

The Chief Publican's Conversion
Particular Baptist Forefathers
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The Chief Publican's Conversion or A Lost Sinner sought and Saved by Christ. Luke chapter 19 and verse 10. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, John 10:36, came to save sinners, 1 Timothy 1:15. And being sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, Matthew 15:24, found Zacchaeus a son of Abraham, Luke 19:9, in his blood, that is, in his natural estate, a lost sinner, for this Zacchaeus was the prince of the publicans, or chief among the publicans, verse 2, and a sinner so that he was known of all to be a sinner, verse seven, to whom Christ said, "Zacchaeus today I must abide at thy house," and Zacchaeus received him joyfully, to wit, both into his house and into his heart, verse 5, 6, 8, 9.

Now when the Pharisaical Jews saw Jesus to lodge, or make his abode at the publican's house, they all murmured saying that he was gone to be the guest, with a man that is a sinner. Whereupon our Saviour gave them to understand that this was the business for which He came into the world, namely to call sinners, Matthew 9:13.

This was the great design of God the Father in sending His Son Jesus Christ, to wit, to save lost sinners, Matthew 18:11. And this was the very cause why he would be Zacchaeus, because Zacchaeus was a sinner, a lost sinner. For the Son of Man is come to seek and save that which is lost.

So that the words of the text contain in them the reason why Christ would be with Zacchaeus and implicitly an answer to their objection, who murmured at it, as may appear in the like case, Mark 2:15-17.

In the text consider these three things: first, a Savior, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Timothy 2:5, the Son of man. Secondly, the work He came about and that is twofold—to seek and to save. Thirdly, the persons whom Christ came to seek and save, to wit, lost sinners. The doctrine, which arises clearly from the words, is this.

Doctrine: The man Christ Jesus must seek and save lost sinners.

This was His errand from heaven. The work he came to do. And, this He must accomplish as the scriptures declare, John 6:38, 39.

For the explanation of the doctrine three things must be opened and proved by the word of truth, to wit, first, who the man Christ Jesus is. Secondly, how He seeks lost sinners. And thirdly, what he saves them from.

Now, touching the first query: the Scriptures do declare what the man Christ Jesus, is Immanuel, God with us, Matthew 1:23, which was long since foretold by the prophet, Isaiah 7:14. Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

This is a great mystery saith the apostle, 1 Timothy 3:16, God manifested in the flesh. He is also called the Word of God, Revelation 19:13.

And the Word as God, John 1:1, and man. The Word was made flesh, John 1:14. The only begotten of the Father, called the Son of God, John 3:16 and Luke 1:35, equal with God, Philippians 2:6, and one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, 1 John 5:7, which oneness is a mystery, Colossians 2:2.

The hypostatical union of the divine and human nature is a great mystery, 1 Timothy 3:16. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, Romans 11:33.

Furthermore, the Scriptures of truth do declare touching the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God man. That is, He is Mediator between God and Man, 1 Timothy 2:5, by whom and in whom God is reconciled to man and man is reconciled to God. Therefore Christ took upon Him the seed of Abraham that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people, Hebrews 2:16, 17 and Colossians 1:21. And He is therefore called the Mediator of the New Covenant, Hebrews 12:24, the better Covenant, which was established upon better promises, Hebrews 8:6.

And for this cause He is the mediator of the New Testament or Covenant that by the means of death for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament, or covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance, Hebrews 9:15.

The man Christ Jesus is also the great Prophet and King of His people, Acts 3:22, 23 and 5:31, 32, The Head and Savior of His Church, Ephesians 5:23. And this Son of man came to seek and to save lost sinners.

Now, touching the second query, the scriptures do witness that Christ seeking His lost sheep finds them in their blood polluted, corrupted, filthy, naked, and loathsome, Ezekiel 16:3-6.

But the poor sinner knows not that he is wretched and miserable and poor and blind, and naked, Revelation 3:17, until the Lord by His Holy Spirit and word convinces him and enlightens his understanding.

Now the Lord seeing the poor sinner polluted in his own blood, that is, in his natural estate of sinful corruption and looking upon him with an eye of compassion, for his time is the time of love, He draws him with His everlasting loving kindness, Jeremiah 31:3, without which powerful drawing, no sinner can come to Christ, John 6:44.

The means by which the lost sinner is drawn to Christ is the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he is convinced, enlightened, and converted.

First, God does by His Spirit and Word convince the soul of sin, righteousness, and judgment, John 16:8.

First, of sin, to wit, sins not only against the law, as drunkenness, uncleanness, covetousness, but also sins against the gospel, because they believe not in Christ, verse 9, that you may perceive what it is to be convinced of sin, because they believe not in Christ, John 16:8, 9.

That is, the Spirit of God in the Word, and by the Word convinces the sinner. First, that he has no saving, justifying faith, Hebrews 3:18, 18; 4:2, which is the precious faith of God's elect.

Secondly, that without this faith, he cannot please God, Hebrews 11:6. Unless he believes in Jesus Christ he shall perish.

And, thirdly, that it is not in his own power to believe, but the exceeding greatness of God's power is put forth to them that believe, Ephesians 1:19, 20. And this almighty power must be given to enable the soul to believe.

Now, this is not a general conviction that all men are sinners and consequently you are a sinner as well as others. But it is a particular convincement with divine light and power which causes the soul to understand and believe that he is indeed a sinner, a miserable sinner, a lost sinner. For it is the Spirit in the Word that does thus convict the soul of sin. The effect of this conviction usually is much trouble of conscience, fear of hell and sensible apprehensions of the wrath of God and such like, for the poor sinner now sees, and feels, that it is an evil thing and a bitter thing, to sin against God, for He has caused the arrows of his quiver into his reins, Lamentations 3:1, 13.

This arrow of the almighty is sharp in the heart of the king's, that is Christ's enemies, Psalm 45:5. It pricks the sinner in the heart, Acts 2:37, and causes him to cry out, "What shall I do?" Acts 16:30. What shall I do to be saved?

Now, this sinner is bidden to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 16:31. But, alas, he cannot believe.

Ah, no, no says the poor sinner. I am a sinful wretch, a vile abominable sinner. I have been a blasphemer of the name of God, a persecutor of the people of God, a despiser of the Word of God and ministers of God, disobedient to parents. There is no hope for me. I shall perish. I shall perish everlasting. I am undone. I am lost forever. I cannot believe. I have an unbelieving heart and this sin of unbelief added to all my other sins fills up the measure of my iniquities.

The Spirit does also convict the soul of righteousness, John 16:10. That is to say, first, that he is not righteous, but a sinner, Romans 3:9, 10.

Secondly, that his own righteousness, which he has gone about to establish, is as filthy rags, Isaiah 64:6.

And thirdly, that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes, Romans 10:3, 4.

Fourthly, that this righteousness of Christ must be imputed to him to justification of life, Romans 5:18, 19.

And thus the sinner is taken off from trusting to himself to the law or to his performances any longer.

Now he dares not rest upon his duties, gifts, reformation, humiliation, or any work of God in his soul for life or salvation. Now his prayers, his mourning, his exact walking, nor his universal obedience cannot mediate for him, nor be his Savior. It is not his inherent qualifications, but the righteousness of Christ whereby he is justified before God. And yet notwithstanding, he is not taken quite taken off from duties, but from resting in them and trusting in them?

The poor sinner prays still, reads the Scriptures, hears the Word, is both constant and conscientiable in the performance of holy duties. But now he cannot, as he formerly did, raise his hopes of salvation, gather his comforts in promises, nor conclude his assurance of eternal life from his duties alone, because he knows not whether Christ is his or not and whether or no he performs those duties from the Spirit of life in Christ.

Likewise, doth the Spirit convince the sinner of judgment, John 16:11, that is to say, first, that there is a day of judgment, 2 Peter 2:9.

Secondly, that all men shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ and then every one shall give an account of himself to God, Romans 14:10-12.

Thirdly, that then God will render to every one according to his deed, Romans chapters 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Fourthly, that it will be a terrible day, a day of dread and horror to devils and wicked men, Malachi 4:5, and for a poor soul to stand naked without Christ's righteousness at that day is a fearful thing.

Then consider, poor sinners, what a sad day those poor creatures had in Sodom and Gomorrah when the Lord rained down fire and brimstone upon them. But this great and dreadful day of the Lord will be 10,000 times more terrible when the Lord shall say to those who are without Christ, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Hear, ye that are afar off, what I have done, saith the Lord, and you that are near, acknowledge my might. Sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness has surprised the hearts of hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who shall dwell with everlasting burnings? Isaiah 33:12-14, 18.

And now the sinner's heart begins again to meditate terror of the Lord, for by this powerful conviction of the Spirit and Word of God, the sinner is brought to a sensible apprehension of his natural condition. And now he apprehends himself in a terrible estate. Yea, and sees himself a lost sinner and is ready to conclude against his soul that there is no hope for him. He formerly had some hopes, some comforts, some confidence of his own salvation, but they were all false being built upon the sand of his duties, humiliations, and legal performances.

Alas! Alas! saith the poor sinner, I have kindled a fire, and compassed myself about with sparks, and did walk in the light of my fire, and in the sparks that I have kindled. And this now I have received at the hand of God, to lay down in sorrow, Isaiah 50:11.

Here the soul has his burden, which is too heavy for him to bear. And under the feeling sense and sight of his own sinful lost condition, he gets into a corner alone where no eye can see and no ear can hear him and cries mightily to God with prayers and tears, spreading his miserable estate before the Lord, begs for sin pardoning mercy and heart changing grace, power against corruption and patience to wait on God and to seek him that hides his face for a little moment.

Then to some experienced preacher, or believer, this poor sinner goes to inquire after the way to heaven to whom he declares his miserable condition and asks what he shall do to be saved. And being exhorted to believe cries out, Oh! I cannot believe. I dare not believe and then propounds all his objections against believing.

This is, I conceive, the work of thorough conviction by the Spirit.

Secondly, God does by His Spirit and word enlighten the soul to know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power towards them that believe, Ephesians 1:18, 19, 20.

The Lord having convinced the sinner of his lost estate and sinful condition by nature, doth by His Spirit and Word enlighten his understanding to see and know: First, that there is a Savior, to wit, Jesus Christ, Matthew 1:21. Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins. And Acts 5:31, Him has God exalted to be a Prince and a Savior to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Secondly, that this Savior Christ Jesus came into the world to this very end, to save sinners.

1 Timothy 1:15. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and Matthew 18:11, for the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

And, thirdly, that whosoever shall believe in this Jesus Christ shall be saved, Mark 16:15. Preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved.

And John 3:16, whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Now, as God gives the sinner a spiritual understanding to see and to know this, so the Lord brings over his heart and causes him to assent unto all this as the truth and to believe it to be the will of the Father that everyone that believeth in His Son Jesus Christ shall be saved.

And if I could believe in Him, says the poor lost sinner, I should be saved by Him. But, alas, here is my misery. I cannot believe. This is the condemnation to my poor soul, my unbelief. I must justify God. He is just in all His ways. He has done right, but I do wickedly. I cannot believe.

Oh, beloved, the poor lost sinner now can tell you that it is not an easy matter to believe in Jesus Christ. No, no, it is as difficult a thing to believe as to keep all the commandments. The poor sinner could do something touching the commandments, but he cannot tell how to do anything about believing. He knows not how to begin to believe.

Nay, saith the sinner, I now know by experience nothing but an almighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead, can enable me to believe and this day of His power I must wait for. Thus the Lord leads the soul by a way that he knows not, Isaiah 42:16. I will bring the blind by a way they know not. I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them. And thus the poor sinner is enlightened to see the hope of his calling.

Well, saith the poor soul, I have some secret hopes that God will show me mercy and will give me Christ and forgive my sins according to the riches of His grace. For the Lord waits to be gracious, and will be exalted that He may show mercy unto sinners, Isaiah 30:18.

Thirdly, God does by His Spirit and Word convert the sinner, that is to say, changes him into the image of His Son Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 3:18. But we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image.

Let me open this Scripture a little to you so that you may understand the work of conversion. But we all, to wit, who are converted or turned to the Lord, as in verse 16, with open face, with unveiled face, that is to say, the eyes of the understanding being enlightened, Ephesians 1:18, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, that is, looking upon that object of faith Jesus Christ, who is the glory of the Father, John 1:14.

Yea, the brightness of His glory, and the express image, Hebrews 1:3, set forth in the word of the gospel preached, as in a glass, James 1:23-25, to be looked unto for salvation, Isaiah 45:22. We are changed into the same image, that is to say, we are converted, made a new creature, regenerated, made a new man, and renewed into the likeness of Jesus Christ, or conformed to the image of his Son, Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 5:22; Ephesians 4:23, 24.

And this change is wrought by the Spirit of God, 2 Corinthians 3:18. And that thus the Lord having propounded or offered Jesus Christ to lost sinners, outwardly and in general by the Word, and inwardly and particular to this or that lost sinner by the Spirit accompanying that word of the gospel with divine light and power to the heart of the sinner, does enable the poor soul so to assent unto what is propounded, as to receive what is thereby offered, namely, Jesus Christ, and by faith to rest upon Him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, which Christ being given to the sinner of the Father, is of God made all this to him. As we read in 1 Corinthians 1:30. And now the sinner is drawn to Christ and is sought and saved by Christ.

And now touching the third query: the Scriptures of truth do testify that Jesus Christ having sought lost sinners does save them: first, Christ does save them from sin, Matthew 1:21. That is to say, first, from the guilt or imputation of sin. For all have sinned, saith the apostle, and all the world has become guilty before God, Romans 3:9, 19, 23.

Now, Jesus Christ does save them from this guiltiness by being made of God their righteousness, in point of justification. And therefore, the same apostle says, Romans 3:24, that those who before were proved to be sinners and had become guilty before God are now justified freely from His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ whom God has 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 that He might be just and the justifier of him that believes in Jesus, Romans 3:25, 26.

Hereupon the apostle triumphs, Romans 8:33. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. And therefore, God has freely promised in the everlasting covenant of His rich grace, Hebrews 2:12, to remember their sins no more.

David describes the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin, Romans 4:6, 7, 8.

Secondly, from the filth or pollution of sin. For sin contracts filthiness and defiles the sinner, Matthew 15:18, 19, 20 and Ezekiel 16:6, 22.

Now, Jesus Christ does save them from this pollution and defilement by being made of God their sanctification, 1 Corinthians 1:30. And therefore, although the saints have sin and do sin, 1 John 1:8, 10. Yet the blood of Christ, which is the fountain open for sin and for uncleanness, Zechariah 13:1, does cleanse them from all sin, 1 John 1:7, 9. And being so sanctified and cleansed, they are presented by Christ to the Father holy, and unblameable and unproveable in His sight, Colossians 1:22, not having spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, Ephesians 5:26, 27. For both He that sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one, Hebrews 1:11. And by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified, Hebrews 10:14, according to the request of the apostle Paul, 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Now the very God of peace sanctify you wholly.

Thirdly, Christ does save from the power or dominion of sin. For sin has a dominion over the hearts of natural men, Colossians 1:13. It is called the power of darkness. And in Romans 8:2, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from that law of sin. Sin has the force of a law upon a carnal heart. Let a man or woman, who are in the state of natural corruption, resolve to forsake their sinful ways. Let them purpose in themselves and promise to their friends to leave such a sinful course. They shall still be overpowered by their lusts to commit those very sins, and be overcome, and be held under the power of them. And although some, yea diverse of their companions in sin are justified and sanctified and escape these pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ and by the power of His free grace, yet they shall still live in their lusts and commit their wickednesses, Daniel 12:10.

Many shall be purified and made white and tried, but the wicked shall do wickedly. Now Jesus Christ does save them from this lordly power of sin by fellowship with Him in His death, Romans 6:6. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him that the body of sin might be destroyed that henceforth we should not serve sin. And therefore, although the saints do sometimes that which they allow not, that which they would not, nay that which they hate, and on the contrary, that good that they would, that they do not and find a law that when they would do good evil is present with them and see a law in their members bringing them into captivity to the law of sin, which sin is in their members, Romans 7:15, 19, 21, 23.

Yet there is not one sin, which has dominion over them, Romans 6:14, 15, 17, 22. They are not now the servants of sin. Sin is not their lord and king, but they are freed from it in this regard also, Romans 6:18. So that though sin may tyrannize and carry them captive sometimes, yet saith the apostle, sin shall not have dominion over them, who are under grace.

And, then, fourthly, Christ doth save from the curse or punishment of sin. For sin merited the curse of the law and the wages of sin is death, Romans 6:23.

Now Christ does redeem His people from the curse of the law by being made a curse for them, Galatians 3:13. Thus faith looks at Christ as a Savior made sin, made a curse, and crucified to redeem His elect from the curse due to sin.

What punishment the law and justice of God could exact or require of sinners, that the Lord Jesus Christ has suffered and He has fully satisfied His Father's justice for all the sins of all His people, therefore called our Surety, Hebrews 7:22. And although God does rebuke and chastise His people for sin, Psalm 39:11. It is not in wrath for satisfaction, but in love for amendment, Revelation 3:19.

Secondly, Christ having sought lost sinners saves them from the law. For you must understand that sinners were under the law until Christ redeemed them, Galatians 4:5. But now we are delivered from the law that we should serve in newness of Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter, Romans 7:6.

First, from all the ceremonies or elements of the law, Galatians 4:3, to wit, the observation of days and months and times and years, verse 10. Christ by His coming in the flesh abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances, Ephesians 2:15. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and contrary to us, and took it out of the way, Colossians 2:14. Therefore, the apostle tells the Galatians that if they were circumcised, Christ shall profit them nothing, Galatians 5:1-3.

Secondly, from under the penalties and curse of the law. For it is written, cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, Galatians 3:10.

Now from this penalty and curse Christ frees His whom He has sought and saved, Galatians 3:13. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. Therefore sinners are said to be saved from wrath through Him, Romans 5:8, 9.

Thirdly, Christ doth save us from the school mastership of the law. For the law was our schoolmaster until Christ, but after faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster, Galatians 3:24, 25. Now the office of a schoolmaster is to teach or instruct the ignorant, to teach is the main or essential part of a schoolmaster and to correct is but incidental. One may be a good schoolmaster and never correct a scholar with stripes. And therefore we are thus to understand this Scripture. We, who are believers, are no longer under the tutorage or government of the law, as we were in our non-age, which is the very truth, which the apostle labors to clear up to the understanding of the Galatians, 3:24, 25; 4:1-5.

But we have a new schoolmaster, to wit, Jesus Christ, Ephesians 4:20, 21. If so be you have heard Him, and have been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus. Now the difference between these two schoolmasters, the law and Christ, is this: Moses in the law commands

his disciples to do this and forbear that, but gives no power, nor communicates no skill to perform any thing. Christ commands His disciples to do the same moral duties, and to forbear the same evils, and with His command He gives power and wisdom. For He works in us both to will and to do according to His good pleasure, Philippians 2:12, 13.

Thus Christ having freed us from under the tutorage of the law takes us under his own tuition and teaches us to yield obedience of faith to His Father's will and to serve Him in newness of Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Fourthly, from the old covenant of the law. For the Ten Commandments are called a covenant, Deuteronomy 4:13, Exodus 34:28. And the apostle in his epistle to the Hebrews calls it an old, faulty, vanishing covenant, Hebrews 8:7-13, opposing against it that new, perfect and everlasting covenant of the gospel.

You know the zealous Jews sought righteousness and life by the works of the law, Romans 9:31, 32. That is to say, they did think, as many of the professors of our times do, to be saved by keeping the Ten Commandments, Luke 18:18-22.

And Paul bears them record that they were zealous, but it was not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness went about to establish their own righteousness and the apostle hereupon tells them that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes, Romans 10:2-5.

And therefore we may use great plainness of speech and safely conclude that the administration of the law written and engraved in stones, even the Ten Commandments as they were that first, old, faulty, and vanishing covenant, is now done away and abolished. And yet we do not hereby make void the law, but establish it, Romans 3:31. For we say that we ought to yield obedience of faith in newness of Spirit and to fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, James 2:8. You do well, saith the apostle, so speak and so do as they that shall be judged by the perfect law of liberty, James 2:12. Neither are we without law to God, but under the law to Christ, 1 Corinthians 9:21. For though we be delivered from the law, which was our old husband, that being dead wherein we were held, yet we serve God in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter, Romans 7:4, 6. The grace of God, which has appeared bringing us this salvation teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world, Titus 2:11-15.

I might be large in the declaring and proving by the scriptures that Christ saves His people, even poor lost sinners, from hell also, both from the fears of hell in their hearts, delivering them, who for a long season through fear of wrath and everlasting death, were held in bondage, Hebrews 2:15, and from the power of the pit. Also, how He saves them from Satan's deluding temptations and the enticing allurements of the world. And indeed, I might justly treat upon all that good blessing and covenant grace, which poor lost sinners from the first conversion to the faith, receive the end of their faith, the

salvation of their souls. For these two terms of seeking and saving include all from the beginning of grace to the end of glory but this may suffice for the present.

Reason number one: Jesus Christ must seek and save lost sinners because the Father sanctified Him, sealed Him and sent Him from heaven to finish this work of redemption. And this is the Father's will, which has sent me that of all, which He has given me I should lose nothing and that everyone who believes on the Son may have everlasting life, John 6:38-40.

This was the great errand of Christ from heaven to the habitable parts of the earth to save sinners, 1 Timothy 1:15. Christ came into the world to save sinners. And this was the work His Father gave Him to finish; therefore, he must perfect it. I came from heaven, says Christ, not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me, John 6:38.

Reason number two: The man Christ Jesus must seek and save lost sinners because the Father having exalted Him to be a Prince and a Savior, and promised in His everlasting covenant of grace that all Israel shall be saved, Romans 11:26, 27. There is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, Acts 4:12. Neither is there salvation in any other. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills and from the multitude of the mountains, truly in Jehovah our God is the salvation of Israel, Jeremiah 3:23.

Therefore, the Lord said by his prophets, Isaiah 45:22, Look unto me and be you saved all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is none else.

Reason number three: The Lord Jesus Christ must seek and save lost sinners because God will not have any one of those whom He has given to His Son to perish, Matthew 18:14. Therefore the Son of man has come to save them that are lost, verse 11. Christ must give an account to God the Father of all, which He has given Him and He must keep them and preserve to Himself, when He gives up the kingdom to God the Father, John 17:12 and 18:19.

Therefore, Christ promises to give them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of His hand, John 10:28. For He said surely they are my people. So He was their Savior, Isaiah 63:8, 9. And in their affliction the Angel of His presence saved them.

Use number one: Seeing that this is a truth that the man Christ Jesus must seek and save lost sinners, let us make use of this doctrine to discover the ground of much trouble, and disconsolation of some professors touching their salvation. They see that they are lost, undone, and in a perishing condition, but they look not to Christ to be saved. They think to save themselves by seeking, praying, mourning, reforming and consider not that Christ must seek and save them. They will take the work out of His hand and think to do it themselves by their humiliations, duties. And such professors either have no comfort or their joys last no longer than their humiliations and duties. And when they cannot pray, mourn, overcome sin, and perform holy duty with that enlargement and broken

heartedness, as they have done sometimes, then all their joy is ceased, all their hopes are perished, all their comforts are gone and they are marvelously disconsolate and cry out they are hypocrites. They have no grace and to their performances, duties, and humiliations, and truly in vain is salvation hoped for from these hills and mountains. Although most professors confess with their mouths that Christ must save them, yet many do in their hearts deny him, and would make their prayers, their humiliation and their duties their Saviors. And no marvel if they are often sorrowful. After they have kindled a fire and compassed themselves about with the sparks of their performances, Isaiah 50:11, they walk in the light of that fire and sparks, which they themselves kindled. But when that light goes out and those sparks die or vanish away, then all their joy, peace, comforts, and hopes are lost.

Use number two: This doctrine may also be useful for examination. Christ came to seek and save lost sinners. This is the work He has to do for poor souls, to seek and to save them that are lost. Let it therefore put you upon trial whether you are such as Christ must seek and save.

Are you sinners? Yes, we are all sinners will some say. And if any man say he has no sin, he deceives himself and the truth is not in him, 1 John 1:8, 10.

Yes, that is truth. All men are sinners, but has this general truth been brought home to your heart in particular with such a divine light and power of the Spirit in the Word that it did so convict your conscience that if you had not known any other man in the world to be a sinner, yet you could not but have believed that you were a sinner. Ah, saith a poor seeking soul, I know by woeful experience of my own heart and ways that I am a sinner indeed, a sinner with a witness. I was a blasphemer, a drunkard, an unclean person. My heart is still hard and proud, carnal and desperately wicked. I find and feel it so to be daily.

Well, but have you had a thorough conviction that you are a sinner? Have you been convinced of your gospel sins, to wit, piercing Christ, slighting God's offer of Him to you upon gospel terms, and despising Him though tendered in a covenant of grace?

Alas, the thought how I have abused, slighted, and neglected free mercy and rich grace pierces my heart. I have stood out against God, preferred the world, and the things of this life, yea, my own base sinful lusts before Jesus Christ. I cannot speak of the vanity and deceitfulness of my heart in this kind without tears. Oh, it breaks my heart so oft as I seriously consider what injury I have done to Christ in His people by scorning and reproaching and persecuting them. What hard thoughts I have had of Him, unbelieving thoughts, blasphemous thoughts, carnal thoughts. And what hard speeches I have spoken against Christ's ways, messengers, ordinances, churches, and people.

But could you not reform yourself, humble yourself, deny yourself, forsake your sins, perform duties and so save yourself from this your miserable estate?

Oh no, I did think that I might amend my ways, leave my sins, and reform myself and I went about it hoping to be saved by my own righteousness, but all in vain. For either I had no power to forsake my sins, nor grace to pray, mourn and humble myself, or if I did overcome some temptations and resist some corruptions through the power of God, or was assisted by His grace to perform holy duties. I rested in them and raised all my hopes, confidence, and comforts from them, grew proud, self-confident and so miscarried, lost all my hopes and comforts.

But albeit you could not get heaven this way, yet could you not easily believe and so be saved?

Truly says the poor sinner I think it is as hard a thing to believe in Jesus Christ with all the heart as to keep all the commandments. When I was convicted that my own righteousness could not save me, and saw I could never get to heaven in a way of works, I complaining to some of my miserable condition and they had me believe, which at first I thought was easy, and I resolved to believe, but presently after and unmortified corruption breaking forth in my heart, put me into sad fears. I went to pray, but my heart being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, I could not pray. Thereupon I doubted of my condition more still. Then I would have affected my heart with sorrow, but I could not mourn. I began to feel my heart cold, hard, and dead and thereupon I call all into question. And being under many fearful temptations, concluded that I was a hypocrite and saw myself utterly lost, having no hopes, could not but bewail my sad condition to godly friends, who still exhorted me to believe in Christ. But, alas, I could not believe. And I was also afraid to believe lest it should be upon false grounds and truly I think that had not the day of God's exceeding great power come upon me and set home a promise of free grace by His Spirit with divine light and mighty power upon my heart, I should never have believed. But when that promise came, it was so suitable to my present condition my heart objections were so answered by it and it pleased God so clearly to reveal His rich and free love in Christ Jesus to my soul in it that I could not but with tears and much heart breakings admire the infinite goodness of God to me. I was so self-ashamed & abased as that I saw myself the chief of sinners. Which promise of the Spirit I received by faith, applied to myself and in the believing that Christ was mine and I His, I was filled with joy unspeakable and glorious. And ever since God has drawn out my heart more and more after himself and after holiness so that He has caused me more to desire, yea, hunger and thirst after righteousness and sanctification, than after heaven.

Use number three: This doctrine will make much for the consolation of true believers that Christ must seek and save lost sinners and that first for themselves, secondly, in regard of theirs. Believers themselves are much troubled with their corruptions and although they pray against them, mourn under them, and resist them, yet sometimes they are carried captive, Romans 7:23.

Now this doctrine may be applied for the consolation of such. Christ must save you from your sins, Matthew 1:28. And sin shall not have dominion over you, Romans 6:14. His

grace is sufficient for you, 2 Corinthians 12:8, 9. Christ shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob and this is His covenant with them, to take away their sins, Romans 11:26, 27.

Also, believers may from this doctrine have some ground of hope and so of comfort with respect to their yoke fellows, parents, brethren, children, or other friends or kinsfolk after the flesh, who yet remain in their natural estate. It may be you have spent many a prayer, some tears also upon them. You still do make mention of them day and night in prayer and as often as you have access to the throne of grace, you make mention of them to the Father. You spread their blind, ignorant, dead, naked, miserable condition before God and still they abide in their sinful estate, and you have sad thoughts, doubts and fears that they will perish. But yet there is hope in Israel touching this thing. For Christ must lose none that the Father has given Him. He must seek them and save them. And what do you know but that carnal yoke fellow, parent, or brother, or child, or sister, or neighbor may be of that number. And if so, they shall not perish.

Consider what the apostle propounds in 1 Corinthians 7:16, and let me thus apply it. What know you whether Christ will save your husband or wife, &c. Therefore, pray in hope and wait on God in hope. Who can tell. God may have chosen him or her and then Christ must seek and save them.

Use number four: This doctrine may afford us a word of exhortation to poor seeking, waiting, and mourning souls, who are made sensible of their lost condition and see themselves almost ready to perish for want of Christ. I would exhort such to believe that they shall be saved for Christ came to seek and save that which was lost. Christ must seek and save lost sinners. This is a ground to believe it.

But you will object, this is a ground to believe Christ will save some lost sinner. But all who were lost in Adam shall not be saved by Christ and how can I know that I am one of these few, who shall be saved?

I answer, when God by His Holy Spirit shall bring home this general truth, particularly to your soul with divine light, life and power of manifestation, He will so clearly witness that Christ came to seek and save you, who was a lost sinner that you will have a spiritual understanding given to know it and to believe it, yea, and you shall be filled with joy and peace in believing.