

## Donald Cargill's Lecture at Torwood on Ezekiel 21.25-27.

*“And thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end.  
Thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.  
I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.”*  
-Ezekiel 21.25-27.

‘Now, I have only one thing to beg of you, that you would not entertain prejudices against us before you hear us speak.

1. God is judge of the whole world, and this gives us assurance thereof – I say this gives assurance to all men, that God is judge of all. He will judge oppression. If He will not relieve the oppressed, I doubt not but He will reward oppressors.

2. God is a righteous Judge, and He will not suffer the wicked to pass unpunished. Now ye have heard that this word gives us assurance, that there is a Deity, a righteous Judge. The word shows us this, and the Lord knows whether or not it may be rightly applied to some. The words imply that the Lord is about to make a change. The Lord is wearied of many, and He knows whom to put in their place. He will give them their leave, but He is about to make a great change; and when He is about to make a great change, He will take away kings; He will take away princes; He will take away nobles, and He will lay waste many fair buildings. But ye may say, “Why will He make this great change?” He will do it, if it were no more but because men have taken away His authority. Now, He is saying to Britain, “Who rules here?” But ere it be long He will make them know who rules in Britain. *“And thou profane wicked prince of Israel,”* &c. [Ezekiel 21.25.] By their profanity and wickedness, you may easily cast their horoscope. Now there is a great one fallen. It is not an ordinary death or an ordinary fall. It would in that case be too small a token of God’s displeasure. He must stigmatize with more than ordinary brands.

Now **1st**, we see that there is a great one fallen. The Lord is saying, *“And thou profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come,”* &c. [Ezekiel 21.25] As if the Lord had said, “The day is come when you must tyrannize no longer; you must live voluptuously no more.” O dreadful woe! whose day is come! Now must he leave all his pleasures. Now must he leave his court. Now must he leave all his voluptuousness. Now must he leave all his dishes. But we may say this one word of the wicked, of the most voluptuous that ever lived, that their day is coming, and great wickedness hastens and helps forward their day. *“Whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end.”* [Ezekiel 21.25] As if God had said, “I will shorten their voluptuous living. I will shorten their reigning. I will shorten their pleasure.” Oh, if they knew what was coming amongst them, “when their iniquity shall have an end!” Oh, blessed shall we account that day, when sin and iniquity shall fall and have an end! We are persuaded that this joy is allowed to devout persons in Scripture; when iniquity shall fall there shall be no more sinful and iniquitous laws. When the sinful lawgiver shall fall, and God shall arise, iniquity shall fall and stop its mouth. But let them fall, be who they will; be they father, or mother, or brother, or be who they will, if God arise let them fall before Him.

Now **2ndly**, *“Iniquity shall have an end. Thus saith the Lord, Remove the diadem; take off the crown.”* [Ezekiel 21.25-26.] The Lord stands by, and, as it were, disrobes the king. The Lord stands by, and gives orders to take the filthy garments from Joshua, and to clothe him with change of raiment, and to *“set a fair mitre upon his head.”* [Zech. 3.5.] Just the contrary is here. The Lord gives orders to disrobe the profane, wicked prince, to remove the diadem, and, in a word, to rend his insignia regalia. And is God saying, *“Remove the diadem, take off the crown.”* [Ezekiel 21.26.] There may indeed be much blood shed in keeping it on. They may keep it for a while, but it shall fall, and they shall never recover it again. *“Remove*

*the diadem, take off the crown. This shall not be the same; exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high.*" [Ezekiel 21.26.] Now, they must change places, If ours be ill, theirs shall be worse. We shall say this, that the worst change in all the earth is not like this change of a wicked magistrate; for their change is from the throne to eternal fire—from the crown to eternal fire. But let the man of low degree rejoice; for unto them their bringing low comes from mercy, but unto the wicked who are high, from wrath.

**3rdly**, it is to be observed concerning the overthrow of princes, that it is generally of great extent. "*Overturn, overturn, overturn*" [Ezekiel 21.27.] may be applied to three states, or to these three sorts in the land, viz., king, nobles, priests, and people. We see, that one overturning sufficeth not. Alas! this overturning extends to many more, nay, it will go through. It is like an earthquake – it will not leave a house unshaken in all the city. "*Overturn, overturn, overturn.*" Ye think ye shall be free of it, Sirs; but as the Lord lives, ye shall have a part in this overturning.

**In the next place**, "*This shall not be the same.*" [Ezekiel 21.25-26.] It is a contemptuous saying, a word of contempt. What does the Lord regard a magistrate, when he is an enemy to Him? Here He takes them all in together, in the very act of doing their wickedness, and says, "*This shall not be the same.*" They are all included. Is he now a king, a duke, an earl, a general? Still he is comprehended. They are all moth-eaten, they are already rotten down. It must not be, "*This shall not be the same; it shall be no more.*" [Ezekiel 21.26-27.]

And **Lastly**, it is questioned, how long shall this be? It is answered, "*Until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.*" [Ezekiel 21.27.] For a while the Lord shall hold it, till He get a fit man, fit governors, or fit men for the government. They are low, it may be, this day, whom He will make fit for it. And oh, that we could pray that He would raise up fit men for it! He never gave it to other men but by a wrathful permission, as He doth all such things. They get them by a permission in His wrath.

And **1.** There is an overturning.

And **2.** A styling. He will in His own time put it in their hand, that will rule for Him.

**1.** Then He begins: "*And thou profane, wicked prince of Israel.*" [Ezekiel 21.25.] Here observe a strange title given unto a king. But sure I am, it does not belong to or become a faithful minister to give any king, who is an enemy to God, any other name. Oh, the parasites, the court flatterers, the flattering creatures of this generation! It is a wonder to see so many of them. They are not like Job, or rather Elihu, that would not give flattering words or titles unto men. We should give greatness its due, but when employed against God, it ought to be testified against. It is strange, that ministers would make us believe that the same titles, the same names, and the same obedience is due to them when apostatized and wicked, that is due to them [when] in the right way. If our hearts be not right with regard to them, we will get a fall, I assure you. And take heed, Sirs, it is a good part of this day's work to set your hearts right with respect to them.

Then **2.** What means Ezekiel by profane? Observe: it is either when a man neglects the worship of God altogether, or when he defiles all that he handles thereof. So he is said to be profane who altogether neglects the worship of God, as Esau, who worshipped and sacrificed a while, but he soon left it, and for one morsel of meat sold his birth-right. He is most profane who defiles the worship of God as they do who go from their whoredoms to their sacraments, and from their sacraments to their whoredoms, as the princes and great men now do; so that they may justly be called profane and

wicked men.

And 3. He is called "*Wicked prince of Israel*." [Ezekiel 21.25] What is called wickedness? Why, wicked men are full of enmity against God, against His way, and against His people. That is wickedness. In a word, it is a stiff, stubborn kind of sinning – a stiff kind of wickedness in sinning. They will not submit nor bow to God at all.

Now let us see whether they are such or not who are called our rulers. Let every soul apply it without prejudice. Is not this the style that should be given them? They have sinned stubbornly, and they will not bow at all to God, "*whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end.*" [Ezekiel 21.25] But his day is come. "*He shall be broken.*" [Dan.8.25.] His day is coming. There have been great lamentations for the death of kings, but he hath been so great a burden to the people, that in the event there shall be as great a singing and rejoicing. I say, "When the wicked perish, there is shouting." [Prov. 11.10.] Their death shall be desired. When they are dead, it shall be as when the sea hath been long in a storm – it rages long after the wind is calm. "*Thus saith the Lord, Remove the diadem: take off the crown.*" [Ezekiel 21.26.] This is the Lord's disrobing of him. He is taking away the crown. As when a Popish priest turns Protestant, they take him out to some public place with all his priestly garments on, and then, beginning at the head, they take off the mitre and disrobe him from top to toe. Just so here: the Lord disrobes him, and He will take away the insignia regalia, as we said before.

Now He will do to some as if a king took in a beggar from a dunghill, set him on high, put his own robes upon him, and caused him to feast and be royally attended. Next day he takes him out and disrobes him, and sets him back where he was, whereby he becomes most contemptible. When the greatest and highest fall, they become the greatest contempt. The higher they are they shall become the more contemptible. "*Exalt him that is low: and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn. And it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.*" [Ezekiel 21.26-27.]

Now they are sitting low indeed whom He will set up. Pray that the Lord would seek them out, and that the Lord would make a way for them, and that the Lord would give success in mercy, as there hath been success in judgment. Amen.'

## Donald Cargill's Discourse Prior to the Excommunication

"That we may make way for what we are about, let us join the first words of our lecture, "*And thou profane wicked prince of Israel,*" &c., with the last words of the fifth chapter of the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians:— "*Therefore put away from amongst yourselves that wicked person;*" [1Cor.5.13.] a connection which indeed shows that there is a holy consistency betwixt such a wickedness and excommunication, and that the conclusion is just and right, and should necessarily (if ministers of the gospel fail not in their duty) be made. Although excommunication be one of the censures of the Church, and the highest censure (for we do not make a difference between excommunication and anathematizing [as the Catholics did], which is the highest degree of excommunication, and doth, besides exterminating, add a curse), yet, this being the highest censure of the Church, and the sword of the Lord to revenge all disobedience to God, must not be drawn out at all times and against all sins. We acknowledge, however, that it is the sin of the present generation that it hath been so long in drawing out; for although it be an excellency in God, and a glory to Him, to forbear and suffer long, yet it is no excellency in us that we do in this kind bear with them that are evil. "*Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel,*" [Rev. 2.20.] which Mr. [James] Durham [c.1622-1658] interprets of non-excommunication and casting her out of the Church, which was properly in their power. [See Durham *A Commentarie upon the Book of the Revelation* (1680), 140.] But though it hath been our sin, that this sentence hath been so long in being passed, yet it shall have this advantage, that the longer it hath been a-doing (being deserved), it must be acknowledged to be the more just when done, and to have the greater weight. Nor yet must this sword be drawn out by a private spirit, or by a desire to revenge private injuries (as frequently hath been done under Popery), but by the Spirit of God, and out of zeal to God's glory. Those who live in Him ought not to see His dishonour. That so we may stigmatize with this brand, and wound with the sword of the Lord, these enemies that have so apostatized, rebelled, mocked, despised, and defied thus our Lord, and to declare, that as they are none of His so they are none of ours.

We shall then discourse a little of the nature of excommunication. And who are the subjects thereof? And what are the causes of it? What are the ends for which it should be exerted?

For the first, The nature of excommunication is a declaring:—

1. That a man, who pretends to belong to a true Church, and to be in the right way, by his sinning is become an alien, though he still continue under the covert of the name of a Christian, and fearer of God. I say it is a declaring, that notwithstanding this he belongeth to the other body or corporation whereof Satan is head, and not unto that body whereof Christ is the head; and a declaring withal, that he doth injuriously and by usurpation wear that livery, bear that badge, and possess that name, proper unto the spouse and members of Jesus Christ.
2. It is a taking away, and rending of the insignia of Christianity (as we see is done in the case of defaulters, when the coat of arms of the defaulters is rent to pieces), after the person hath put off the nature, subjection, and evidences of a Christian in the sight of the Church of God.
3. It is a ministerial punishment, in which the servant, at the command of the Lord and Husband, takes from the whorish wife the husband's tokens, and disgracefully thrusts her out of doors and delivers her up to the hand of the hangman to be chastised by him.
4. It is a ministerial declaring of the mind of the Lord (as a herald at the public cross declares the mind of his king and

states) concerning such, viz., that God quits formally these wicked persons, and divests them of that Church and domestic relation of children, that they professed to have with Him, and that He will deny them from henceforth that inspection, and those favours that they might have looked for in their former estate, and that He quits them and gives them up to Satan as his own, to be tempted, tortured, and punished of him according to God's will. So that they pass not from God to devils by their own will only, but are also given up by the just judgment of God, not to be treated of devils at their pleasure, but to be punished by devils at God's pleasure. It is very remarkable, that where this sentence is just, it passeth the power of devils to make them have such a life as they had before. For after that, they are still languid, vexed, and anxious at heart, as persons falling from the highest and best condition, and justly cast off by the best of heads and husbands, and falling under the worst of heads, and into the most dreadful of companies and conditions.

**Lastly**, it hath the Lord's ratification, for that is His promise, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven." So that they may expect that henceforth the strong and jealous God will neglect and condemn them as undervaluers of His privileges; follow them with terrors as fugitives; hate them as those who are fallen off to His greatest enemies, and as those who have done the greatest of mischiefs; and lastly punish them as the greatest of apostates and rebels, who have preferred devils unto God, filthiness and wickedness unto righteousness and holiness.

The **second** thing is to show who are the subjects of excommunication. And they are those who either are, or were the members of the true Church; who were entered by baptism, and have fallen away by error and impieties, and not those who are without the Church. All Christians we mean, one as well as another, the great as well as the small, ministers as well as people; for all are obliged unto the like obedience, though their relation, offices, and investiture (so to speak) may make a difference. So he that is the highest, and hath the greatest benefits and best opportunities, is most obliged to the greatest and most loving obedience (as the tenants who have the greatest and best farms are obliged to pay the greatest rents). I say, then, all people, priests, princes, and kings, are the subjects of excommunication, for excommunication, as it hath causes, so it ought to follow upon the disobedience of the subjects to God, and that indifferently upon all without respect of persons; as God, who is the commander of this judgment, will proceed Himself in judgment without respect of persons. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, justly excommunicated Theodosius the Emperor, for the slaughter committed by him at Thessalonica, and debarred him from the privilege and benefits of the Sacrament till he repented, humbled himself, and acknowledged his fault with tears.

**Thirdly**, for the causes of excommunication, they are:—

1. Sins great and incontrovertible (at least, amongst those who have received and acknowledged the faith and the Reformed religion) – such as blasphemy, paganism, atheism, murder, adultery, incest, perjury, willing and open profanation of the Sabbath; or

2. When there is added contumacy to these sins, and obstinacy in regard of repentance; for though the sins be smaller, if there be these things, there is just cause of excommunication. Much more is this the case when the sins are greater, and contumacy joined or added thereunto.

**Fourthly**, for the ends of excommunication, they are these:—

1. Zeal to God's glory that will not suffer such to abide in His house upon God's account, because they are a discredit to Christians and saints, who are the followers of this society and a reproach to the Holy One who is the head thereof, lest such should be accounted His who walk contrary unto Him. And

2. That wickedness, which, like leaven (if given way to), leaveneth the whole lump, may be hindered from further infection, and that the putrefied members which are ready to infect the rest may be cut off before its infection spread farther. This ought especially to be attended to in the case of the great ones; for sins in them are most public and visible, and so most powerful to draw others after them who will either reckon these things virtuous, or at least palliate them in order to stand fair for their favour and rewards.

3. It is for this end, to be a warning to those who are thus guilty and cast out, these censures being the forerunners and prognostics of ejection and banishment from God and from eternal happiness, and a sorting them unto their own party and fellowship, of which they will be eternally if they repent not.'

After prayer, Cargill then moved on to the censure.

### **The Excommunication**

‘We have now spoken of excommunication, of the nature, subject, causes, and ends thereof. We shall now proceed to the action itself, being constrained by the conscience of our duty, and by zeal for God, to excommunicate some of those who have been the committers of such great crimes, and authors of the great mischiefs of Britain and Ireland, but especially those of Scotland. In doing this, we shall keep the names by which they are ordinarily called, that they may be better known.

I, being a minister of Jesus Christ, and having authority and power from Him, do, in His name and by His Spirit, excommunicate and cast out of the true Church, and deliver up to Satan, Charles II. king, &c., and that upon the account of these wickednesses:-

**1st**, for his high contempt of God, in regard that after he had acknowledged his own sins, his father’s sins, his mother’s idolatry, and had solemnly engaged against them in a declaration at Dunfermline, the 16th of August, 1650, he hath, notwithstanding all this, gone on more avowedly in these sins than all that went before him.

**2ndly**, for his great perjury in regard that, after he had twice at least solemnly subscribed that covenant, he did so presumptuously renounce, and disown, and command it to be burnt by the hands of the hangman.

**3rdly**, because he hath rescinded all the laws for establishing that religion and reformation engaged unto in that covenant, and enacted laws for establishing its contrary; and also is still working for the introduction of Popery into these lands.

And **4thly**, for commanding armies to destroy the Lord’s people, who were standing in their own just defence, and for their privileges and rights, against tyranny, and oppression and injuries of men, and for the blood he hath shed on fields, and scaffolds, and seas, of the people of God, upon account of religion and righteousness (they being willing in all other things to render him obedience, if he had reigned and ruled according to his covenant and oath), more than all the kings that have been before him in Scotland.

**5thly**, that he hath been still an enemy to and persecutor of the true Protestants; a favourer and helper of the Papists, both at home and abroad; and hath, to the utmost of his power, hindered the due execution of the laws against them.

**6thly**, for his bringing guilt upon the kingdom, by his frequent grants of remissions and pardons to murderers (though it is in the power of no king to pardon murder, being expressly contrary to the law of God), an indulgence which is the only way to embolden men to commit murders to the defiling of the land with blood.

And **lastly**, to pass by all other things, his great and dreadful uncleanness of adultery and incest, his drunkenness, his dissembling both with God and men, and performing his promises, where his engagements were sinful.

Next, by the same authority, and in the same name, I excommunicate and cast out of the true Church, and deliver up unto Satan, James, Duke of York, and that for his idolatry (for I shall not speak of any other sin but what hath been

perpetrated by him in Scotland), and for setting up idolatry in Scotland to defile the Lord's land, and for his enticing and encouraging to do so.

Next, in the same name, and by the same authority, I excommunicate and cast out of the true Church, and deliver up unto Satan, James, Duke of Monmouth, for coming unto Scotland at his father's unjust command, and leading armies against the Lord's people, who were constrained to rise, being killed in and for the worshipping of the true God; and for refusing, that morning, a cessation of arms at Bothwell Bridge, for hearing and redressing their injuries, wrongs and oppressions.

Next, I do by virtue of the same authority, and in the same name, excommunicate and cast out of the true Church, and deliver up unto Satan, John, Duke of Lauderdale, for his dreadful blasphemy, especially for that word to the Prelate of St. Andrews, [James Sharp,] "Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool;" his atheistical drolling on the Scriptures of God, and scoffing at religion and religious persons; his apostacy from the covenants and reformation, and his persecuting thereof, after he had been a professor, pleader, and presser thereof; for his perjury in the business of Mr. James Mitchell [executed in 1678], who being in Council gave public faith that he should be indemnified, and that to life and limb, if he would confess his attempt on the Prelate; and notwithstanding this, before the Justiciary Court, did give his oath that there was no such act in Council; for his adultery and uncleanness; for his counseling and assisting the king in all his tyrannies, overturning and plotting against the true religion; for his gaming on the Lord's day, and lastly for his usual and ordinary swearing.

Next, I do by virtue of the same authority, and in the same name, excommunicate, cast out of the true Church, and deliver up to Satan, John [Leslie], Duke of Rothes, for his perjury in the matter of Mr. James Mitchell; for his adulteries and uncleanness; for his allotting of the Lord's day to his drunkenness; for his professing and avowing his readiness and willingness to set up Popery in this land at the king's command; and for the heathenish, and barbarous and unheard of cruelty (whereof he was the chief author, contriver and commander, notwithstanding his having engaged otherwise), to that worthy gentleman, David Hackstoun of Rathillet [executed in July, 1680], and lastly, for his ordinary cursing, swearing, and drunkenness.

And I do by virtue of the same authority, and in the same name, excommunicate, cast out of the true Church and deliver up to Satan, Sir George M'Kenzie, the King's Advocate, for his apostacy in turning into a profligacy of conversation, after he had begun a profession of holiness; for his constant pleading against, and persecuting unto the death, the people of God, and for alleging and laying to their charge things which in his conscience he knew to be against the word of God, truth, and right reason, and the ancient laws of this kingdom; for his pleading for sorcerers, murderers, and other criminals, that before God and by the laws of the land ought to die, and for his ungodly, erroneous, fantastic, and blasphemous tenets printed in his pamphlets and pasquils.

And lastly, I do by virtue of the same authority, and in the same name, excommunicate, and cast out of the true Church, and deliver up to Satan, [Thomas] Dalziel of Binns, for his leading armies, and commanding the killing, robbing, pillaging, and oppressing of the Lord's people, and free subjects of this kingdom; for executing lawless tyrannies and lustful laws; for his commanding to shoot one [David] Findlay at a post at Newmills, without any form of law, civil or military (he not being guilty of anything which they themselves accounted a crime); for his lewd and impious life led in

adultery and uncleanness from his youth, with a contempt for marriage, which is an ordinance of God; for all his atheistical and irreligious conversation, and lastly, for his unjust usurping and retaining of the estate of that worthy gentleman, William Mure of Caldwell, and his other injurious deeds in the exercise of his power.

Now I think, none that acknowledge the word of God, can judge these sentences to be unjust; yet some, it may be, to flatter the powers, will call them disorderly and informal, there not being warning given, nor probation led. But for answer: there has been warning given, if not with regard to all these, at least with regard to a great part of them. And for probation, there needs none, their deeds being notour and public, and the most of them such as themselves do avow and boast of. And as the causes are just, so being done by a minister of the Gospel, and in such a way as the present persecution would admit of, the sentence is just, and there is no king, nor minister on earth, without repentance of the persons, can lawfully reverse these sentences upon any such account. God being the Author of these ordinances to the ratifying of them, all that acknowledge the Scriptures of truth, ought to acknowledge them. Yet perchance, some will think, that though they be not unjust, yet that they are foolishly rigorous. We shall answer nothing to this, but that word which we speak with much more reason than they that first used it, "*Should he deal with our sister, as with an harlot?*" [Gen. 34.31.] Should they deal with our God as an idol? Should they deal with His people as murderers and malefactors, and we not draw out His sword against them?

**Donald Cargill's Afternoon Sermon at Torwood on Lamentations 3.31-32.**

Printed as Sermon III in *Sermons Delivered in Times of Persecution in Scotland*, 502-506.

*"For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies."*— Lamentations 3.31-32.

'We know not of any Scripture that the Lord confirms oftener unto us than this. It is often borne in upon us. I say, He will not cast off a remnant: "*for the Lord will not cast off for ever.*" Oh, but it is a sweet word! but alas, there are many sweet words that are hardly believed, because we are lying under much guilt. There is one thing sure, God will not cast off a remnant for ever. And if ye be sure of this, that ye once had Him, we will make you sure of this likewise, that if ye have had Him, ye shall yet have Him. We have a great pledge of His return, but we fear that if ye have Him not, He will not return. And if He return not, then a soul should not be exercised about this, "If ever He will come again," but rather if ever He shall be theirs. Hath He ever been yours? If He hath been within you, I assure you He will yet be within you. He will yet return, and we shall say this, His absence is but short to some, but to some it is very long. But he that guides best gets Him soonest back again.

Now these words foreshow sad things – a sad condition indeed!

1. It is a sad thing to see a people cast off. Is it not a sad thing to see a wife cast off by her husband, and thrust out of doors?

2. As there is a sad condition shown in these words, so there is a fair hope given, that there will be help given in this condition. We shall say this, the departure of God would be even misery, if there were not hope of His return.

3. We have in the words the rise and spring of His returning. "*Yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.*" He shows what is the thing that will bring Him back, "*for yet He will have compassion.*" As for this desertion, blame yourselves; and for His return, give thanks to God-give thanks to Him for His mercy and compassion. And blessed be God, that it is so. If it had not been so, if His bowels of mercy and compassion had not been such, if He had not abundance of bowels in Him, we had sinned Him out long since. Yes; we have sometimes wondered, that after all our sins, provocations and backslidings, there should be one spark, so to speak, of affection in God towards us. Tempt Him not always very sore, though His bowels are very great. But oh, the ingratitude that is in us! Our ingratitude makes such a base return for all His goodness long continued towards us.

Now we shall not go through everything in this text. We shall only consider this:— That the more that casting off causeth grief (when the Lord casteth off it causeth grief, but mistrust in grief is sorest), it helpeth us against our grief the more we consider that there is hope that "*he will not cast off for ever.*" But when unbelief is added to grief, and they are both together, it is even like a stream that is carrying away the poor soul-it is like to be overwhelmed. But He stays the stream with this, "*For the Lord will not cast off for ever.*" Oh, but grief with unbelief is sore! We will say this one word, that grief that hath unbelief joined with it should be stopped; for there is no benefit by abiding that case long. Ye may say, "What will stop this grief that is accompanied with unbelief?" In a word, dwell much upon God's part, and be sore upon yourselves. I say, dwell much upon God's part. He hath not done it without cause, and the cause of it is from ourselves. Justify God, and then be much upon His part; for though we have procured it, He will mind it. We shall say this, that though God

cast us off, it shall not be perpetually. Though our sins be great, and though our castings off for our sins be but short (oh! it is His compassion and mercy that make them short), though we provoke Him to cast us off, yet blessed be God who hath done that which will make them that they shall not be perpetual, and this is founded upon His goodness, upon the goodwill of God, upon His mercy and compassion. Our casting off flows from our sins, but this is His goodness and compassion, that He will not cast us off for ever. And besides, there is nothing required as a condition of His engagement, or of the continuance of His engagement, but what He promises freely of Himself. But there are a few things whereby He shows that His casting off will not be perpetual, or for ever.

**1.** His nature is unchangeable. Ah! It would go farther than casting off! Yes, it would go immediately to consuming. Were He not unchangeable, we would be in a poor case-it would even be consuming. Though we be changeable yet He is unchangeable. And it is not at all in us, but from Him, if we stand or if we be in a state of believing.

**2.** His faithfulness engageth Him. He hath passed His promise, and what He hath said, He will not recall. What hath He said? He hath said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." [Heb. 5.13.] What is the Lord like unto in this respect? We will say, He is like a husband that goes out and in, to and fro, about his employment, and afterward he returns home again, and he never leaves his wife, nor his house, or rather he never breaks wedlock. Oh, the faithfulness of God! If He had dealt with us as we have dealt with Him, what would have come of us ere now? Oh, His faithfulness is strong! If His faithfulness had not been strong, we would have broken and run away from Him, and never returned again. We run from Him and He brings us back again, like Adam when he had sinned. But it was God that brought him back again.

**But 3.** As God's unchangeableness and faithfulness are engaged, so the great affection and love that are in God, make the casting off of His people not be perpetual. There is a great love and affection in God towards His people. He will not only exercise His love toward Himself and His own Son; but He will have a creature to exercise His love upon. Oh, wonderful that He should exercise His love on a creature! It is a wonder that we are not saying everyone to another, "I can never love, but when I am loved of Him."

**4.** As this word imports a casting off, so it imports that there hath been a oneness in the case. Where God hath forsaken them, there His love hath once been towards them. If His love did not bind them, it would be a dreadful casting off. If ye cannot say that once ye received Him, nothing can follow. Now, this is the foundation; I have once been with God. If ever ye have been resolved here, then it is a marriage indeed, and there is a remarkable feast, for there is never a marriage but there is a feast. He would give us the marriage and the feast, if we would give Him the heart. I would then ask you, "Got ye ever the feast? Had ye ever greater delight in God, than in all other things?" I shall say this one word: If God had been the greatest feast and the greatest delight unto you, ye had oftener feasted. Thus it imports a oneness, and that oneness is the foundation of His return. And it likewise imports casting off, though the Covenant be not broken, and that casting off must have a great fault. And where there is casting off, it is a wonder there is not a longing to see where the fault lies, and what the great fault or faults are-that since casting off hath a cause, what that cause is? There must be a cause, for there is real displeasure of God, though that displeasure be constantly with love, yet according to our carriage He will cast off, or delight in us. And just as we behave we may expect to find Him. There are two things here. There is a real displeasure, and a real cause of displeasure; and therefore God is not to you as before. Then reflect upon the cause. Reflect upon yourselves. The cause is in you. O happy soul, that never goes to God, till it find a fault with itself and what is the cause of His withdrawals, and acknowledge it and so find Him again.

But **5.** The many castings off now say that there is great untenderness, for where there is great untenderness, there are many castings off. If ye would not have Him stay away long, be very circumspect, be more tender; for in effect untenderness in a Christian makes his life differ nothing from that of a heathen. A Christian's untenderness will never keep off crosses, but will keep off a present God. Now then we are sure of this, that frequent casting off flows from great untenderness, and this is the great sin of this nation. We are persuaded, though we never knew what is within you, that this is the present generation's sin, for it is evident that untenderness can neither enjoy God long nor frequently.

**6.** It imports this, that if once there be an interest in God, His castings off will not be perpetual. "*The Lord will not cast off for ever.*" There is no creature that hath an interest in Him but He hath reserved hope for it, so that though there be a casting off, yet there will be a return. I say, there are none that have their foundation sure, but He will return unto them. Is your foundation sure? Have ye His tokens? Have ye, I say, got His tokens? Have ye His earnest? Have ye His seal? Have ye the sealing of the Spirit? I fear ye have yet all these to seek. And without these, ye can have but small comfort when cast off. But if ye have these, I assure you, He will not "cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet he will have compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies."

Then **1.** We see that when God casteth off, there must be grief; because the cause of our casting off is from ourselves.

**2.** It causeth great grief because there is much time lost, much time runs over, and we do no good. We never do a right turn. I think everyone should say with Joshua, "*O Sun, stand thou still,*" [Josh. 10.12.] until I get God again. We should weary of our time, when He is away.

**3.** A thing that not only adds to our grief, and makes it not only great but desperate, is want of the assurance of His returning. The greatest grief and misery are when there is no hope of His returning. This makes grief not only great, but desperate. I say, it makes the grief great, because the cause is from ourselves. It would quiet our minds somewhat if we were not the procuring cause of it ourselves, but how can I be quiet, when it is procured by myself? In this case, there is no good done, and much time ill-spent, for all evils are present.

**4.** This casting off brings not only grief, but is desperate without an interest in Christ. But where there is an interest in Him, this casting off will not be perpetual. But ye may say, "When will He return?" His returning will be according to our diligence. If ye can want Him, He will tarry the longer. Yes, indeed He will tarry the longer, if ye can want Him. When He is absent, ye never go a right step till He come again. When He is away, all good departs, and all ills come. Oh, how poor and wretched art thou that canst want Him! How greatly is it your interest to get Him, and, when got, to endeavour to keep Him; for when He is gone your wisdom is gone; your strength is gone; you are laid open to all your enemies, and made a prey of by them. You cannot do anything without Him, but sin.

**Use.-** Here we might make several uses of these things, but we shall only speak to this one, which is even here for comfort to them that are smitten with any casting off and forsaken: "*Yet He will have compassion.*" He hath cast the Church of God long off, and He hath cast His people long off, which is very sad. But I trow the people of God have more ground to hope for His return to themselves than they have to hope for His return to all the Church. For it is now alike with all nations. We have no token of restricting Him to our nation. He was never restricted to any nation after the Jews, yet we are far from discouraging any from believing His return again unto this land. We acknowledge this indeed, that

there is more to press down our hearts, than to hold them up. But we yield this also for your encouragement, that He hath showed as great a love to this nation, and as strange mercies, as ever He hath done to any. But they will force him away out of despite, and He will have them once overturned, and then He will rise up against their will. But if He return, see that ye be not away, when He comes. Oh, that woeful bonding and cess paying! O this shire! [i.e., Stirlingshire] This shire! I know not a place in Scotland like it. Woe to them when God comes back! Ye will neither get favour nor pleasure. He will be a terror to you. But when He comes, He will be to the afflicted their desire and the answer of their prayers. Have ye kept His bed chaste? If ye have kept His bed chaste, He will come again, and He will thank you, so to speak, for so doing.

Now what say the words more? They say this: "I will turn the wheel upon the wicked." [See Prov. 20.26.] He will turn again and see who is wrong and who is right. There will be many complaints given in unto Him. Be ready, Sirs, with all your complaints, with all the wrongs done to the work of God, and to His honour. This one thing I say, He will turn the wheel upon the wicked, and He will have His people up again, though He give them away for a while. Though He cast down, He will take up again. He will reckon with them for all their wrongs. Now, when He comes, enemies will not get one foot-breadth of ground. Though He cause grief, "*He will not cast off for ever.*" There the thing is His compassion and mercy. If His compassion do it not, it is impossible that He should return. If His bowels of mercy make Him not return, it is impossible that He will return again. There is nothing that will make us sure of His return, but His compassion and mercy.'