

Christ Crucified:
Or, the
Marrow of the Gospel
in Seventy-Two Sermons
on the Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah

by James Durham

Edited by Christopher Coldwell



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Christ Crucified:

*Seventy-Two Sermons
on the Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah*

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testimony may be rested on. We are persuaded there is one of two that will follow on this doctrine; either a strong encouragement to, and confirmation of believing, and quietly resting on Jesus Christ for pardon of sin, or a great ground of aggravation of, and expostulation with you for your guilt, who care not whether you receive this report or not. We shall say no more for the time, but God bless this to you.

2

Isaiah 53:1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

The prophet Isaiah is very solicitous about the fruit of his preaching, when he has preached concerning Christ; as indeed it is not enough for ministers to preach, and for people to hear, except some fruit follow. And now, when he has been much in preaching, and looks to others that have been much in that word, he sadly regrets the little fruit it had, and would have among them, to whom Christ was and should be spoken of; a thing that in the entry should put us to be serious, lest this complaint of Isaiah stand on record against us; seeing he complains of the hearers of the gospel, not only in his own time, but in our time also.

We told you, there were four things in this first part of the verse. I. The great errand that ministers have to a people; it is to report concerning Christ.⁴ And beside what we observed from this head before, looking to the scope, we shall observe further:

Isaiah's End In
Preaching And What
A Minister's End
Should Be

(1) The end that ministers should have before them in preaching Christ and the gospel, is that the hearers of it may be gained to Jesus Christ by hearing, so as they may be brought to believe on him. It is in a word, to gain them to saving faith in Christ.

(2) It is implied that Jesus Christ is only to be proposed as the object of faith, to be rested on by the hearers of the gospel, and is the only ground of their peace. There is no name that can be mentioned for the salvation of souls, but this name only, and there is no other gospel can be proposed, but that which holds him out to people.

Christ Offered

(3) Observe (which is much the same with the former observation, and to which we would speak a little more particularly) that by preaching of the gospel, Jesus Christ is laid before the hearers of it, as the object of their faith, and proposed to be believed upon by them, else there would be no ground of this complaint against them. But wherever this gospel is preached, there Christ is laid, as it were, at the foot or door of every soul that hears it, to be believed and rested on. This is the great errand of the gospel, to propose to people Jesus Christ, as the object and ground of faith, to lay him down to be rested on for that very end. When the Apostle is speaking of the doctrine of faith, he says (*Rom. 10:8*), *It is not now, who shall*

⁴ Ed. Durham continues under point "I" under the outline given in Sermon 1 on page 73.

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ascend into heaven? nor who shall descend into the deep? but the word is near thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart. What word is that? *The word of faith which we preach.* Now, he says, Christ, by the preaching of the gospel, is brought so near folks, that he is brought even to their hearts, and to their mouths; so near, that (to speak so) people have no more to do, but to stoop and take him up, or to roll themselves over upon him. Yea, it brings him into their very heart, that they have no more to do, but to bring up their heart to consent to close the bargain, and with the mouth to make confession of it. And these words are the more considerable, that they are borrowed from *Deut. 30*, where Moses is setting death and life before the people, and bidding them choose; though he would seem to speak of the law, yet if we consider the scope, we will find him to be on the matter speaking of Jesus Christ, held forth to that people under ceremonial ordinances, and showing them that there was life to be had in him that way, and according to God's intent, they had life and death put in their choice.

I know there are two things necessary to the acting and exercising of faith. The first is objective, when the object or ground is proposed in the preaching of the gospel. The second is subjective, when there is an inward, spiritual, and powerful quickening and framing of the heart, to lay hold on, and make use of the object and offer. It is true, that all to whom the offer comes, are not quickened; but the doctrine says, that to all to whom the gospel comes, Christ is proposed to be believed on by them, and brought near unto them; so that we may say, as Christ said to his hearers, *The kingdom of God is come near unto you*; both Christ and John brought, and laid the kingdom of heaven near to the Jews, and it is laid as near to you in the preached gospel.

Faith Objective And
Subjective, And
What It Is

Doctrine. This is it then [what] the doctrine says: 1. That the gospel holds out Christ, as a sufficient ground of faith to rest upon. 2. And with a sufficient warrant to these who hear it, to make use of him, according to the terms on which he is offered. 3. And it brings him so pressingly home, as he is laid to the doors and hearts of sinners who hear the gospel; that whoever has the offer, he must necessarily either believe in, and receive Christ, or reject him, and cast at the report made of him in the gospel.

I shall first a little confirm this *Doctrine*, and then secondly make use of it. First, I shall confirm it from these grounds:

1. From the plain offers which the Lord makes in his Word, and from the warrant he gives his ministers to make the same offers; it is their commission to pray them, to whom they are sent, to be reconciled; to tell them *that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself* (as it is *2 Cor. 5:19-20*), and in Christ's stead to request them to embrace the offer of reconciliation; to tell them that Christ died for the sinners that will embrace him, and that he will impute his righteousness unto them; and (*2 Cor. 6:1*) *We beseech you* (he says) *that ye receive not this grace in vain*; which is not meant of saving grace, but of the gracious offer of grace and reconciliation through him. This is ministers' work, to pray people not to be idle hearers of this gospel; for, he says, *I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* The force of the argument is this, if you will make this gospel welcome, you may get a hearing; for now is the day of salvation, therefore do not neglect it. So *Ps. 81:10-11* (where God makes the offer of himself, and that very largely) *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* The offer is of himself, as the

Of The Gospel Call,
And The Largeness
Of The Offer

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words following clear; *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me; for they that refuse his word, refuse himself.* And hence he says (*Isa. 65:1*), *I am found of them that sought me not; I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name; and to the Jews, I have stretched out my hands all day long to a rebellious people.*

2. We may clear and confirm it from these similitudes, by which the offer of this gospel is, as it were, brought to the doors of people, and there are several similitudes made use of to this purpose. I shall name but four.

(1) It is set down under the expression of wooing (as *2 Cor. 11:2; I have espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ*). This is ordinary, and supposes a marriage, and a bridegroom, that is by his friends wooing and suiting in marriage; so that (as we show) wherever the call of the gospel comes, it is a bespeaking of souls to him (*Song. 8:8; What shall we do for our sister, in the day that she shall be spoken for?*).

(2) It is set out under the expression of inviting to a feast; and hearers of the gospel are called to come to Christ, as strangers or guests are called to come to a wedding feast (*Matt. 22:2-4*). *All things are ready, come to the wedding*, and etc. Thus the gospel calls not to an empty house that [*lacks*] meat, but to a banqueting house where Christ is made ready as the cheer, and there [*lacks*] no more but feasting on him. So it is set out under the similitude of eating and drinking (*John 6:27; He that eats me, even he shall live by me*).

(3) It is set out often under the expression or similitude of a market, where all the wares are laid forth on the stand (*Isa. 55:1; Ho, every one that thirsts, come to the waters*, etc). And lest it should be said, or thought, that the proclamation is only to the thirsty, and such as are so and so qualified; you may look to what follows, *Let him that has no money come; yea, come, buy without money and without price*. And to the offer that is made to those of Laodicea (*Rev. 3*) who, in appearance, were a hypocritical and formal people, yet to them the counsel and call comes forth, *Come buy of me eyesalve, gold tried in the fire*, etc. It says the wares are even in their offer, or even offered to them.

(4) It is set out under the similitude of a standing and knocking at a door, because the gospel brings Christ as knocking and calling hard at sinners' doors (*Rev. 3:20; Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man will hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me*). So by the sleepy bride it is said (*Song. 5:2*), *It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh*; and [in] *Ps. 24:7-10*, it is cried, *Lift up your heads, ye gates, and be lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in*; which is an earnest invitation to make way for Christ Jesus, wanting nothing but an entry into the heart, whereby we may see how near Christ comes in the gospel, and is laid to folks' hands.

3. We may confirm it from the nature of faith, and of the obedience that is required to be given to the command of believing. Wherever this gospel comes, it ties and obliges all the hearers to believe on Christ, that is, to receive and welcome him; and there could be no receiving of him, if he were not making an offer of himself. Thus it is said (*John 1:11-12*), *He came unto his own, but his own received him not; but as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God*. He came to both these who received him, and to these who received him not; but he gave to believers only this

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privilege of sonship. If we look to all the names of faith, as coming to Christ, eating and drinking of him, receiving of him, resting on him, etc, they all suppose that Christ is near to be caught hold of, and within speaking and trysting terms⁵ to people that hear the gospel.

4. It may be confirmed from the many sad complaints that the Lord has for not receiving him, and not believing his Word, and from the dreadful designations, by which he holds out the sin of unbelief; all which will make out this, that God lays Christ at sinners' door in his Word. Hence our Lord says (*John 5:40*), *Ye will not come unto me, that ye may get life.* And [in] *Matt. 23:37*, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee, and ye would not!* This was it that did aggravate their sin, that he would, and they would not. So [in] *Ps. 81:11*, *my people would not hearken to my voice and Israel would none of me;* and [in] *Luke 7:30*, it is said, *the Scribes and Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves;* and [in] *Acts 13:54* when the Jews rejected Christ, it is said, *they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life;* and therefore the apostles say, *that they will leave them, and turn to the Gentiles.*

5. We may confirm it from this, that in respect of the gospel, and offer made in it, Christ comes alike near to all that hear it; for if he be near to some, then he is near to all, I mean in regard of an objective nearness; there is the same warrant to speak and make the offer to all, before there be some discovery made for qualifying the doctrine to some. It is true, there is a difference in respect of the power that accompanies the gospel; but as it lays out the offer of Christ, and life through him, it comes alike near to all the hearers of it. The invitation comes to all, and in the same terms, to them that refuse, as well as to them that receive him; the same gospel is preached to both.

Christ Brought Near
In Gospel Offer To All
Alike

6. A sixth confirmation is from the nature of God's administration of his external covenant, which is sealed in baptism to both; not one covenant to one, and another covenant to another, but the same covenant, on condition of believing, to both. Behold then, in the preaching of this gospel, that Christ comes near you, even to your door, in respect of the mediate ordinances; as near as he did to Abraham and David, although God had his extraordinary ways of manifesting himself to them, not common to others. Yea, this day the gospel is more clear objectively to you than it was to Abraham, who rejoiced to see Christ's day afar off, when it was veiled. Yea the gospel is as clearly preached to you, as those, who are now before the throne of God, had it preached to them, as to the matter of it, though we will make no equality as to the manner of it.

Use One. Advert to this, when you come to hear the gospel preached, and think how you are living in trysting terms with God, and how near Christ comes unto you; the Word of faith lays him so near, that you have no more to do but to receive the offer of him, to believe and close with him, and step in upon him, as it were, to come as living stones to be built upon him as a sure foundation.

But it will be asked, 'How comes this gospel so near? How does it bring in Christ so near to sinners?' *Answer:* In these five steps:

5 Ed. *Trysting terms* — Terms of engagement. *Trysting*; *Tryst* — v. n. To engage to meet, or to meet with. v. n. To enter into mutual engagements. *Jamieson*.

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1. As it makes the report of Christ, and brings the tidings of such things, as, that he is born, and that he has suffered, and for such an end, that we may partake of the benefit of them on such terms; it makes the proclamation narratively, and tells what he did, what good may be gotten of him, and how we may come by it.

2. As it brings an offer of these good things on the terms on which they are to be gotten, so it never tells that Christ is come, but it says also, 'Here is life to be gotten in him by you, if you will take the way proposed to come by it.' Therefore, when the proclamation comes forth, *that all things are ready*, the next word is, *Come to the wedding*. And when, in the one word, he says, *I stand at the door and knock*, at the next he says, *If any man will open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me*; and when it is said (*Isa. 28:16*), *He is a precious cornerstone, a tried foundation stone laid in Zion*; the next word is, *He that believes on him shall not make haste*, or, as the apostle has it, *shall not be ashamed or confounded* [*1 Pet. 2:6-7*]. This makes the gospel glad tidings, because it comes always with an offer of Christ, and of life in him.

3. When the offer is made, and the precious wares are exposed to sale in this cried [*heralded*] fair of grace, a command comes out, 'Choose life, come buy the wares, believe, receive the offer,' as is clear in all the places we named before. It leaves not folk indifferent to receive or not, but charges them, as they would be obedient to a command, to receive him (*1 John 3:23*). *This is his commandment, that ye should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*. This is the great gospel command, and ministers have not only the telling of these news, and warrant to make the offer, but a commission to command to receive it; and therefore the sitting [*neglecting*;^E *resisting*] and slighting of the offer, is a sin opposite to the command.

4. It not only makes the offer, and backs the offer with a command to embrace it, but it sweetens the command with many gracious promises knit to it (as *Isa. 55*; *Hear and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David*). And whenever the command of believing comes, it is always with a promise; as Paul deals with the jailor [in] *Acts 16:31*; *Believe, and thou shalt be saved*; and [in] *Mark 16:16*, the Lord says, *They that believe shall be saved*, to encourage to faith in him.

Promises & Threat-
enings Leave Men
Inexcusable

5. It presses the offer, and commands embracing of it with the promise, with a certification; for the offer is not conditional, but alternative (*Mark 16:16*; *If ye believe not, ye shall be damned*; so *Deut. 30*, death and life are proposed, and they are bidden choose). If the gospel is not effectual in its commands and promises, it will be effectual in its threatenings. The Word of God will triumph one way or the other, and not return to him void (as is very clear, *Isa. 55:11*; *2 Cor. 2:15-16*); it triumphs in some, while they are brought by the promise to give obedience to the command of believing, and to them it becomes the savor of life unto life; and to others it triumphs, as to the execution of the threatening on them for their unbelief, and to them it becomes the savor of death unto death. In a word, Christ Jesus comes so near people in this gospel, that he must either be chosen, and life with him; or refused, to the destruction and death of the refuser. You have the same Christ, the same word, the same covenant, the same obligation to believe, proposed to you, that believers from the beginning of the world had. And another you will not get. And what more can the gospel do, to bring Christ near to you? When it brings him so near, that you have him in your offer, and the authority of God and his promises interposed, to per-

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suade you to accept of the offer; and threatenings added, to certify you, that if you accept it not, you shall perish. In which respect, we may say, as the prophet Isaiah does (*Isa. 5:4*); *What could God do more to his vineyard, which he hath not done?* as to the holding out of the object of faith, Jesus Christ to be rested on by you.

1. But some will, it may be, object here; 'But if there come not life and power with the offer, it will not do the turn; we cannot believe, nor receive the offer.' *Answer.* Whose fault is this, that you [*lack*] ability? It is not God's fault. You have a sure ground to believe. His work is a warrant good enough. The promises are free enough; the motives sweet enough. The great fault is a heart of unbelief in you, that you will not believe in Christ, nor open to him when he is brought to your door. I doubt, yea, I put it out of doubt, when all that ever heard the gospel shall stand before the throne, that there shall be one found that shall dare to make this excuse, that they were not able to receive Christ. The gospel brings Christ so near them, that they must either say, yea or nay; it is not so much, 'I cannot,' as 'I will not believe'; and that will be found a willful and malicious refusal.

The Inability Of Man
Not A Sufficient Plea
For Their Unbelief

2. It may be objected, 'But how can this gospel come to all alike, seeing it cannot be, that these that will never get good of the gospel, have it as near to them as these that get the saving fruit of it?' *Answer.* Not to speak of God's purpose, or what he intends to make of it, nor of the power and fruit that accompanies it to some, and not to all; it is certain, the gospel, and Christ in its offer, comes alike near to all that hear it. It objectively reveals the same glad tidings to all, with the conditional offer of life, and with the same command and encouragement, and certification, in threatenings as well as promises. In these respects, Christ is brought alike near to all; and when God comes to reckon, he will let sinners know in that day, that the gospel came to their door, and was refused. Yea, it comes, and where it comes, will take hold of some, to pluck them out of the snare, and be ground of faith to them; and to others it will be a ground of challenge, and so the savor of death unto death. For though it take not effect as to its promises in all, nor in its threatenings to all; yet as to either death or life, it will take effect in everyone, so as, if life is refused, death steps in the room of it.

But it may be asked, 'Why will God have Christ in the offer of the gospel brought so near the hearers of it?' *Answer:*

1. Because it serves to commend the grace and love of God in Christ Jesus. When the invitation is so broad, that it is to all, it speaks out the royalty of the feast, upon which ground (*2 Cor. 6:1*), it is called *grace*, the offer is so large and wide.

2. Because it serves for warranting and confirming the elect in the receiving of this offer; for none of the elect could receive him, if he were not even laid to their door. It is this, which gives us warrant to receive that which God offers. It is not because we are elected or beloved of God before time, or because he purposed to do us good, that we believe; these are not grounds of faith, being God's secret will. But we believe, because God calls and makes the offer, invites and promises, knowing that he is faithful, and we may trust him. Hence David says, *I will never forget thy word [Ps. 119:16]*, and *In God will I praise his word [Ps. 56:10]*; for the word in its offer speaks alike to all, and to none particularly. Indeed, when it comes to the applica-

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tion of promises for consolation, that is to be made according to the qualifications in the persons, but the offer is to all.

3. Because by this means the Lord has the fairer access to found his quarrel and controversy against unbelievers, and to make their dittay⁶ and doom the clearer in the day of the Lord, when it is found that they never received the offer, *My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me; therefore I gave them up to their own hearts lusts, and they walked in their own counsels* [Ps. 81:11-12]; and this is an approbation given to justice here, it is well-waired [*it is but just*],^E seeing they would not receive you, that they get worse in your room.

Use Two. Seeing Christ comes near you in this gospel, and this is one of the market days, I entreat you, while he is near, receive him, call upon him while he is near. Or take it in the plain words of the Apostle: open to him, take him in, give him welcome, while he bodes himself, to say so, on you. There is not a conscience in any man that hears this gospel, but he will have this testimony from him in it, that he came near them, was in their sight, and within their reach and grips, as it were, if they would have put out their hand to receive hem. And seeing it is so, O receive this gospel, give him room; while he is content to sup with you, take him in, make sure your union with him. This is the end why this report is made, and Christ is laid before you, even that you may lay yourselves over on him.

I would follow this *Use* a little, by way of exhortation and expostulation jointly, seeing the doctrine will bear both; for when Christ is brought so near, even to the mouth and to the heart, it will be great ground of reproof and expostulation, if he shall be rejected. Be exhorted therefore to be in earnest, seeing; (1) It is a matter of such concernment to you. Many nations, kings, and kingdoms have not had Christ so near them as you have; neglect not such an opportunity. Do you think that all that is said in the gospel, concerning this, is for naught? Is it for no use, that such a report is made, and preaching continued so long among you? And if it is for any use, is it not for this, that you may receive the report, and may, by doing so, get your souls for a prey? To what use will preaching be, if this use and end of it is missed? Will your hearing the gospel make your peace with God, if Christ is not received?

(2) Consider the advantages you may have by receiving the gospel, that others have not. Is it a little thing to be called to God's feast, to be married to Christ, to be made friends with God, and to enjoy him forever? The day comes when it will be thought an advantage; and are there motives to persuade to anything, like those that are to induce to that?

(3) Consider what it is that we require of you. It is no strange nor hard thing; it is but believing. And this is nothing else, but that the report concerning Christ be received, yea, that he be received for your own good. That is it that the gospel calls you to, even to betake yourself to a physician for cure, to betake yourself to a cautioner⁷ for your debt. If you could escape a reckoning and wrath another way, it were something; but when

⁶ Ed. *Dittay* — Scottish Law: the grounds of indictment.

⁷ Ed. *Cautioner* — Scottish Law: one who becomes a *surety* for another's debt. *OED*. Durham uses this term extensively throughout these sermons and its meaning will not be noted as often as other Scottish, archaic or obsolete terms.

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there is no other way to obtain pardon of sin and peace, or to escape wrath, and obtain favor and friendship with God, but this; and when this way (to speak so) is made so easy, that it is but to stoop down, and to take up Christ at your foot, as it were, or to roll yourselves on him, how inexcusable will you unbelievers be, when you shall be arraigned before his tribunal?

(4) But, look a little farther to what is coming. If you were to live always here, it were hard enough to live at a feud with God; but have you faith of a judgment after death? If so, how will you hold up your faces in that day, that now refuse Christ? Will not horrible confusion be the portion of many then? And will any ground of confusion be like this, the slighting of Christ? When he shall be seen coming to judge slights of him, what horror will then rise in consciences, when he shall appear and be avenged on them that were not obedient to this gospel? As is most clear (*2 Thess. 1:7*). *When our Lord Jesus shall be revealed in flaming fire, with his mighty angels from heaven, to take vengeance on all that know not God, and obey not the gospel.*

(5) Consider that death and life are now in your option, in your hand as it were; choose or refuse. I speak not, nor plead here for free-will, but of your willing electing of that which you have offered to you; for one of two will be, either shall you willingly choose life, which is a fruit of grace, or refuse life, and choose death, which will be found the native fruit of your corruption. You may have life by receiving Christ, who is laid to your door; and if you refuse him, death will follow it: as now in hearing this gospel, you carry in choosing or refusing, so will the sentence pass on you at the great day; and so your sentence, in a manner, is written down with your own hand, as it is said (*Acts 13:46*), *Ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life*, not out of humility, but maliciously. Now, when the matter is of such concernment beware of playing the fool. If you will continue presumptuous and secure, following your idols, what will the Lord say, but, 'Let it be so, you get no wrong when you get your own choice?' And he but, as it were, ratifies the sentence which you have passed on yourselves.

Free Will Not To Be
Pleaded For, Though
Moral Suasion Be
Used

(6) I shall add but this one word more, and beseech you that you would seriously lay this to heart, as a weighty thing, considering the certification that follows on it. It is not only death, but a horrible death, wrath, and wrath with its aggravation from this ground; like that of Capernaum, that was lifted up to heaven in this respect, having Christ brought so near them. To whom this gospel is not the savor of life into life, it shall be the savor of death unto death: and think not this a common motive, though it be commonly used. It will bring wrath upon wrath, and vengeance upon vengeance on the hearers of this gospel, beyond that of Sodom, if you be rejecters of it. Surely, none of you would think it an easy thing to be punished as Sodom was, nor digest well the curse that came on them. Is there any of you, but you would think it uncouth and strange, yea stupendous, to enter into their judgment, and to have your lands turned into a stinking loch, and yourselves eternally tormented with them? But there is more wrath and vengeance following on the sin of unbelief, and rejecting of Christ, when he comes to your door in his gospel.

To close up all, consider, that Christ is near you, and has been long near you, and wooing you. You know not how many days or years you shall have; how soon this gospel may be taken from you, or you from it; how soon you may be put in the pit, where you will gnash your teeth, gnaw your tongues, and blaspheme God. Therefore be serious while Christ is in

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your offer, and roll yourselves over upon him, while you have him so near you. Welcome this *hearing* or *report*, while it sounds in your ears, that there may be no just ground of this complaint against you, *Lord, who hath believed our report?*

3

Isaiah 53:1. Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

The most part of men and women think not much of the preached gospel. Yet, if it were considered what is the Lord's end in it, it would be the most refreshful news that ever people heard, to hear the report of a Savior: that is, and should be, great and glad tidings of great joy to all nations; and we should be so composed to hear such news from God, and concerning his will and our own well [*welfare*], as to be suitably affected with them. It is a wonder that God has sent such a report to people, and in it has laid Christ so near them, that he puts him home to them, and lays him before them, even at their feet as it were; and as great a wonder, that when the Lord has condescended to give such a Savior, and brought him so near, that all he calls for is faith, to believe the report, or rather faith in him of whom the report is; which is the second thing in the words.

Duty To Believe The Gospel

II. *Doctrine*. The second thing is,⁸ the duty that lies on people to whom the Lord sends the gospel, or this report concerning Christ. And you may take it in this general: That it lies on all that hear the gospel to believe the report that it brings concerning Christ, and by faith to receive him, who is held out to them in it. This is clearly implied. Isaiah and all ministers are sent to report concerning him, and to bear witness of him, and it is the duty of all hearers to believe it. And this is the ground of his and their complaint, when people do not believe it. By comparing this text with *Rom. 10:16* and *John 12:38*, we showed that it is saving faith that is here to be understood.

I shall take up this *Doctrine* in three branches,⁹ which we will find in the words, and which will make way for the use.

Believing Ceases Not To Be A Duty Though Ability Lacking

1. That a people, to whom Christ is offered in the gospel, may warrantably accept of Christ; or, the offering of Christ in the gospel is warrant enough to believe in him. Otherwise there had been no just ground of expostulation and complaint for not believing. For though the complaint will not infer that they had ability to believe, yet it will infer they had a warrant to believe; for the complaint is for the neglect of the duty they were called to. 2. That they to whom Christ is offered in the gospel, are called to believe; it is their duty to do. Thus believing is necessary, in all that hear this gospel, by necessity of command; even as are holiness, repentance, etc. 3. That saving faith is the way and means by which these that have Christ

⁸ Ed. See the outline in Sermon 1 on page 73.

⁹ Ed. In this sermon Durham handles Branch One of Doctrine II, and begins Branch Two, which he continues in Sermon 4. He takes up Branch Three in Sermon 5.