we being exercised with so many trials, an express belief of God's power is necessary to convert such an obstinate creature as man is: to sanctify such a sinful creature, to preserve us in the midst of temptations, to raise the dead, are no slight things.

3. It is called 'everlasting consolation,' because it is sufficient to do its work; that is to say—

[1.] To reduce us from temporal and flesh-pleasing vanities. Alas! the pleasures of sin are but for a season, not worthy to be compared to the recompense of reward which Christ hath promised: Heb. 11:25,26, 'Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect to the recompense of reward.' Whatever is temporal, we may soon see the end of it. All carnal enjoyments, like flowers, wither while we smell on them; and the most shining glory in the world is soon burned to a snuff; but eternal life, and eternal glory, and eternal pleasure, are secured to us by Christ's promise; all the delights in the world are but a May-game to these eternal pleasures, which we shall have at God's right hand for evermore: Ps. 16:11, 'Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.' Now, will you sell your birthright for one morsel of meat? part with your eternal inheritance for a little carnal satisfaction? We have souls that will not perish; and shall we spend our whole time in seeking after things that perish in the using? Temporal things carry no proportion with an immortal spirit. We shall live for ever; we should look after things that will abide for ever 1 John 2:17, 'The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever.' Otherwise what will you do when the soul shall be turned out of doors? To what regions must the poor shiftless, harbourless soul betake itself? Surely then this consolation, though we feel it not always, and it be frequently interrupted, may be well called eternal consolation, because it affordeth argument enough to check our worldly and sensual inclinations, and to call us off from time to eternity.

[2] To make us stedfast in the truth, and cheerful under sufferings, for he saith here, 'The Lord, that hath given us everlasting consolation, comfort your hearts and establish you.' The great use of everlasting consolation is to comfort and stablish us in a suffering condition. The loss of temporal comforts is grievous, but it is recompensed with the promise of eternal joys revealed in the gospel: Heb. 10:34, 'Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that in heaven ye have a better and an enduring substance; cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.' And all our pains and afflictions are sweetened, so far as to keep us from fainting: 2 Cor. 4:17,18, 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things that are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.' The end of God's covenant and promises is to give us strong consolation in the midst of temptations, persecutions, and trials. Worldly joys appear and vanish in a moment, every blast of temptation scattereth them. It is eternal blessedness which is the cause of solid comfort in all dangers, storms, and tempests; hither we retreat as to our sanctuary, and find relief. In the world all is unstable and uncertain, but the covenant provideth for us eternal joy and bliss.

[3.] The third effect which it is to produce in us, is an increase of holiness, to stablish us in every good word; that is, not only in sound doctrine, but in every good work. In holiness of life, our endeavours should answer our motives and ends: 'Abound in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as your labour is not in vain in the Lord,' 1 Cor. 15:58. Diligence should not be grievous to us when there is everlasting consolation at the back of it; surely this should put life into all our endeavours. Should we trifle away that time which we are to improve for eternity? John 6:27, 'Labour not for the meat that perishes, but for that which is to endure to everlasting life: Faith in Christ, joined with solid goodness, will lead you to eternal life. There should be in the saints an eternal principle, which is the grace of the Holy Spirit; and an eternal end, which is the pleasing, glorifying, and enjoying of God; and an eternal rule, which is the will of God; and they will have eternal consolation and reward.

Use, of exhortation:—

1. Look upon the new covenant as it is in itself, as containing the only solid grounds of rejoicing; the blessings of it are real, certain, stable, and suitable to the great necessities of mankind. The blessings are pardon and life; they are real, no fancies or chimeras. The gospel is not a dream or well-devised fable, but the greatest reality in the

world; it speaketh much for itself, commending itself to the conscience by rational evidence: 2 Cor. 4:2, 'By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God;' but more by the authority of the Son of God, who came from heaven to show us the way thither; and if it had not been so, he would have told us, John 14:2; for he used great plainness of speech and fidelity; and is more fully ratified by the Spirit: John 16:8—11, 'He will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.' They are stable and unchangeable, as appeareth by the covenant form, in which the conveyance is so strong and firm as will make a plea in law 2 Sam. 23:5, 'He hath made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things, and sure,' in which is all my hope and desire, and suitable to many necessities. Here is a cure for our great sore by pardon, and satisfaction to our desires by a fit happiness.

2. Let it be so to you; do you fulfil the duties required; if there be any room for doubting, it must be of your qualification; therefore that must be made more explicit: 1 John 3:19 'Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.' We miss much of this everlasting consolation, because we are upon such loose terms with God: never hope to have peace upon cheaper terms than clear and undoubted holiness. You are not to model God's covenant and new make it, and bring it down to your humour and liking. No; the covenant is unalterable and eternal; so the duties, as well as the privileges. You must take it as you find it, and choose the things that please God, Isa. 56:4. There is your claim; follow that close: 'Henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them that love his appearing.'

3. Carry it so as those to whom God hath given grounds of everlasting consolation. We are up when we have the world with us, but dead in the nest when our temporal dependences are broken. The covenant is the same still; and there should be your hope and your joy: 2 Cor. 1:20, 'All the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us;' 2 Sam. 23:5, 'Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.' Heaven is where it was; the world cannot make void your interest in it; therefore you should rejoice in the Lord always: Phil. 4:4, 'Rejoice in the Lord always; and again, I say rejoice.'

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