
*COLLECTED SERMONS
OF JAMES DURHAM*

THE SERMONS OF JAMES DURHAM

Collected Sermons of James Durham: Sixty-one Sermons (2017)

Collected Sermons of James Durham: Seventy-two Sermons on Isaiah 53 (2017)

COLLECTED SERMONS
OF JAMES DURHAM

The Blessedness of the Death of those that Die in the Lord
Heaven upon Earth: The Joys of a Good Conscience
The Unsearchable Riches of Christ
The Great Corruption of Subtle Self
The Great Gain of Contenting Godliness
& Miscellaneous Subjects

IN
SIXTY-ONE SERMONS

Edited by
Chris Coldwell

*The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the
pure are pleasant words. Proverbs 15:26.
A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Proverbs 25:11.*

NAPHTALI PRESS &
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Naphtali Press
P. O. Box 141084
Dallas, Texas, 75214
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Reformation Heritage Books
2965 Leonard St. NE
Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49525
616-977-0889 / Fax 616-285-3246
orders@heritagebooks.org
www.heritagebooks.org

ISBN 978-1-60178-556-5

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INTRODUCTION

James Durham of Pittkerro (1622–1658), was born “a good gentleman, of the house and family of Grange Durham, an ancient, honorable, and sometime flourishing family in the parish of Monifieth, in the shire of Angus.”¹ He was the oldest son and heir of Sir James Durham, who outlived him.² His mother was Helen Ramsey, the daughter of the archdean of Dunkeld. In 1643 Durham succeeded to a portion of the family lands in Angus “in the parish of Murroes, then called Easter Powrie, but now called Wedderburn...” (29),³ and stood to inherit his father’s considerable estate. He had attended Saint Andrews University in about 1637–1640.⁴ He did not finish his course of studies at university and looked simply to take up the

1. See the life of Durham in Donald John MacLean, *James Durham (1622–1658) And the Gospel Offer in Its Seventeenth Century Context* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 66–75. See also the overview of Durham’s life in Nathan Holsteen, *The Popularization of Federal Theology: Conscience and Covenant in the Theology of David Dickson (1583–1663) and James Durham (1622–1658)*, Ph.D. Thesis, The University of Aberdeen (1996), 190–197. See also the lengthy 18th century “A Collection of Some Memorable Things in the Author’s Life,” affixed to various editions of Durham’s works, and also with some additional material in notes in *Collected Sermons: Seventy-Two Sermons on the Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah* (2017), 29 (subsequent references cited parenthetically by page number). The Durham holdings took up lands in several parishes including Dundee, Monifieth and Murroes. “The lands of Pittkerro are in the parishes of Dundee and Monifieth.” Alexander Johnson Warden, *Angus or Forfarshire, the land and people, descriptive and historical*, volume 4 (Dundee: Charles Alexander & Co., 1884), 397.

2. Sir James Durham “was a staunch loyalist, and had several public appointments from Charles I., such as Clerk of Exchequer, of which he was deprived after the death of the King, and was put to much trouble by the Commonwealth. He lived to see the Restoration, was knighted by Charles II., and restored to the offices he had previously held.” Warden, 158–159. Warden writes that James died shortly after Sir James, but this seems incorrect if the latter lived to the Restoration. It would seem that Durham’s brother Alexander became heir to the estate of Sir James. He died without issue and the estate passed back to Durham’s son Francis (*Ibid.*, 159).

3. Murroes parish borders both Dundee and Monifieth parishes. Durham’s third great grandfather purchased the lands in Easter Powrie in 1593. Kyle D. Holfelder, “James Durham,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

4. Holsteen, 191. Depending upon how long Durham stayed at the university, his time

life of a country gentleman.⁵ While of an upright blameless character, he was a stranger to faith in Christ, and from the influence of his upbringing, not “well affected” to the Covenanter aims of the Second Reformation and Presbyterianism. Sir James was a committed loyalist. His grandfather served both James VI and Charles I as Clerk of Exchequer, to which position his father succeeded.⁶

When twenty, Durham married his first wife, “a daughter of the laird of Duntarvie;”⁷ and “his wife and her mother were both very pious women” (29). One day while they were visiting his wife’s mother, he, upon their entreaty, accompanied them to a Saturday church service prior to communion. He was so taken with the simple message of the gospel presented, that he returned the next day. “Ephraim Melvil preached from 1 Peter. 2:7: ‘To you that believe, he is precious.’” Melvil “so sweetly and seriously opened up the preciousness of Christ, and the Spirit of God wrought so effectually upon his spirit, that in the hearing of that sermon he first closed with Christ, and then went to the Lord’s table and took the seal of God’s covenant” (29–30). He became devoted to the Lord from that day and gave himself considerably to the study and practice of the faith.

During the English Civil War, he served as a captain in his brother Alexander’s regiment.⁸ He would lead his troops in prayer and was more like a chaplain or minister to his men than simply a captain.⁹ On one such occasion, David Dickson happened to be riding by and was so taken with Durham’s prayer that he conversed later with him and told him he should pursue the ministry.¹⁰ While not at first convinced he should do so, two subsequent escapes from death confirmed his path in life. During an engagement he survived his horse being shot out from under him, and later an English soldier took Durham to be a minister and spared his life. After his military commitment was over, he pursued the study of theology under Dickson at Glasgow, “where, in a short time, he profited so as he might have been a Professor of Divinitie in any universitie in Europe.”¹¹ Upon completion of

there may have put him in early contact with John Carstares who was up to a year younger than Durham, and also with Samuel Rutherford if he remained through 1638 and later.

5. See the entry for James Durham by William Garden Blaikie in the old Dictionary of National Biography (old DNB) and also the new entry by Holfelder.

6. George Christie, D.D., “James Durham as Courtier and Preacher,” *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, IV Part I (1930) 68.

7. “Anna, daughter of Francis Durham of Duntarvie.” (Blackie, old DNB). Christie implies the date of 1642 as the year of their marriage in stating Durham was twenty years old. Christie, 66. The couple had one son, Francis Durham. Durham and his second wife, Margaret, had three sons, James, Alexander and John. Hew Scott, *Fašli Ecclesiae Scoticanæ; The Succession of Ministers in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation*, vol. 3 (1920), 456.

8. Warden, 4.159.

9. Cf. Christie, 67.

10. Christie thought it was likely at Marston Moor, on July 2, 1644. Christie, 67.

11. *Select Biographies*, edited by W. K. Tweedie (1845), 332.

his studies he was ordained on December 2, 1647 and first served as minister at Blackfriars church in Glasgow.¹² Durham entered into the ministry planning to leave his former life behind, but this proved a great trial.

Being settled there [in Blackfriars], he did apply himself to the work of the ministry with great diligence; meditating on these things he had received in charge, he gave himself wholly to them, so that his profiting did quickly appear to all. But he considering that no man that wars, entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who has chosen him to be a soldier, desired and obtained leave of his people to return to his own country for some little time, to settle his worldly estate and affairs there. Whilst he was there, he was not idle, but preached every Sabbath day. The first Sabbath he preached in Dundee, where he had a great audience, the most of the inhabitants of any note in the town. And all the gentlemen in town, and some miles about it, being of Mr. Durham's old acquaintance, hearing of his being come to the country, and that he was to preach, did out of their curiosity come to hear him. He preached from *Rom. 1:16*: "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," and showed them that it was no disparagement for the greatest to be a preacher and a gospel minister. The second Sabbath he was in this country, he preached in Fealing, at the desire of the minister there. It is the next adjacent parish to the place where his interest lay in the country, where several of the neighbor gentlemen of his old acquaintance did come and hear. He preached from *2 Cor. 5:18-19*: "He hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," etc. The third Sabbath he was in this country, he preached in Monifieth, at the desire of the minister there, the place where all his relations and intimate acquaintances had their dwellings. He preached from *2 Cor. 5:20*: "We then as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." In both which places, he acted indeed like an ambassador for Christ, and managed the gospel treaty of peace to very good purpose. The fourth Sabbath he designed to have preached in Murroes, his own parish church, where he was a considerable heritor. But whilst he was thus employed in preaching, and settling his worldly interest and affairs here in the country, he received an express from Glasgow, to return in all haste, his wife being dangerously sick. Upon which he made for his journey, and returned to Glasgow, leaving his affairs to the care of

12. Durham was "presented by the town council on 22nd September, and ordained and admitted on 2nd December; had charge of the south quarter of the city from 1647-1648...." James D. Marwick, *Charters and Other Documents Relating to the City of Glasgow: A.D. 1175-1649* (Glasgow, 1897), dcxxxii. Durham was licensed to preach in Irvine on May 18. Holfelder, DNB.

his friends. In a few days his dear wife, who was the desire and delight of his eyes, died (33).¹³

James Durham quickly rose to some prominence in the church and was appointed to the standing commission of the General Assembly in August of 1649.¹⁴ In 1650 only after a few years of ministry in his first charge, Durham was looked upon as the best selection to replace Dickson as divinity professor at Glasgow, who had been called to the chair of divinity at Edinburgh.¹⁵ However, Robert Ramsay was chosen instead and the Kirk fixed upon James Durham for his family's "hereditary connection with the Crown, his piety, his gravity, his prudence, and perhaps his youth (he was but 28)" "as eminently suited to be the Church's representative at the Court of the young King," and appointed him to that service in July, 1650.¹⁶ Durham had "the chief duty of ministering to the Royal Household devolved upon him. He acted also as the constant channel of communication between the King and the Commission, met and consulted with frequent deputations from that body and with Committees of Parliament, carried letters from and to the King and joined in the discussions and orders of the Commission when

13. Christie notes that Mrs. Durham was likely sick from "the prevailing pest" (plague). Christie, 68.

14. Holfelder, DNB. *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland holden in Edinburgh the Years 1648 and 1649*, volume 2, edited by Alexander F. Mitchell and James Christie (1896), 299. Durham first appears in the minutes appointed to aid the church in Stirling in renewing the Solemn League and Covenant, 178, 262, 321, 319.

15. *Records of the Commission for 1648 and 1649*, 409. Dickson and Durham are noted as joint authors of the *Sum of Saving Knowledge*, which while not a formal church document, nevertheless became a part of the Scottish version of the Westminster Standards. An act of the church in 1649 about catechizing, directed ministers to present to their charges "the chief heads of saving knowledge in a short view." It may be in the time before Dickson left for Edinburgh in 1650, the *Sum* came into being from discussions he had with Durham on the Craigs around Glasgow Cathedral. Patrick Simson, George Gillespie's cousin, served as amanuensis. The *Sum* was first printed in Edinburgh by Lithgow who appended it to an early edition of the Confession of Faith and Catechisms (1650), and it seems likely he obtained the text from Dickson. Cf. Robert Wodrow, *Analec̄ta, or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences; mostly relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians*, 4 vols. (Printed for the Maitland Club, 1842–43), 1.166; 3.9–10. Andrew Edgar, *Old Church Life in Scotland: Lectures on Kirk-session and Presbytery Records* (Paisley and London: Alexander Gardner, 1885), 93. David Hay Fleming, "The Sum of Saving Knowledge" *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 10, no. 38 (1899): 318–324. B. B. Warfield, "Notes Toward A Bibliography of the Westminster Confession: I. Britain," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 12 (1901): 626; "The Printing of the Westminster Confession," *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, in *Works* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981) 6.344; "Spiritual Culture in the Theological Seminary," *Princeton Theological Review*, volume 2 (1904):85. Chris Coldwell, "The Development of the Traditional Form of The Westminster Standards," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 1 (2005) 168ff; "Examining the Work of S. W. Caruthers: Justifying a Critical Approach to the Text of the Westminster Standards & Correcting the 18th Century Lineage of the Traditional Scottish Text," *ibid.*, 43–64.

16. "appointed chaplain to the king in July, 1650." *Charters and Other Documents*, dcxxxii.

meeting near the court or when he was sent to it.¹⁷ Durham as a member of the Assembly's standing commission had been intimately involved in the communications with and preparations for the coming of the king.¹⁸ The chaplaincy should have gone to Robert Blair, but he was in ill health, and he could not have withstood the frequent movings about of the king's court. He also had begun to have strong issues of conscience regarding ministers getting too involved in civil affairs.¹⁹

From what is known of the character of Charles II, it is not hard to imagine why serving as King's chaplain proved exceedingly grievous service for Durham.²⁰ Even though it is said, the "duties of this office he discharged 'with such majesty and awe' as to inspire the court with much reverence for him,"²¹ Durham is recorded as saying that the king was "simple and creuel [cruel], and that he was ay[e] glaiking²² at sermons and prayers, in kirk and family."²³ He served in this capacity for only a few months before the situation affected his health, while at the same time he was in financial straits due to Cromwell's occupation. Among other things, he apparently was suffering as much as any from the quarterings and plunderings by soldiers, a trial of the times which he often notes in his sermons, and from the lack of a stipend from Glasgow.²⁴ We find the Commission of the General Assembly granting on November 23, 1650, a respite for a time starting that December first, due to his "present distemper and indisposition,"²⁵ and appointed

17. Christie, "James Durham," 70.

18. *Records of the Commission for 1648 and 1649*, 355, 405, 437, 439, 440. Amongst other appointments, Durham was also appointed to committees to present overtures to parliament and to confer with the army in communicating to the English enquiring after their intentions towards Scotland. *Ibid.*, 399, 419.

19. Christie, 69.

20. Baillie writes of his service to the king as "that grievous burden." *The Letters and Journals of Robert Baillie*, ed. David Laing, vol. 3 (Edinburgh, Robert Ogle, 1842), 150.

21. "It is said Charles II. had a great veneration for him, and stood much in awe of him." *Analecta*, 3.108.

22. Aye (always) glaiking. *Glaik*: light, giddy, foolish, sometimes with connotations of being flirtatious (see Jamieson's *Scottish Dictionary*). The king had already begun having affairs at a young age and would eventually lay claim to around a dozen illegitimate children by half a dozen mistresses.

23. Publications of the Scottish History Society, Second Series, vol. XVIII, *The Diary of Sir Archibald Johnson of Warriston, Volume 2, 1650-1654*, edited by David Hay Fleming (Edinburgh: March 1919), 137.

24. See pages 74, 516, 721. "I suspect, indeed, one of the grounds on which Mr. James hes reason of malcontentment, is the neglect of his maintainance. I think he hes his owen burthens on his lands, besyde that the quarterings this yeaere, and some yeaeres bygone, hath made his rent small in itself, neare to nothing; he hes a numerous familie, he hes no stipend from Glasgow: I see not how he must not be straitned. Therefore, in the midst of all the scarcitie that can be among yow, I advyse, that without more delay, in the first day of Exchequer, yow appoint him a stipend at least of two hundred pounds..." Baillie, 3.155. Durham's family was housing with the family of Patrick Gillespie. Christie, 77.

25. *The Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland holden*

several ministers to that duty for four months, swapping out teams at two months. This plan initially may have been upended, at least for a time, by the King's request on November 28 that Durham return. He may have returned, because rather than retiring for illness, he was active in the church's affairs through the end of the year. He appears before the commission on December 12 when letters from the King and Parliament are produced and read, though it is not clear if he was acting as courier, and serves on a committee to consider the Parliament's letter. On December 13, Durham is appointed to preach to the parliament the next Lord's Day. He attended the meeting in the morning on December 14, but is not recorded attending in the afternoon. And he attended the commission on December 31 in Perth, as the King was to be crowned the next day at Scone.

This all took its toll, and after attending the commission on January 6, he likely made his condition known. The next day, January 7, when he was not in attendance, a replacement was appointed during his illness. On January 22 the commission promised an answer to Durham's request of a furlough at the next meeting, but did not answer until March. At the same time in late January (it is unclear which came first), the common session of Glasgow wrote in an undated letter asking that he might return to ministry there. Durham's desire was to fill the professorship that had previously been offered him, and his friends believed he had been ill treated by denying it to him.

On March 18, the commission finally granted liberty to Durham "for his health and private affaires, to withdraw himself from his service and charge in attending the King and his familie" for six weeks. He attended no other meetings of the commission though he was appointed to various committees to answer this or that need or correspondence. By the beginning of April, Durham was back in Glasgow (35–36). On April 19, Cromwell suddenly came to Glasgow and heard "Mr. John Carstairs lecture, and Mr. James Durhame preach, graciously and weell to the times as could have been desyred. Generrallie all who preached that day in the Towne gave a fair enough testimony against the Sectaries." Old Ironsides got the message and in a meeting with the ministers the next day complained that the English were "condemned 1st, As unjust invaders" etc. (36).²⁶

On April 23, the commission appointed more ministers to "attend the

in Edinburgh in 1650, in St. Andrews and Dundee in 1651 and in Edinburgh in 1652, volume 3, edited by James Christie (1909), 117, 133, 234, 253, 335, 405, 420, 443, 549.

26. *Records for 1650–52*, 420. Christie, 72, 73. Baillie, 3.165–166. "I heard Mr Durham who was then the king's chaplain. He preached on his ordinary text, Song 1, last verse [1:17]:" "Mr Gabriel Semple, 'Life,'" Scottish History Society, Fifth Series, volume 15, *Protestant Piety in Early-Modern Scotland: Letters, Lives and Covenants*, ed. David George Mullan (Edinburgh: Printed for the Scottish History Society, 2008), 143. Durham would preach over 130 sermons on at least Song 2–5 when he took up the call to Glasgow in Sept–Oct 1651, beginning the first of 44 sermons on chapter 2, October 19. See "James Durham MS III, The Sermons on Song of Solomon," *The Confessional Presbyterian*, forthcoming.

Kings family by courses, and to be assisting to Mr. James Durhame for performing all ministeriall dueties to them.” Whether at this time and since January, Durham returned sporadically to the King, assisted by these and others, or they simply stood in for him, is not clear.²⁷ And despite Durham and his friends writing letters and campaigning for the Glasgow university appointment, Baillie appears to have successfully blocked this effort, believing it would be a disservice to the king and not stand Durham or the church well. Resigned for the time apparently, and his health recovered, Durham writes to Robert Douglas on July 14, 1651, expressing his intent to take up again his charge as the King’s chaplain. “I was once in doubt whither to have staid till the Assembly or not; but being recovered in my health, and not knowing quho may be with the King, I have resolved, upon Mr. Blair’s advice, to goe immediatly to that charge, untill the Assembly dispose of me and it, as shall be thought best. I doubt not quhen men are to be named, but yee will be carfull to see them such as that taske require, which I ingenuously confesse does not only requir mor zeall faithfullnes and abilities then I have, but mor then I could have thought of before experience of the snares and discouragements which accomanie it.”²⁸

On July 20, Leslie’s army was defeated at Inverkeithing, but Charles saw in the English army advancing north an opportunity to invade England. He marched his royalist army south attempting to gather troops on the way. Durham may have at least attempted to join the king between July 14 when he wrote to Douglas and the King’s resolve to head toward England after July 20. It is said Durham offered to go with the King, but he refused.²⁹ By August 4 Durham had left the king, and the assembly at Dundee ordered three other ministers to attend the king.³⁰ Johnson writes, “I thought it strange to heare that their was not on[e] minister to goe on with the King or airmye, except deposed ministers, albeit the meiting at St. Jhonston [in Perth] was most

27. Christie writes that Durham returned to the King for two months in May (73), presuming he did so after the March 18 liberty expired. Durham appears to be in Sterling on May 16, where the King and the army were (*Records for 1650–52*, 335); but in a March 31 letter to Glasgow about taking up a position in the university, his language seems to indicate he was freed up until the meeting of the assembly at the end of July (Baillie, 3.148). Yet as Christie notes he continued “occupied with the business of the Commission of Assembly. . . met their deputation to his Majesty and discussed . . . signing of the Covenant by his English friends, . . . and conferring with those ministers who had been prisoners in the Tower of London . . .” (Christie, 73). On May 24 he is listed as appointed to go to the King with others of the commission, though he is not noted as in attendance of the commission. By sometime in July when he wrote Douglas on July 14, it is clear he had not been with the King, and having recovered his health had determined to return.

28. Baillie, *Letters & Journals*, 3.560.

29. Christie, 73. Durham “offered to goe with the king . . . but not finding suiteable acceptance, he returned to Glasgow. . .” *Select Biographies*, 332.

30. The brief commission record for the meeting at Dundee on August 1, 1651 does not mention this, so this may have been at the General Assembly at Dundee in late July. Johnson’s diary entry is dated August 4, 1651. *Diary*, volume 2, 105.

willing to send them, as their was non in 1648, when I heard that, even at Torwood, their was no evening nor morning prayers in the campe, and farre less now.”³¹ On August 22, Charles’ army arrived at Worcester and was subsequently routed on September 3, 1651. Charles managed to escape to Europe.

Relieved of his burden, and also having not been reappointed at the end of July to the Assembly’s commission, Durham was free of those duties as well. But even though Ramsay died suddenly, and even with Baillie’s support at that point, the professorship was denied him for good. In August 1651, the Glasgow session wrote Durham asking him to return, issuing him a call on September 4 to the ministry of the Inner Kirk of the cathedral. His companion in ministry there would be John Carstares. Durham spent the rest of his few years of ministry and life in this service, where he did the work for which he is most known. He did not spend those years alone however, but married again another woman of extraordinary piety and commitment to the truths of the Scriptures, Margaret Mure Boyd.

The remaining years of the ministry of James Durham were full ones. During this time his extreme diligence, particularly in study, wore out the body which was not in the best of health.

He preached at least twice a week, often three times. Lectures before sermon were also given regularly, and every fifth week he took his turn of daily public lecturing. There was also visitation of the sick, catechising—daily before Communion seasons—exhorting of all his people from house to house, a weekly meeting with the session for discipline, and possibly “a Contraversie to be handled before the Presbyterie,” while a considerable part of one day each week was set apart for private devotion and prayer. During the composition and writing of his many Lectures on the Book of Revelation, he kept two days every week for fasting and prayer, that he might better apprehend the teaching of its spiritual mysteries. . . . [In his communion sermons] he seems to have excelled himself in devotion and power, his very face shining as of one who had been in the Mount, for his teaching was not directed to fencing and barring, but to inviting and attracting, so that “those of the lowest stature among them all might have catcht hold of the Rope or Cord of the Offer of Salvation.”³²

George Christie provides a modern (circa 1930) assessment of Durham’s preaching which seems only partially fair and accurate.

Durham lacked imagination, that is clear; his sermons have no sparkle in them, little of illustration or incident, nothing personal or moving.

31. *Diary*, volume 2, 106.

32. Christie, 76.

Very rarely does one feel any thrill of eloquence. Even his perorations are dull, unless hell's horrors are his theme, yet there is a depth of spirituality and a loftiness of Christian feeling, a skilful probing of motive and analysis in temper, which excite thought and aspiration. His preparation of mind and spirit was perfect—the stream is pure and strong, straight and deep, if without ripple and light—and his matter was read and re-read for generations. “He liked not to soar and hide himself from the Hearers in a cloud of words;” i.e. he was not a “popular preacher.” He was a weighty preacher—possibly a heavy one—and had he been able to combine grace with his gifts, attractive and pungent presentation of the truth with seriousness and strength, he would have been “a very rare and singular man” in his generation. Extremely modest and humble, he never strove for plaudits or praise by fine phrase or by playing upon the emotions; intent upon the matter, he left style alone.

Christie knows enough of his subject to have been affected by his depth, but Durham is no more eloquent on hell than he is on the freeness of God's grace and when extolling Christ. It is true he was not a popular preacher in both senses of that term, and often faced a sparse room, practically fearing the congregation might run out on him for his lack of eloquence. He does not show a poetic imagination like Samuel Rutherford's, nor does he exhibit a gift for short and memorable statements, such as had his mentor and teacher David Dickson. However, his grasp of his matter was solid and he leaves a deep impression. And while they may not have been appreciated as spoken, as printed his works were popular and printed over and over again, as Christie noted. He may not have impressed the “room,” but his fellow ministers, who could see past the niceties of verbal delivery, knew what they had in their fellow preacher. David Dickson “had a wonderfull opinion of great and worthy Mr Durhame. . . . He said somewhat to this purpose of Mr Durham, that ‘He was like a great bottle full of excellent good wine, that when it did go to come out, it could not well come out, but it played buck, buck!—so Mr Durham had little expression, but much good and great matter.’”³³

Durham “died on the 25th of June, 1658, in the thirty and sixth year of his age. His death was the more to be lamented, that he died thus in the very flower and vigor of his grace, gifts and age. Mr. John Carstairs, his colleague in the Inner-kirk, preached next Sabbath upon Isaiah 57:1. ‘The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering, that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come.’ Where he gave him a large character, and represented the great loss of such an eminent man” (41). The prefacer to Durham's *Lectures on the Book of Job* drew from the manuscript of Carstairs' sermons at Durham's death, which was still extant at that time.

33. Wodrow, *Analeceta*, volume 3, page 10.

When Mr. Carstairs earnestly exhorted his hearers in the application of his first sermon, to mind the work that God put in their hands, before they come to die: "I must tell you (he says) a word or two of that faithful servant of God Mr. Durham, whose face you have often seen in this place, to the great refreshment of many of your hearts, and now shall see him no more. When he was drawing towards a close in a great conflict and agony, finding some difficulty in his passage, yet sensibly, through the strength of God's grace, triumphantly overcame, and was more than a conqueror, by the help of the glorious Captain of his salvation, he cried out in a rapture of holy joy, some little time before he committed his soul to God, 'Is not the Lord good? Is He not infinitely good? See how He smiles. I do say it, and I proclaim it.' I pray you seek to be well grounded and stuffed with the substantial of religion, for at death a number of our flashes and shows will be gone, and in the great bing [*pile*] of duties, a little handful of grain will be found. And since by death, O Christians, ye will be taken away, see that ye be very tender in your walk, for miscarriages may meet and have a dreadful aspect, when you come to die, if God withdraw and hide His face; though ye should die persuaded as to the main matter, that it will be well with you. There may be floods of God's displeasure in your love, and that will make your passage dark as we are very apprehensive the death of the most part of Christians in this generation will be right irie,³⁴ though they get their souls for a prey. I will not say but God may lay a restraint upon some that have been eminently holy at death, that we may not think of them above that which is meet, and to put all to diligence to make their calling and election sure; but I think the way of the professors of this generation is so ragged, gruff, and untender, that it seems to be brewing a storm to us ere we die" ...

In the application of the second sermon he adds, "If the Lord's removal of several serious and sober Christians in this place, within these two years calls for our serious consideration, doth not the removal of a serious and godly minister much more call for it? Let us then take a backlook of the person that is now gone to heaven, and of what God gave him to be eminently useful in the work of the ministry. And I would speak somewhat upon this, partly, to recommend the grace of God that was bestowed upon him, and partly, to work up ourselves to a kindly sense of the great loss we sustain by his death, for I truly think we have not lost an ordinary, but a very extraordinary pastor. ...

2. I would have you consider and take a view of his faithfulness in the

34. *Irie*: Affected by a fear of the supernatural giving rise to feelings of uneasiness or loneliness; less common, apprehensive in general (Dictionary Scottish Language, www.dsl.ac.uk).

ministry, which he received of the Lord, not so much for stirring up of our natural affections as for our deep humiliation under this deplorable bereavement. When God had separated him from another employment to this honorable function, we may justly say, to the commendation of God's free grace, that he, seriously and prudently, discharged all the duties of it, to have His great name glorified, and the people under his charge edified, and built up in holiness and comfort, to their eternal salvation. I remember, in some of his good days, when speaking of the Lord's distinguishing goodness to him, what he said unto me, *viz.*, That he had win³⁵ to compendize and abridge his suits to these four things, 1. That God would show mercy to his own soul. 2. That he would be merciful to his children, and sanctify them for his service. 3. That he would accomplish and make good all his promises in reference to Christ's kingdom. 4. And that he would make his ministry fruitful and successful; that it might be said of him what Paul said of Timothy, "I know no man like minded, that will naturally care for your estate" [Phil. 2:20]. O the kindly care of the people, and all the churches of Christ, which lay upon his mind. And I may truly say, that the stipend, or any worldly things of his own, were as little valued as the dust he trod upon.

3. I would have you to consider the full and entire manifestation of God which he made unto you, when he delivered nothing but the purest truth unto us, or he never wavered or balked any truths of God. And though he, perhaps, would have been unwilling to say so much of himself, if he had been alive, yet we may warrantably say, after he is now gone from us, that he was free of the blood of all men, "for he never shunned to declare the whole counsel of God" [Acts 2:27]. Ye yourselves know what variety of Christian duties he pressed you to perform with sincerity, and what religious exercises he encouraged you to persist in; what cases of conscience he judiciously handled, and what rare and sublime experiences of vital religion he recommended, which so few good Christians even win to.

4. Was he not a very seasonable and judicious speaker? Did not God give him "the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the faint and weary soul" [Isa. 50:4]? How seasonable and pertinent were the ordinary subjects of his sermons? And did he not also pitch upon the most suitable and proper subjects of evangelical preaching, upon fast days, and at the solemn celebration of the Lord's supper? Was he not also a very candid and searching preacher? He would have been, in an instant, in the inmost corners of your bosoms, with the outmost

35. *Win* (Scot. pron. wun). "To have any thing in one's power, to arrive at any particular state or degree with some kind of labour or difficulty" (Jamieson).

caution and meekness, without giving any of his hearers the smallest ground to fret and repine at his freedom in dealing with them.

Do ye not remember what particular and just up-takings and apprehensions he discovered of your various circumstances and conditions, and how he wisely ranked you in your several classes, to let you know whether you were in a good or bad state? Do ye remember any of his wholesome instructions, when he preached upon these memorable passages of the inspired writings? Matthew 12:17. "We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced. We have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented." Revelation 3:3. "Thou hast a name to live, and art dead." Hosea 6:4. "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as the morning cloud, and the early dew, it passes away." And how seasonably did he discourse at your last communion, upon Matthew 26:29,³⁶ "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom?" and so it hath come to pass. Was he not a faithful and free-speaker, in secret admonishing, and reproving with meekness and wisdom? Gentlemen, burgesses, and all that now hear me, you may remember the words which he spoke unto you in the name of the Lord, both in public and private; and though he is not now amongst you, to observe your walk and behavior, and call you to an account for it, yet God hath it recorded, and will surely bring you unto judgment [cf. Eccl. 12:14]. How pertinently and seriously did he speak unto the sick and dying, according to their several circumstances; and could not leave them till he had exonerated himself, by communicating unto them what he judged for their good and welfare: and his brethren who visited them, could easily know, how he had spoken to them, whenever they conversed with them. Did he not also frequently and fervently pray unto God for you? He might have justly said, as did Jeremiah, "Remember" (says he to his Maker) "how I stood before thee to speak good for this people, and to turn away thy wrath from them" [Jer. 18:20]. And we know in particular, how this devout man set apart one day in every week for solemn supplication to his heavenly Father, these several years bypast, and surely at these times ye were not forgotten. Ye are now deprived of an eminent intercessor at the throne of divine grace, whose soul wept often in secret, for the pride and obstinacy of the people who would not receive the gospel. Ye likewise know how faithful, dexterous and impartial he was in the exercise of church discipline amongst you. Ye know how

36. This is sermon fourteen in *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* (p. 638). There appears to be a manuscript of this sermon. "VI. [On] Matthew XXVI ver. 29. The New Home in the Kingdom [Sermon] on the 2d. Communion Sabbath afternoon." Dundee Central Library Durham MS. Coldwell, "The James Durham MSS Part II," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 7 (2011), 231.

he exemplified the truth of the gospel, and the genuine spirit of our holy religion in his own personal walk and behavior; and that his conversation among you was in every respect becoming the gospel he preached. Ye know the consummate wisdom and prudence God gave him in all things, which belonged to his station and calling as a gentleman, and a minister of the glorious gospel; for he loved not to meddle with anything which was foreign or unsuitable to the pastoral office. And we may thankfully declare, as an eminent instance of God's goodness to this city of Glasgow, that we have been kept in the most wonderful calm, and lived in great amity and peace these eight years bypast, when he was with us, though we were as much predisposed, and in danger of being consumed by these woeful fires of division and strife that were burning our church, as any other Christians were. And if we can commend any proper means of healing such distempers, or promoting peace and unity among all ranks, we cannot sufficiently extol and celebrate his incomparable moderation, prudence, meekness, lowliness, and integrity. It will be a signal mercy if we be kept so long again from some kind of reeling, confusion and schism; and if ever we see again these woeful days, we will bemoan the want of one of his cementing, peaceable and healing spirit. Was he not, in a word, a merchy [*full of marrow*] and substantial preacher, who gave us the marrow, yea, the very pith and kernel of the gospel; he delivered very much sound divinity in little bounds, and in few words. Ye that are the common people, are deprived by his death of a plain and easily understood preacher. Ye that are sore troubled in spirit, and exercised, ye want a very tender and sympathizing guide. Ye that are learned and wise, want a learned minister, who was well instructed in the mysteries and laws of Christianity, the most valuable learning I know. Ye that are proud, covetous or wicked, now want a teacher that would have exposed your corruptions, and might have been a blessed means of reforming you, and reclaiming you from your dangerous mistakes and errors, without fretting and irritating you.

Secondly, I would have you also to consider the time wherein the Lord was pleased to remove him from us: and surely, no period of time might be pitched upon, when he could be worse spared, though we should not murmur against God's awfulest dispensations of providence. This is a time of trouble, division, confusion and giddiness. God had given our deceased pastor a spirit of healing and incomparable moderation. This is a time when even some ministers among us are too slothful and careless, and seem to be too little acquainted with the power of true godliness, and have too little concern for the welfare of precious souls, and seem to be afraid that their people should turn too serious under their inspection. We have even amongst us some dumb dogs that cannot

bark, but are afraid to reprove any sin, or endeavor to reclaim their hearers from it, or to acquaint them with religious exercises. I might also observe, that our friend was cut off in the thirty-sixth year of his age, in the very prime and vigor of his age, and singular gifts. How remarkably were his gifts and graces increased these several years bypast and how remarkably did he plead his Master's cause with the strength of sanctified reason, and the energy of religion? And how faithfully did he deal with every one of your consciences, and recommended himself to every hearer as "a workman that needed not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" [2 Tim. 2:15]. If the removal of such a serious, painful and able minister of the New Testament, at such a time, when he was an eye-sore and burden to some carnal and negligent ministers who reside amongst us, seems an evident token of the Lord's fierce displeasure. We should sadly bewail it. Do ye not remember that remarkable sermon ye heard, not very long ago, upon Christ's own words [Matt. 22:4],³⁷ "All things are ready, come ye to the marriage"? You cannot readily expect to see the word of salvation hang lower down to you, nor [*than*] it was at that time, and the good bargain concluded. But his works, and this sermon when printed, will sufficiently praise him. I would have you also to consider,

Thirdly, The manner how God removed this faithful servant of our Redeemer. He had a pretty long and sharp conflict, and was a {close} prisoner under seven months sore sickness and sadness, and some measure of darkness, though he had no reason to be doubtful of his good state, and his right to the heavenly inheritance. But the Lord brought him comfortably through all his trials, and delivered him from all the evil he feared. If it was so "done to the green tree," what will be done to withered, fruitless and untender [of conscience] Christians, that are but *dry* and barren *trees*, whose interest in Christ was never put to the trial, or satisfactorily cleared [Luke 23:31]? Let us at the same time,

Fourthly, Consider the glorious and happy outgate or deliverance he met with from all his sharp conflicts and trials, and how cheerfully and triumphantly he maintained his good hope, till he resigned calmly his spirit to his blessed Father's hands, and entered into the joy of his Lord. "Mark the perfect, behold the upright, for the latter end of that man is peace" [Ps. 37:37]. But this is so well known to you that I need not insist longer upon it.

Fifthly, Consider what might have been matter of provocation on our

37. See sermon three in *Unsearchable Riches* (p. 464). There appear to be several manuscripts of this sermon. See Murray 38 #9, 19 and Gen 230 #3. Coldwell, "James Durham Manuscripts Held by Glasgow University Library," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 5 (2009), 305–307.

part, to remove such an useful instrument at this time. He had such a healing disposition, that no person was better fitted for these divided times (as we hope will appear in his treatise upon scandal, which will be printed as his last testament to the church of Scotland) as he had much of God's mind in these things that were warmly debated, so he interposed for the cementing of the unhappy differences amongst us, though his overtures for peace and union were but too little regarded. I think in my conscience, that God was angry when the jealousies of both parties hindered them from hearkening to and laying so little weight upon what he proposed, on the account of his moderation, and that he was laid by for some years, as one little regarded. 'Well,' says God, 'I will remove him, and see if ye can be better without him than with him.' I speak it without disparagement to many eminent servants of God in Scotland, that I never knew any minister more fitted of God for healing our differences and breaches than he was, as he was never actually engaged in either side, nor bigoted to their sentiments. And I may also observe, that though he was eminently qualified for teaching divinity in this university, and was chosen to be their professor, and even loosed from another charge to enter upon this work, yet when he returned again to Glasgow, after he had been sometime chaplain to the king's family, he was not admitted to the profession of divinity, when he offered to serve God in that eminent station. I do not desire to be mistaken, as that chair is filled to edification; but these men may be afflicted with no small concern, who closed the door upon such a valuable instrument, for who knows what good might have been done to the candidates for the holy ministry these eight years bypast? It is also well known that when God had withdrawn him a while from this place, and he was in a capacity as well as willing to come back again, and addresses were made to him for this purpose, yet some endeavoured to prevent his return to us. Ye know what supplications and protestations were given in to the session against his coming, though these persons professed no ground of dissatisfaction with him: and for as little as some think of that protestation that was offered against his admission, it will be remembered many years hence, and even in the day of judgment. Let all such as had a hand in it repent, and lay it to heart.

Consider also if the little prayer and wrestling these seven months past, during his sickness amongst us, though God was waiting on our prayers, might not have contributed to provoke God to deprive us of such a blessing. This event might have induced his people to set apart a day, yea, several days for humiliation and prayer, [but] that this was not done. I may also observe, that the little welcome the gospel he dispensed had among too many, might provoke God to take him away. God was

indeed pleased to remove another minister in the prime of his days, when multitudes seemed to idolize him, to teach us not to glory in man, or think of any pastor more than is meet.³⁸ But how many in this congregation stood out, and yet stand out against the calls of the gospel? How few were gained to Christ? How many wearied of the gospel, and Christ's ministers, as they were loath to be plainly dealt with, or even reprov'd for wrongs done to God, and overliness [*superficiality*] or negligence in the things of religion. They said (Micah 2:6) to the prophets, "Prophecy not," and "they shall not prophesy." Many a fair day of the Son of man hath been in Glasgow, many a fair, free and sweet offer of the gospel (so savory and comfortable to God's children) have been waved and rejected by many hearers of this gospel. This is the great cause of this terrible stroke. Our judgment carries our sin engraven upon it. Were not two serious, spiritual and eminent ministers taken from you in one month?³⁹ "Three shepherds," as we read [in] Zechariah II, "I also cut off in one month, and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then said I, I will not feed you; that which dieth, let it die: and that which is to be cut of, let it be cut of; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another." May God graciously prevent such a judgment, but the cold reception the gospel got here, hath provok'd God to do all as He hath done at present with us. I have heard this faithful servant of God, He hath now translated to heaven, complain often that when he came to preach in his own church, he saw not the face of a congregation, and that he came seldom to the pulpit, but he feared some tumult among the people in running away from him. He also said, some little time before his last sickness, he was afraid the Lord had recalled his commission to Glasgow, and that his work among them was coming to an end.⁴⁰ I am sorry indeed to say such things, but when such a judicious and well skilled dispenser of the Word was despised, it was just in God to take

38. Carstares likely refers to Andrew Gray (1633–1656).

39. Unless "in one month" is figurative and this is another reference to Andrew Grey, it is unclear who the second minister is. This cannot refer to David Vetch, because as the story goes, he took ill the Lord's day before the Monday of Durham's burial when Carstares preached a third sermon. The two sermons cited here were preached on the Thursday before, June 27, 1658. Cf. Howie, *Lives of the Scottish Covenanters* (1858), 215.

40. "That a litle before he sickned, ther came a call to him from Aberdeen; and, jesting with his wife, he sayes, 'My dear, will you goe with me to Aberdeen? Shee surprised, and said he needed not to doubt she would goe where he went; but what meant he by that? 'Treuly,' said he, 'I think I must goe either to Aberdeen or my grave: There is certainly somewhat before me; for my work is done in Glasgou; I can not get a text to preach to them.' And with a litle time he sickned and died." *Analec̄ta*, 2.140. See also, *Analec̄ta*, 3.107. It is unclear whether Durham accepted the call (dated 23 December). He was still uncertain and considering it, even though he knew the seriousness of his condition and unsure he had "anie mor lyf;" in a February 15, 1651 letter seeking advice that he wrote to David Dickson (NLS, Wodrow MSS Folio XV, #26). Cf. "The James Durham MSS Part III," *The Confessional Presbyterian* 13 (2017).

him to Himself. Doth not God threaten some famine of the bread of life, when such a skilful and wise steward, that gave every one his portion in due season, is now taken out of His house? Ye know how skillfully he could have ranked you all, and gave your bread in great plenty; and who knows but our sun is now going down.”

In the last sermon, the day when Mr. Durham’s body was laid in the grave (upon the same text) Mr. Carstairs adds, “I renew the exhortation. Overlook not this melancholy dispensation, *viz.*, the removal of a very pious man and minister, as useful a minister as ever we had amongst us, or ever ye will see. ‘Know ye not that there is a prince, and a great man fallen in Israel?’ May I not say on better grounds, ‘Know ye not that there is a prince among pastors fallen today, a steward, a faithful and wise steward, that knew well how to give God’s children their food in due season, a gentle and kind nurse, a faithful admonisher, reprove, and warner of every one of you; a skilful counsellor in all your straits, and difficulties, and dark matters. He was eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; a burning and shining light in this dark world; an interpreter of the word among a thousand; to him men gave ear, and after his words no man spoke again.”⁴¹

From what I have faithfully transcribed from these sermons of the reverend and worthy Mr. Carstairs, and from the collectors of some memorable particulars of Mr. Durham’s life, the reader will see how much this great man was esteemed for his incomparable wisdom, humanity, goodness, integrity, gravity, moderation, humility, meekness and all other Christian virtues, which were eminently fortified and supported by his unaffected piety and devotion. His discourses, both in print and in manuscript are undoubted specimens of the sound divinity, and the most extensive learning, and his intimate acquaintance with all the fundamental doctrines and laws of genuine Christianity; his foresaid friend {regrets} he was unpopular, and less followed than some ministers greatly inferior to him in learning, and ministerial abilities; this might be owing to the weakness of his voice, or some other trivial circumstance in the manner of communicating his sentiments; or to his prudent gravity and abstraction from the world, and not to anything that could depreciate his unparalleled worth and sufficiency. It hath been observed by some, that the most judicious, learned, honest and pious ministers, have been frequently less admired and followed by the common people, than some that have been vastly inferior to them, but have been more fervent in the delivery of their sermons.⁴²

41. 2 Samuel 2:38; Matthew 24:45; 1 Thessalonians 2:7; Proverbs 25:12; Proverbs 1:5–6; Job 29:15; John 1:5; 5:35; Job 33:23; 29:21–22.

42. Thus far Mr. Carstairs and the prefacer to Durham’s *Lectures on the Book of Job* (1758).

While the ministry of James Durham was brief, it left a lasting legacy. Even though in his lifetime he never thought to send anything to print, at the end of his life at the entreaty of Baillie and others he prepared his lectures on John's Revelation for publication. These appeared after his death, as all of his books did. "The writings of 'Judicious Durham' claim a place in Scottish Bibliography simply owing to their great popularity. His books were constantly read for almost two centuries. Twenty-six printing-presses in eight towns of Scotland, England, and Holland were occupied with them; in each decade between his death and the beginning of the nineteenth century at least one of his books was printed; Not one of them, however, was published during his lifetime ... it was through the loving care of his widow and her brother-in-law, Mr. John Carstairs of Glasgow, that his Sermons and Expositions were edited and published."⁴³

THE WORKS OF JAMES DURHAM

The works which came from the ministry of James Durham as enumerated by George Christie are:⁴⁴

1. *A Commentary upon the Book of the Revelation* (1658).
2. *A Treatise Concerning Scandal* (1659).
3. *Clavis Cantici: An Exposition of the Song of Solomon* (1668).
4. *A Practical Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (1675).
5. *The Blessedness of the Death of those that Die in the Lord* (1681).
6. *Christ Crucified: or, The Marrow of the Gospel* (1683).
7. *The Unsearchable Riches of Christ* (1685).
8. *Heaven Upon Earth* (1685).
9. *The Great Gain of Contenting Godliness* (1685).
10. *The Great Corruption of Subtile [i.e. Subtle] Self* (1686).
11. *An Exposition of the Book of Job* (1758).

TWO PERIODS OF PUBLISHING EFFORTS

Excluding the lectures on the book of Job, the publications produced during this all too brief ministry of James Durham, fall into two categories and/or periods. The earlier publications published between 1658 and 1675 were a theological work (treatise on scandal), commentaries (Revelation; Song of Solomon), and lectures (Ten Commandments). Before his death

43. George Christie, B.D., "A Bibliography of James Durham: 1622-1658?" *Papers of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 1918. 35.

44. "A Bibliography of James Durham," 36.

**THE BLESSEDNESS OF THE DEATH OF
THOSE THAT DIE IN THE LORD**

Seven Sermons on Revelation 14:13

*All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Job 14:14
So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom. Psalm 90:12*

The Blessedness of the Death of those that Die in the Lord.

EDITIONS

- *1. No publisher noted ([Sanders,? Glasgow?], 1681). Wing D2795d.
- *2. No publisher noted ([Anderson?], 1682). D2796.
- *3. Robert Sanders (Glasgow, 1682). The “third edition.” D2796a.
- *4. Heir of Andrew Anderson (Edinburgh, 1684). D2797, ESTC R171875, ALDIS 2950.6. This edition is noted by George Christie as an example he owned, and Christie is the only basis upon which ESTC lists this edition. However, while the publisher (“Heir”) is accurate for that date, it is possibly a typographical mistake, and that Christie intended 1694, as he does not list an edition for that date (which was published by “Heirs”). Wing locates no such edition.
5. Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson (Edinburgh, 1694). D2798.
6. Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson (Edinburgh, 1708). Not in ESTC. National Library of Scotland, Rare Books & Music Reading Room (George IV Bridge), shelfmark RB.s.2674. Also, Princeton Theological Seminary, SCA #1997.
- *7. Heirs and Successors of Andrew Anderson (Edinburgh, 1713). Not in ESTC.
8. Robert Sanders (Glasgow, 1715). National Library of Scotland, Rare Books & Music Reading Room (offsite). Shelf mark L.164.h. ESTC T189990.
9. Mr. Alex Carmichael, Alex. Miller, Jo. Ja. and Mrs. Browns (Glasgow, 1734). T209913. Example: Congregational Library, London, shelfmark 56.2.21.
10. [Dutch] *De zaligheyd der dooden die in den Heere ſterven* (Te Dordrecht, gedrukt by Joannes van Braam, 1735).
- *11. John Hall (Glasgow, 1751). T189988. An example is owned by Glasgow University Library, Special Collections, BG56-k.26.
- *12. John Hall (Glasgow, 1754). Not in ESTC.
- *13. John Hall (Glasgow, 1756). T11687
14. [Dutch] (Utrecht: den Hertog, z.j., 190?).
15. [Dutch] (Ter Aa : Den Hertog, 1913).
16. Naphtali Press (Dallas, Tex., 1988); in *An Anthology of Presbyterian & Reformed Literature*, volume 1:#1–#2. The text was based on the 1754 edition.
17. Soli Deo Gloria Publications (Morgan, Pa., 2003).
18. In *Collected Sermons of James Durham* (2017).

*These editions are listed in Rev. George Christie, “A Bibliography of James Durham: 1622–1658,” *Papers of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 1918, 42.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

*To the very much honored and virtuous Lady, Madam Jean Cockburn,
Lady to Right Honorable Sir Robert Hepburn of Keith,
Marshal in East-Lothian, Knight¹*

MADAM,

When I was casting in my thoughts to whom I should address the dedication of these few following Sermons, your Ladyship's self readily offered, being a person to whom I am upon many accounts singularly obliged, as I am likewise to your honorable husband, having also had the retirement and conveniency not far from you for revising and making them ready for the press, which as you partly know and as others may conjecture was not so very easy a piece of work, considering that they were not taken from the author's pen, but from his mouth when preaching by one of his ordinary hearers, no scholar, and afterwards transcribed by another of less judgment—your ladyship being withal a genuine and undegenerate daughter of the ancient, honorable and loyal family of Ormiston, eminently instrumental in our beautiful and blessed, in our great and glorious work of Reformation from popery; and famous² for ready and cheerful receiving, harboring, cherishing and encouraging the faithful servants of God and martyrs of Jesus—particularly of renowned Mr. George Wishart, who was thence taken under trust by the unhappy Earl of Bothwel, now extinct and his memorial with him,³ while the House of Ormiston stands and flourishes still. Which Mr. Wishart, I say, was taken thence and

1. [Some information on the Cockburns and Hepburns is given in *The New Statistical Account of Scotland* (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1845), vol. 2, 135–139.]

2. As it is hoped it will through grace still continue to be, if the like sad occasion, as we wish it never may, should again occur.

3. The mentioning whereof, I know your honorable husband Sir Robert's just regard for the reformed Protestant Religion, will easily persuade him to bear with, though he may be, for anything I know, one of the nearest relations of that sometime great nobleman, now surviving.

thereafter most cruelly murdered at St. Andrews, the then seat of Cardinal Beaton, who in great state and pompous pride, looking out at the window of his castle there, now almost leveled with the ground, fed his lustful eyes with the horrid and pitiful, but to him pleasant spectacle of that eminent saint and servant of Jesus Christ, his being burnt alive and consumed to ashes—the [same] measure that Mr. Patrick Hamilton, that noble person, nobly descended, having been a nephew by his father to the Earl of Arran,⁴ and by the mother to the Duke of Albany (no blood being too noble or precious to be left by these butchers, or to be sucked by these blood thirsty leeches), met with at the hands of the Arch prelate Beaton, uncle to the said cardinal, not many years before in that same place. O terrible truculent and tragical actings! Yet such as may be erected amongst us if ever (as God forbid) the Roman Antichrist, that scarlet colored beast, drunk with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, shall again recover his interest in these kingdoms, now the kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ.

But it may be some careless and unconcerned Gallios will for silencing and satisfying us, say *that these things were done by law*; as we are told by a late petulant and profane *pamphleteer*,⁵ that all these horrid and hideous persecutions raised and prosecuted against many Protestants in the neighboring Kingdom of England in the short but very bloody reign of Queen Mary, notwithstanding her solemn profession made to the Northfolk [Northfolk] and Suffolk Gentlemen, and in plain council to the contrary, *were according to law; so that the martyrs in her days can no more be accounted such, than those who suffered by the late Popish Plot; above 200 of whom, being in all but 277, according to his reckoning (though he reckons amiss) were, as he falsely and impiously alleges, executed as profligate persons, speaking this malicious and grossly calumnious lie, purely out of his own, in exact imitation of the father of lies. For famous Mr. Fox, that indefatigable laborious searcher after all occurrents of that nature, gives no such account; of whose scrutiny in the suffering of martyrs under Queen Mary, ingenuous and impartial Mr. Fuller speaking in his Ecclesiastical History,⁶ *says, this point has been handled already so curiously and copiously by Mr. Fox, that his industry herein has starved the endeavors of such as shall succeed him, leaving nothing for**

4. See Spotswood, *History*, Page 12. [John Spottiswood (1565–1639), Archbishop of St. Andrews, *History of the Church and State of Scotland* (London, 1655).]

5. [*Three great questions concerning the succession and the dangers of popery, fully examin'd in a letter to a Member of this present Parliament*, by M. R. (London : Printed for M.R., 1680), 19. Carstares is writing during the brief period of the Popish Plot (1678–1681). Created by Titus Oates, the fictitious plot claimed there was a Jesuit conspiracy to assassinate Charles the II and bring his Roman Catholic brother James to the throne. It was widely believed and caused a great deal of panic. Fifteen men were executed as alleged participants in the plot.]

6. [Thomas Fuller, *The Church-History of Britain from the Birth of Jesus Christ Until the Year MDCXLVIII* (London: Printed for John Williams, 1655; repr. Oxford, 1845) vol. 4, 179, 203.]

their pens and pains to feed upon; for what can the man do that comes after the king, but that which has been already done? And Mr. Fox, appearing sole emperor in this subject, all posterities may despair to add any remarkable discoveries which have escaped his observation; wherefore to handle this subject after him, is to light a candle to the sun. And further, according to his commendable candor, he adds, as if he had been in designed contradiction to this detractor: *And now to take our leaves of these martyrs, what remains, but—that we embrace and defend that doctrine which they sealed with their lives, and as occasion shall offer, to vindicate and defend their memories from such scandalous tongues and pens which have or shall traduce them.*

Neither does Dr. Burnet,⁷ in his late *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, give us any such account. Nay, neither Speed nor Baker, whom he most injuriously vouches for his authors of this calumny, hint any such thing. But the man has forgotten or would not remember, that there has been, may be and still are in the world, “thrones of iniquity which establish mischief by a law, wherewith God” the great lawgiver “has no fellowship” [cf. Ps. 94:20]. And that the primitive Christian martyrs, who were most cruelly put to death by the persecuting pagan Roman emperors, particularly by Trajan, Hadrian, the Antonins, and Severus, were so dealt with by them, according to the then laws of the Roman empire; for which reason it is very probable that John the divine in the Revelation brings in some of these persecutors with a pair of balances in their hands [Rev. 6:5], insinuating thereby that they pretend to weigh and measure out their persecutions of Christians by exact justice according to law; who are therefore no more to be accounted martyrs. Nay, all that have suffered most exquisite torments and cruel deaths on account of the Protestant religion, not only in Scotland and England, but in France, Germany, the Low-Countries, and elsewhere since the beginning of the Reformation and our forsaking the apostate church of Rome; and in Tholouse, Bohemia, the Valleys of Piedmont and the other parts of the Christian world before that time, for that very same religion, though not under the denomination of Protestant, must needs according to the new doctrine of that pretended Protestant author, be dashed out of the roll and catalogue of the martyrs of Jesus Christ; because forsooth they were generally put to death by and according to the laws of the respective countries wherein they suffered, though these human laws were framed on the matter in contempt and defiance of divine laws to the contrary.

And yet we need neither wonder, nor strange to find this man basely bespattering, as so many profligates, the Protestants who suffered in Queen Mary’s days, and ranking them in the same category, and setting them near by on the same level with the Papists that were lately executed for their

7. [Gilbert Burnet, *History of the Reformation of the Church of England: In Two Parts* (London: Printed by T.H. for Richard Chiswell, 1681).]

accession to the horrid and hellish plot, and denying the former to have been martyrs more than the latter; who roundly and boldly in face of the reformed churches dare assert that all the difference between the Popish and the Protestant religion is *in modes and circumstances, and no more in reality*; and that *the laws which established the Protestant and abolished the Popish religion cannot be otherwise altered but by an equal power with that from whence they had their being, King and Parliament, who by agreeing no more prejudge the public in order to heaven than they did before, that being only accidental and extrinsical to the substance of religion by which alone and not by forms or ceremonies, men are saved.*

What? Are there no material and highly momentous doctrinal differences between Protestants and Papiſts?

— As about the Pope, his arrogantly claimed and usurped universal, civil and ecclesiastical supremacy, whereby he takes [up]on him to transfer kingdoms, to depose kings and emperors and loose subjects from their sworn allegiances to them; to interdict as to all sacreds, and on the matter to excommunicate, not only particular persons, the greatest crowned heads not excepted, but whole Christian kingdoms at his pleasure, none being warranted to say, “What, or why dost thou?” And all this as Christ’s vicar on earth, whereas indeed he is the arch-enemy of Christ, even that Antichrist, to whom all his characters assigned by the Apostles Paul and John do most exactly and punctually agree.

— About his fondly fancied infallibility, times and ways out of number, to the conviction of the world, not only fallibilized, but grossly falsified and belied; as for instance undeniably appears in a matter of very great moment, to wit, the different translations of the old vulgar Latin Bible by Pope Sixtus the fifth and by Pope Clement the eighth, some three years only intervening between the one and the other;⁸ each of which translations is in the preface or bull thereto prefixed declared to be authentic and obligatory of the whole Christian world to own the same as such, the printing or publishing of any other translation being under the pain of the greater excommunication, severely discharged; and yet these two translations are not only in a multitude of places, upward of a thousand, different the one from the other, but in many expressly contrary the one to the other; so that the Pope’s infallibility does infallibly prove fallible and falls down flat. For if the one of those translations be infallibly true, then the other must needs be infallibly false; or if they should still say, which it seems they cannot have the effrontery to do, that they are both infallibly true, then their Popes will not only be made infallible, but (if it did not involve a blasphemous repugnancy) super-omnipotent, by attributing to them a power to make most really, plainly and palpably contradictory propositions true at once (so that we need not henceforth

8. See Thomas James [(1573?–1629)], his *Bellum Papale* [1600; 1678], and his defense thereof.

wonder that their canon law styles the Pope, Our Lord God the Pope). Besides that several of their pretended infallible Popes have by the published confessions of their own writers been found respectively guilty of professed heresy, simony, perjury, adultery, sodomy, necromancy, sacrificing to idols and devils, and of other most vile and abominable villainies; yea, their great champion Baronius, at the year 897, expressly says,⁹ *that for the space of an hundred and fifty years together, the Popes were rather apostates than apostolics, and that they were thrust into the papal chair by the power of harlots and by the violence of the Prince of Tuscany.* Which sandy foundation of alleged infallibility being overturned, all the rotten and tottering superstructure of his false doctrines reared up thereon, as so many castles of comedown,¹⁰ must needs fall to the ground. It is indeed a wonder that any rational man should have the confidence to own such a fancy, but a greater wonder that any professing himself to be a Christian, should make it a grand article of his belief, and a basis of the eternal salvation of his immortal soul. Alas! it is to be feared that an evil conscience cauterized and some disposition to atheism are with many the great inductives to it.

— About the authority of the sacred Scriptures, which they will have wholly as to us to depend upon the authority of the church,¹¹ that is to say, at bottom, of the Pope, blasphemously alleging *that the authority of the Pope is above the authority of the scriptures,*¹² *that no book, nay, nor chapter of the whole Bible is to be held so canonical without the Pope's authority,*¹³ *and that the authority of the scriptures is no more to be valued than Aesop's Fables,*¹⁴

9. [Cesare Baronius, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 12 vols. (1588–1607; Cologne, 1614), 2:585.]

10. [*Castle of comedown.* An edifice that has come to ruin; an unsubstantial structure easily overthrown (OED).]

11. Pighius, *de Hier. Eccl.* Lib. 1. Chap. 2. [Albert Pighius (1490–1552), *Hierarchiæ ecclesiasticæ assertio* (Cologne, 1538) folio 6v. *Apostoli quædam scripserunt: non . . . ut scripta illa præessent fidei et religioni nostræ; sed potius, ut subessent.*—*Scripturæ sunt multi iudices: scripturæ sunt veluti cereus nasus.* “The apostles have written certain things: not that their said writings should rule our faith or religion; but rather that they should be under, and be ruled by our faith. The scriptures are dumb judges: the scriptures are like a nose of wax.” *The Works of John Jewel*, Part 4 (1850), 863.]

12. Prierias, *Dialogues against Luther.* [Silvestro da Priero Mazzolini (Silvester Prierias), *Epitome responsionis ad Martinum Lutherum* (1519). Cf. Timothy J. Wengert, *The Annotated Luther*, v. 1: *The Roots of Reform* (Fortress, 2015), 370.]

13. See Greg. 7. *Diēt. In Con. Rom.* [Pope Gregory VII (authorship uncertain), *Diētatus Papæ* (see article 17); see Migne's *Patrologiæ Latiniæ*, vol. 148, col. 408, and Ernest F. Henderson, *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1905) 367. “That no chapter and no book shall be considered canonical without his authority.”]

14. See Hermanus. [Wolfgangus Hermannus (also Kyriander). “One Wolfgangus Hermannus said, ‘that the Scriptures being destitute of the testimony of the Church, have no more authority than Aesop's Fables:’ which words Cardinal Hosius, writing against Brentius, avers as containing a true and sound doctrine. . . .” Edmund Gibson, *Supplement to Gibson's A Preservative Against Popery: Being Important Treatises on the Romish Controversy*, vol. 8 (London: British Society for Promoting the Religious Principles of the Reformation, 1850) 31. “Quando autoritas ecclesiæ scripturam deserit, valebit quantum Aesopi fabulæ; est enim ecclesia suprema magistra, quæ inter scripturas diiudicandi habet potestatem, nempe quia spiritu sancto

unless it were for the testimony of their church. And about the perfection and perspicuity thereof in all things necessary to salvation, which they endeavor to disgrace by the impious imputations of *imperfection* and *obscurity*, calling them a *black gospel*, *inken divinity*,¹⁵ and a *nose of wax*.¹⁶

— About the necessity of unwritten traditions in matters of faith, as proceeding from the same divine authority, and to be received with the same divine belief, and under the same pain of divine wrath and damnation, that the divinely and infallibly inspired Scriptures are. For the Council, or rather causelessly cursing conventicle at Trent, says, *that they are received with the same reverence.*

— About the unwarrantableness of translating the Scriptures into vulgar languages and of the people's reading of them in point blank contradiction to the Scriptures themselves; and whatever be pretended, mainly intended to keep them still in gross ignorance of divine Scripture-truths, and in utter incapacity to discover, detest and abandon their abominable errors? And how dare the people presume to read the Scripture? since his holiness Pope Innocent bellowed out like a beast in this fine infallible interpretation of that Scripture about the beasts not touching the mountain wherein the Law was given: *This mountain*, he says,¹⁷ *which must not be*

regitur et Christus cum ea manet usque ad consumationem saculi." Wolfgang Hermann, *Quod Evangelium non in litera verum in spiritu & virtute consistat collatio* (n.p., no pag., 1552), Bv. This was quite the scandalous statement and involved Johannes Brenz in some controversy with Pedro de Soto and Stanislaus Hosius for attributing (if perhaps sarcastically) the same to de Soto. See the note in Pierre Bayle's *A general dictionary, historical and critical* (1788), 6.252. See also Brenz, *Operum*, vol. 8 (Tubingæ: Gruppenbachius, 1590), 199, 729; de Soto, *Assertio catholica fidei circa articulos confessionis* (1557), 173; Hosius, *Confutatio prolegomenon brentii* (1560), 126. Hermann's words came up in the 1557 Diet at Worms, which Brenz attended. Friedrich Förner, *Historia haënenus sepulta, Colloquii Vvornatiensis* (1624), 43; Benno von Bundschuh, *Das Wormser Religionsgespräch von 1557: unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der kaiserlichen Religionspolitik* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1988), 445–446, n53. Hermann was a Catholic pamphleteer and Dramatist. See the brief entry in *Killy Literaturlexikon: Autoren und Werke des deutschsprachigen Kulturraums* (Berlin; New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 7.154–155.]

15. [Eccius: "Evangelium nigrum, et theologiam atramentarium." Cf. Jewel, p. 758.]

16. See Pighius, *ibid.* Lib. 3 chap. 3. [*Hierarchiæ ecclesiasticæ assertio* (Cologne, 1538), fol. 80.]

17. See Pighius, *ibid.* Lib. 3 chap. 3. [This footnote, which simply repeats the previous reference, seems to have been added in the 1694 Edinburgh edition by the heirs of Andrew Anderson (Wing D2798). No note appears in the example of the first edition preserved in Early English Books (Glasgow: n.p., 1681, Wing D2795). The EEB example of the Edinburgh edition of 1682 (D2796), also no publisher, is incomplete and missing the text in question, so whether a note is present could not be verified. The Sanders 1682 third and corrected edition does not have the note (D2796A). The 1694 edition is not noted in Christie's Bibliography of Durham's works (Rev. George Christie, "A Bibliography of James Durham: 1622–1658," *Papers of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 1918, p. 42). However, Christie does note a 1684 edition by the heir of Anderson (D2797). Wing states that examples of this 1684 edition are "not seen"; and references Christie. Thus it appears the only evidence of it is Christie's bibliography, which states he owned the example. However, it seems likely that the 1684 is simply a typographical error for 1694. If the reference does indeed first appear then, the printer of

touched by the beasts, is the high and holy scriptures, which the unlearned must not read. And their doctors commonly affirm that the people must not be suffered to read the Scriptures, because forsooth, *we must not give holy things to dogs and cast pearls before swine*. Such account make these pastors of the people, as to rank them amongst beasts, even the vilest of them, dogs and swine; which says such pastors are fitter to feed and keep dogs and swine, than to feed and watch over rational men and women that have immortal souls. And one of them, Alphonsus de Castro,¹⁸ asserts, *that from the reading of the scriptures, all heresies come*; though this has been ordinarily more through the fault of learned men than of the common people, and in neither through any fault of the Scriptures. They are so mad angry at the translation of the Bible into vulgar languages, that some of them have boldly belched out this blasphemy, *That peoples being permitted to read the Bible, was the invention of the Devil*.¹⁹ There is an English pamphlet printed anno 1663 entitled, *The Reconciler of Religions*, [which] has these horrid words (page 41): *The Protestant Bible is no more the Word of God, than is the Alchoran or Aesop's Fables, it is a diabolical invention, and a sacrilegious instrument to deceive and damn all such poor souls as believe it, and therefore worthy to be burnt with fire in the middle of the market at noon, and let all the people say Amen, so be it*.²⁰

— About justification by works and inherent righteousness and not

the 1694 edition may have presumed a reference was needed and simply repeated the previous reference to Pighius. Whether a reference was originally intended to be given is not clear. Schaff confirms the statement: “In 1199 Innocent III., writing to the diocese of Metz where the Scriptures were being used by heretics, declared that as by the old law, the beast touching the holy mount was to be stoned to death, so simple and uneducated men were not to touch the Bible or venture to preach its doctrines” (Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 6:723). Schaff references, Migne’s *Patrologia Latina*, CCXIV:695 sq. The statement comes from Innocent III’s *Constitutions*. For a partial translation see, Henry Denzinger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum, The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari, Thirtieth Ed. (Powers Lake: Marian House, published in 1954 by Herder & Co., Freiburg) 1605–1606.]

18. [Alphonsus de Castro, *Adversus omnes haereses libri XIII* (Paris, 1560), 21r–22v.]

19. See Peresius [Archbishop Martín Pérez de Ayala (Martinus Péresius Aiala, 1504–1566), *De divinis apostolicis atque ecclesiasticis traditionibus, deque autoritate ac vi earū sacrosancta adsertiones, seu libri decem: in quibus fere uniuersa ecclesiae antiquitas, circa dogmata apostolica, orthodoxe elucidatur* (Paris, 1549) 30r–30v. “nullus popularibus, rudibus atque carnalibus erit praefixus terminus? admittendi sunt senes ad eam, priusquam animi sordes deponant? inuitandi adolescentes cum adhuc puerile balbutiunt? Credo equidem (nec me fallit opinio) institutum hoc sub pietatis quadam umbra a diabolo esse inuentum...” “Peresius” (quoted by Dr. White) saith, “Shall no bounds be set to popular, rude, and carnal men? Shall old men that yet speak like children, be admitted to read the Scripture? I suppose verily, (and my opinion fails me not,) this ordinance, under the pretence of piety, was invented by the devil.” Cited from Thomas Doolittle, “Popery is a Novelty; and the Protestants’ religion was not only before Luther, but the same that was taught by Christ and His Apostles,” in *The Morning-exercise against Popery, or, the Principal Errors of the Church of Rome Detected and Confuted in a Morning-lecture Preached lately in Southwark* (London: Printed by A. Maxwell for Tho. Parkhurst, 1675); repr., v. 6 (London: James Nichols, 1845) 544.]

20. [S. A., *The Reconciler of Religions* (London, 1663).]

by the imputed righteousness of Christ; whereby sinners have access to boast and glory, as being made their own immediate saviors, and to offer a false sacrifice which God will never accept of, to the great dishonor of the alone Savior, Jesus Christ.

— About the possibility of not only fulfilling the law perfectly in this life, though the whole Scriptures, the universal experience of all ages and men's own consciences reclaim [*contradict; cry against*], but of out-doing the law and doing more than it requires or obliges men unto by their works of *supererogation*, whereby they think to oblige God and to merit from Him not only for themselves, but for others also, and whereby they will needs have the righteousness of one supererogating saint to be imputed to other persons, and hold this for a very real truth, while in the meantime they flout at the imputation of Christ's merits and righteousness, as but a putative and merely imaginary thing, so great is the strength of judicially infatuating delusion.

— About antiscryptural, irrational, nonsensical and monstrous Transubstantiation, whereby they will have the bread and wine in the eucharist turned, and that by the priest when and as often as he pleases, into the very body and blood of Christ, and so will have Him whom the heavens must receive or contain till the time of the restitution of all things, to be corporally or bodily present therein, and that in thousands of places at once, as to His whole body; and to be chewed with the teeth, digested in the stomach, and sent forth into the draught of the profanest wretches that participate of that sacrament; yea, it may be to be eaten by mice and rats, terrible to be once but thought of. And their abominable unbloody sacrifice of the mass, offered daily for the sins of the living and of the dead, highly derogatory unto that one propitiatory and justice atoning bloody sacrifice, offered up once for all unto God by Jesus Christ the great high priest, on the golden altar of His divine nature, by which sacrifice He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.

— About the sacraments conferring grace on such as receive them by the very deed done; and the necessity of a right intention in the administrator of them, not only as to the fruit and effect, but as to the validity and very being of them; whereby not only their *opus operatum* is overturned, but most things in popery as such, namely their Transubstantiation, and sacrifice of the mass, nay the very Papacy itself (as some of their own noted writers seem to be convinced)²¹ are rendered utterly uncertain; and in truth nothing left certain among them but this, that there is an uncertainty of most, if not of all things.

21. See Puteanus, who in 22. q. 1. art. 6. teaches that it is not absolutely of faith that the existing Pope (v.g. Paul the Fifth), is the true vicar of Christ and successor of Peter, because it supposes two propositions, Paul is baptized (N.B.) and Paul is canonically elected, neither of which is absolutely of faith. [John Puteanus (d.1623), *Commentariorum in summam theologiae D. Thomae*, 2 vols. (Tolosæ Tectosagum, 1627), vol. 1., *dubitatio ultima*, p. 603.]

TO ALEXANDER DURHAM.

Generoso viro, & amico suo multis nominibus plurimum Colendo Domino Alexandro Durhamo, Domino de Largo, Clarissimi Authoris Filio Germano, & ex multis quos illi Deus gratiosé dederat liberis nunc tantum superstiti; qui defunctum patrem (virum illum non tantum apud Nostrates, sed etiam apud Exteros Celebrem & vere magni nominis) quamvis non passibus aequis, pro suo tamen modulo, in vijs Domini serió sequitur; egregias has de Consciencia Conciones Conscionatoris conscienciam tenerrimam & plane divinitus illuminatam suaviter spirans; in sincere amoris tesseram & perpetuae observantiae testimonium, D. D. Johannes Carstares.

Johannes Carstares, D.D. To that noble man, and worthy to be honored for many reasons as his friend, Lord Alexander Durham, Lord of Largo,¹ son german of the most illustrious author, and the only survivor of the many children whom God had graciously given to him; who earnestly follows his deceased father (that man, not only among us, but even among foreigners, famous and of truly great name), although not with equal steps, yet according to his own measure, in the ways of the Lord; these distinguished sermons of the Preacher concerning the Conscience sweetly breathing conscience the most tender and plainly illuminated from on high; as a token of sincere love and testimony of perpetual regard.

1. [James Durham is said to have had four sons (see Introduction, page 10), Francis by his first wife, Anna, and by Margaret, James, Alexander and John. Various histories note that James Durham's brother Alexander was knighted Lord Lyon, and subsequently bought the lands in Largo. He died in 1663, leaving the estate to his nephew Francis, son of his minister brother. He also died without issue in 1667, and the lands passed to his brother, which some name as James and others name Alexander, who became third baron of Largo. James/Alexander had married a Margaret Rutherford, and died sometime before 1694. The wife apparently became a 'notorious Papist.' The term son-German seems to relate to either the fact that the man in question was the son of Durham by his second wife, or/and the fact she was the half sister of John Carstares's wife. One would think Carstares would not have confused which nephew was still living, but the conflicting sources leave it an open question. Cf. John Burke and John Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of Great Britain & Ireland* (London: 1847) 1.365. Walter Wood, *The East Neuk of Fife: Its History and Antiquities, Geology, Botany and Natural History in General* (Edinburgh: 1862) 294–295.]

TO THE READERS, AND MORE PARTICULARLY TO THE
INHABITANTS OF THE CITY OF GLASGOW.

The Microcosm, or little world, Man, a notably curious compend and abridgement (as it were) of the larger one, and the great masterpiece of all the visible works of God; was when he came from under the hand of the Omnipotent Creator in the first edition, a little model and representation of the Divine perfections; having impressed on him that blessed and beautiful, that amiable and admirable conformity to the image and likeness of God, wherein consisted the preeminency of his nature, above that of all other creatures in the visible or sublunary world; being one of the great excellencies that a created nature is capable of, and a clearer ray of divine majesty, than his dominion over the other creatures; and which only made him capable of the enjoyment of God, as being that which assimilated to him, and brought him to the nearest approaches to glory. All the faculties and powers of his soul carried this glorious character vividly [*vividly*] engraven on them. His body also had somewhat of the same image stamped on it, though not in respect of its figure and shape or natural use, but as an essential part of his nature, it was interested therein by a participation of original righteousness. For it was man's person that was made holy, though his soul was the first proper subject of that concreated [*created together*] habit and principle of holiness, yet his body (as I said) as an essential part of his nature, did participate thereof, by a peculiar communication of that holiness to it, as far as it was to be influential on moral operations; and hereby were the parts and members of his body in that state of innocency and integrity, made instruments and servants unto righteousness and holiness:

His *understanding* was a lamp of clear and pure light, without any the least measure or mixture of culpable darkness or ignorance. It was able clearly and distinctly to represent all objects, competent for him to know, with wonderful readiness and facility.

His *will* was (to say so) straight as a rush, without any the least sinful crook or sinister bias, inclining only and perfectly to that which was good and altogether averse from everything that was evil; there being a thorough

agreement between his will and the will of God, so that he willed what He willed and nilled what He nilled [*willed not*].

All his *affections* moved only and constantly towards right and commanded objects and that with perfection of regularity in all their motions.

His *memory* was of strong retention, neither knew he, while he remained such, what it was to forget anything that was suitable and incumbent for him to remember.

His *conscience* was in excellent case to reflect, and there being no ground for any challenge, reproof, or accusation, it did only commend and applaud. In a word, it did most faithfully and exactly act the part of God's deputy, following his orders punctually and precisely and so was kept in an undisturbed calm, and perfectly serene tranquility.

The *members* of his body were servants only to righteousness, and with holy alacrity, subserved the soul in all its operations.

But, ah! the entering in of cursed sin made a sad, sorrowful and stupendous catastrophe, setting on fire as it were the whole course of nature, and putting its very foundations some way out of course, and deplorably defacing the curious, stately, magnificent, beautiful and glorious fabric of this little world, man; quite vitiating and corrupting all the faculties, powers and parts of his soul and body, which by the exact and exquisite symmetry and harmony thereof, through the image of God concreated with him, made him, while it remained in its integrity, incapable of all such motions or actions, which should be subservient unto or compliant with anything contrary unto or different from it:

His *understanding*, the leading faculty and the eye (as it were) of the soul, became an abyss and dungeon of darkness, covered all over with fogs, mists and clouds of ignorance, errors and mistakes, so that becoming of a spiritual and holy man, a carnal and corrupt man, "He did not receive, neither could he know" savingly "the things of" God [1 Cor. 2:14]. He became quite blind, having lost his visive [*seeing; visible*¹⁷³²] faculty, as to all spiritual discerning.

His *will*, the ruling and governing faculty, utterly lost its rectitude, and became crooked, froward, perverse, rebellious and obstinate, strongly inclined and bent to evil, to all evil, only to evil, always and constantly to evil, and altogether averse from everything truly good, willing that which God nilled, and nilling that which He willed.

His *affections* turned all mutinous, disorderly, disturbed and confused, furiously rushing on prohibited objects, as the horse rushes into the battle; and what movings so of them were toward any commanded object, these were altogether irregular, not so much as one of them moved toward any such object, purely or primarily because it was a thing commanded.

His *memory* quite lost its retentive faculty, as to the remembering of anything spiritually good, in the way it should have been remembered. It

HEAVEN UPON EARTH
IN THE SERENE TRANQUILLITY ... OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE,
SPRINKLED WITH THE BLOOD OF JESUS,
IN TWENTY-TWO SERMONS

I. SERMON ONE OF SIX ON ACTS 24:16

*And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void
of offence toward God, and toward men.*

A GOOD CONSCIENCE is a singularly good companion, the worth and benefit whereof is not readily so well known till men be brought into some strait [*difficulty*]; then indeed the passing great and singular worth and usefulness of it clearly discovers itself. As we may see in Paul's case here, who being arraigned before the tribunal of an heathen judge and having many enemies, and these too of his own nation having delivered him up, among other grounds of consolation and defence that he has to sustain himself by, this is one, and not the least, that his conscience did bear him witness that it was his endeavour and work to live so before God and men that he might not have a challenge from it. And this makes him speak boldly against all his accusers, and is better to him, and more valuable than all the arguments and rhetorical discourses that a Tertullus [Acts 24:1], yea a Tully [Cicero], or the most eloquent orator in the world, could have used for him.

These words ("Herein do I exercise myself," etc.) hold out a compend and sum of a Christian walk and an excellent pattern for believers, where we have there three things considerable;

First. The apostle's great design and aim, *viz.*, *To have a conscience void of offence*; that he might so walk as never to offend his conscience, nor to give it an ill report to make of him.

Second. The extent of this design and aim, and that in a twofold respect. 1. In respect of the object, *towards God* and *towards men* (i.e. he would do duty to both and be found without offence to either). 2. In respect of all actions, companies, places and times; he was so exercised *always*; not after a sermon or communion only, not under some heavy cross, or after some notable outgate [*escape*] and delivery only; but he aimed, designed and endeavoured to be so constantly and equally.

Third. The manner of his going about this: *Herein do I exercise myself* (i.e.

it was a business that took him up and held him seriously at work). He was as a man, who fighting for his life in a barras¹ or at a single combat, carefully handles his arms [*weapons*]; even so did he carry and behave himself in all things as if his life had stood on every action or word.

I shall at once and together propose several DOCTRINES clearly deducible from the text, the prosecution whereof will help to clear both the words and the matter contained in them.

DOCTRINE ONE. There are many sorts of offences [to which] we are subject and liable both toward God and toward men.

DOCTRINE TWO. There is within every man a conscience that takes notice of every piece of his carriage and is accordingly affected with it, and affects the man for it.

DOCTRINE THREE. Whatever things are offences toward God or men, are also offensive to the conscience; whatever sin strikes against His law, wounds the conscience.

DOCTRINE FOUR. It is a very good, choice and excellent thing for a believer to walk so as to keep a conscience always void of offence toward God and toward men; and on the contrary, it is a very ill thing at any time to have offence toward either of them lying on the conscience.

DOCTRINE FIVE. It is the duty of all men, and more especially of believers, to walk so, as they may always keep a conscience void of offence; yea, it is not only a duty, but we may look on it as an excellent means for advancing of holiness.

DOCTRINE SIX. Where men honestly aim to keep a conscience always void of offence, it will be an exercising and uptaking [*engrossing*] thing.

DOCTRINE SEVEN. Where this exercise is neglected and not seriously carried on, the conscience is left to stumble at and to abound with offences.

DOCTRINE ONE. As for the first, *that there are many kinds of offences {to} which people are subject toward God and men*; it is a thing uncontroverted by all and we need say little of it. Only: 1. There are sins against the first table which are offences toward God, being immediately against Him; and there are sins against the second table which although they be against God, yet immediately they touch and reflect on men. 2. There are sins against God that are secret which God only is witness to; and there are open sins which scandalize men. Paul endeavoured to eschew all these; for all are sins against the Law of God and [are] wounding of the conscience.

DOCTRINE TWO. The second is, *that there is a conscience within every man, which takes notice of every piece of his carriage, and is accordingly affected with it and affects him for it*. This is the ground of all that follows and had need to be more particularly spoken unto. This truth then contains these *three* things: 1. That there is a conscience in every man that takes notice

1. [*Barras*. A barrier, an outwork at the gate of a castle. 2. An enclosure made of felled trees for the defense of armed men. 3. Lists for combatants (Jamieson).]

of every piece of his way and walk. Hence it is said to bear witness: "This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience," etc. (2 Cor. 1:12); and it is also said, "to accuse or excuse" (Rom. 2:15). It witnesses for men and excuses and comforts them when they do well; and witnesses against them, accuses and reproves them when they do evil, and so is to them as a *check*, *captor*, or *ensor*. The apostle's aim to have a conscience void of offence supposes [*supposes*] that he and every man has a conscience, that it takes notice of everything, and will take offence if it be a thing that thwarts with it. We shall not in this place stand to debate what conscience is, whether it be a power or a faculty, a habit or an act; which as it would not be much for your edification, so it would transcend the reach of many of you. Only in the general we may call it a *power wherewith God has endued* [*endowed*] *the soul of man to take notice of all his thoughts, words and actions.*

2. We say it is accordingly affected with everything: when the man does right, it is pleased; and when he does wrong, it is offended and wounded as we may see in 1 Corinthians 8:10–11. So in 1 Samuel 24:5, it is said, "David's heart smote him"; and in Proverbs 18:14, this is called a "wounded spirit."

3. As it is affected, so it affects the person. When a man has done well, it excuses and clears him; and when he has done evil and wronged it, it challenges and accuses him; in which respect conscience is called a *judge*, pronouncing sentence by absolving or condemning men. Scripture and the experience of all sorts of people and times clear and prove this. (1) The Scripture says of heathens that "their conscience bears them witness and their thoughts the mean while accuse or excuse one another" (Rom. 2:15). It holds out this to have been in Adam, who immediately after the fall says, "I heard thy voice, and was afraid" (Gen. 3:10). Terror seized on him. It mentions this also to have been in Joseph's brethren, who say, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother" (Gen. 42:21); and in David in that forecited 1 Samuel 24:5, where it is said that his "heart smote him." It is clearly also supposed where the apostle says, "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things; if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God" (1 John 3:19–21); where we would take notice that what is here and sometimes in the Old Testament called the *heart*, is in the text and elsewhere called the *conscience*, which supposes this to be in every man. It is further clear from the daily experience of all in all times; for sometimes it is pousing [*pushing*] to duty; sometimes it is challenging for the omission of duty, or for commission of the contrary evil; sometimes it is speaking peace; sometimes it is marring peace, and denouncing war as it were; all which plainly evidence that there is such a thing in men. So Herod when he heard of Christ's miracles, his conscience puts him in mind of John the Baptist whom he had beheaded, and disquiets him with fears that John might have been raised from the dead. Something of it appears likewise in Ahab [Ahab; 1 Kings 21:27], when it puts him to put on sackcloth. All which (I say) plainly evidence that there is such a thing in

men; and besides full scripture-proof, there are none but if they observe, they will find their thoughts the meanwhile either accusing or else excusing them.

For further clearing of this, we shall speak a little, I. To what this conscience is, if it be possible satisfyingly to explain it. II. To the use and ends of it and why God has placed this in man; where we shall show the several sorts of consciences that are in men, good and evil.

I. For the first, to wit, what conscience is; we may for coming to the understanding of it, consider the name *conscience*, which signifies a co-knowledge or a knowledge going along with our knowledge; which we may consider: 1. As looking to God's knowledge going alongst with ours; and ours going alongst with His, and thus it implies, as His knowledge of all our thoughts, words and ways, so our knowledge together with His of these, or our taking notice of them with respect to His knowledge.

2. We may consider it as a reflex knowledge joined with a direct knowledge. As for instance when a man has a direct knowledge of prayer as his duty and a reflex knowledge going along with the practice or exercise of the duty whereby he sees and discerns himself, either to behave suitably in it, or to be faulty. In this respect conscience is a practical knowledge, taking notice by a reflex act of a man's ways.

3. We may consider it as comprehending a knowledge of God's law, and then it signifies a knowledge of ourselves compared with the law. It has knowledge of the rule, and so of what is duty and what is sin; and withal it has in it the knowledge of ourselves of our conformity or disconformity to the rule. Conscience then, in this respect, is a man's knowledge of God's will and of himself as compared with it.

4. We may consider this co-knowledge as if it supposes, besides the knowledge of ourselves, the knowledge of something taking notice of us, or of something deputed in us by God to keep a record of all our carriage and particular actions, and so it is looked on as some way different from us. Hence it is called a *testimony*, *the testimony of our conscience*. Hence also a man will appeal to his conscience. And it does, when in any measure in exercise, impartially and incorruptly bear witness; and a man's conscience will speak against him, as if it were at all no part of him, neither can he command it silence. However then we call it, it is a power deputed in the soul of man by God, taking orders from Him and from His revealed will and Word, and accusing or excusing the man as He directs. It is called "the candle of the LORD" (Prov. 20:27); it is above man in its sentencing and accusing, and will not be commanded by him.

To clear it yet a little further, there are in conscience these three things: 1. There is the laying down of some ground, such as the Law or the Word of God, by which it puts a man to trial; which is that we call the *major* or first proposition of the *argument*. As we may see in Judas when his conscience wakened, it lays down this ground (which is done by light),

he that is guilty of innocent blood has broken the Law of God and may expect horrible wrath.

2. There is an assuming, which is the *minor* or second proposition of the argument, or the *assumption*, if the man be guilty of such and such sin; as thus, "But I Judas am guilty of innocent blood and have broken the command of God" (and this the conscience by its testimony confirms).

Then 3. It draws the *conclusion* and speaks forth the man's lot and gives out his doom, what he may expect; as in the present instance, "Thou Judas mayst expect horrible wrath from God"; this conscience applies and lays home unto him.

Every conscience has these three in less or more. The way of conscience, its reasoning and concluding, is different from a man's knowledge and light; for a man may see sin and not be touched with it. It differs likewise from the memory, for a man may remember that which affects him not. It differs from self-examination, for that, if it be mere examination, brings a man only to know that he lies under such and such sins, so and so circumstantiated. Though it makes use of all these three as its instruments, yet it goes beyond them and has a pricking, stinging, paining power; it accuses, sentences, smites and sharply censures. Whereas before conscience acts its part, a man may look often on his sins, and yet but overlook them. And as to things that are right, conscience does not only or barely look on them, but it has an approving testimony which proves comfortable. There is such a thing as this in every one of you, which will let nothing pass, but more or less will take notice of it, and either accuse or excuse you for it.

II. As to the second, the use of conscience, or the ends wherefore God has put this in men and women, which I shall draw to three heads that may be as so many REASONS of the DOCTRINE:

REASON ONE. He has done so for this end that by it He may keep up His sovereignty, power and terribleness; and keep men under the awe and dread thereof. For this which is called conscience, will make the stoutest to tremble; it will write and impress so vividly [*lively; vigorously*] and deeply these great truths that none shall be able to blot them out: that there is a God, that there is a judgment to come and that all will be called to reckoning, which none will get eschewed. It will fix and fasten such self-conversions on sinners, as will make them unavoidably condemn themselves.

So in John 8:9-10, when the Scribes and Pharisees bring a woman taken in adultery to Christ, intending thereby to trap and ensnare him, He says, "He that is without sin among you let him cast the first stone at her"; whereby their consciences were made to bear such faithful testimony against them, and to carry such terror with it, that they were all forced to steal away one by one. And yet they needed not to have thought shame on account of anything we hear men could have challenged them for; but conscience had such an awe and force on them that there was no resisting of it. Scripture-history

does also tell us that such is the power and force of conscience, when it is awakened, it will make “the knees smite one against another” [Dan. 5:6], even of a Belshazzar, and will make a Governor Felix to tremble [Acts 24:25].

REASON TWO. A *second* end is that God may hold men and women at their duty, in going about these things which are commanded and prescribed by Him, and in abstaining from forbidden sins; for if there were not some awe from conscience, what extravagancies would they loosely run into, who have no fear of God and of His Word? And thus conscience has a force to put men to duty in these respects:

1. It discovers duty and holds it before them. When the Lord has commanded to pray, read the Scriptures, to keep the church [*regularly attend public worship*] and wait upon ordinances dispensed there, to keep holy the Sabbath-day, etc., conscience puts a man in mind of these; and when he neglects any one of them, will say to him, “Thou shouldst be in another place, or about other work? So when David’s heart smote him, it helped him to see his duty.

2. There is an obligation to duty laid on by conscience, so that the man cannot shift it; he cannot, he dare not say, such a thing ‘is not my duty;’ for conscience bears it in, and lays it on him, convincingly.

3. There is an efficacy in conscience to poush [*push*] to duty; from this comes that restlessness and disquiet that is often in men and women, when duty is omitted that they can have no peace till it be gone about.

4. Conscience invites to duty by promising peace upon the performance of it. On the other hand, conscience has influence to restrain from sin: (1) By discovering such and such a thing to be sin; and though the soul would notwithstanding endeavour to digest it, yet conscience makes a challenge to go down with it. (2) By threatening the sinner when its warning is neglected and not taken; telling him that he shall repent it one day, and that it will make him repent it. (3) By taking away the sweetness of sin and leaving a sting in place of it; as when Ahab killed Naboth it said [1 Kings 21:19], “Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?” And from this arise challenges and fears of the execution of threatened judgments, which quite mar the comfort the man expected in the enjoyment of such and such a thing; in all which it keeps a majestic and stately divine way becoming [*suitable to*] God’s deputy, and bears witness for Him against the sinner.

REASON THREE. A *third* end is to abbreviate (as it were) God’s process in judging men, to justify and clear Him, and to make way for His sentence, whatever it be.

1. It conduceth, as it were, to the opening of the books, to the sifting and putting of all persons in a posture before Him to be sentenced by Him. It in a manner {does} all, so that God has little or nothing to do, as it were; for it discovers to a man what was his duty and his sin.

2. It cites him to compare and answer for neglecting such and such a

duty and committing such and such a sin; and he cannot possibly shift compearance.²

3. When he does compear, it gives in a libel of accusations against the man and a catalogue of all his sins in thought, word and deed. "This and this" (will it awfully say) "you did at such and such a time, in such and such a place, aggravated by such and such circumstances."

4. It serves to be a witness, yea in place of a thousand witnesses, and there is no denying or shifting of whatever it bears witness to; all which we may see in Joseph's brethren, who say one to another, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us" (Gen. 42:21). The law discovers that was a sin, conscience challenges and accuses, they are cited, the accusation is given in and proven, this and this they did, and did it with all these circumstances; not a pitiful word that Joseph spoke, nor a tear that he shed in the anguish of his soul, beseeching them to desist, but they remember it now. And there is no shifting of the challenge and accusation, nor covering of it, as they had done before to their aged father Jacob; but they must needs now take with [*own*] all and confess: "We have sinned, and are verily guilty concerning our brother," etc.

5. It passes sentence; and in this respect the heart is said to *condemn* when the thing is evil and to absolve or *not condemn* when the thing is good (1 John 3:20–21).

6. When it has sentenced and condemned, it leaves not the man so, but goes on and executes the sentence and turns [into] a gnawing worm to bite and gnaw, and as an executioner to buffet and smite, to damp [*dampne: condemn*] and torment the man.

Thus you may see how useful conscience is to help forward God's judgment and to vindicate Him in His sentence. And as it is thus with a guilty conscience, so it is with a conscience absolving. It will absolve when men condemn, as we may see in Paul here. When men give in a libel and accuse, it will discharge, as Acts 23:1: "Men and brethren I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." And when conscience has absolved, it makes cheerful; as 2 Corinthians 1:12: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience," etc. And 1 John 3:20: "If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

So then we see conscience has these three uses and ends: 1. To keep people in awe of God and of His greatness, and to keep them in mind that they must give an account to Him. 2. To hold them at their duty, and they should be very loath to contradict it. 3. If duty be neglected, to record all their faults and to accuse and sentence them therefore, and never to leave pursuing them; for conscience will continue as a worm in hell gnawing forever and ever.

2. [*Compeir; compear*. Appear by summons before a court (Jamieson).]

USE ONE. The first use serves to bear in this truth on you that there is such a thing as conscience. The most ignorant and profane and haughty of you all, whether young or old, one and other of you have a conscience that takes particular notice of everything in your walk, that records all, that accuses or excuses; and though you take not heed to it now, you will one day be made to know it. Take it therefore for a certain truth that you have such a thing within you that you have a knowledge with[in] your knowledge, even a conscience that remembers when you would forget.

The minding of this is useful: 1. To make people cast out with sin rather than with their conscience. 2. To make wary that they take not liberty in secret to sin. 3. To make them take kindly with re-proofs for sin. Remember therefore that there is a conscience in every one of you. You will possibly think it needless to press this, and I wish it were so; but we may shortly point at three evidences to prove that many on the matter think they have not a conscience.

The *first* is that they take so little pains to prevent a quarrel from their conscience. How many omit, baulk [*resist*] and step over duty and go on in sin, which they durst not do, if they believed that they had a conscience? The *second* is the few challenges that most have under many sins and their living in such peace and security, as if they had not a conscience to disquiet them. Many men and women know and are as little acquainted with challenges and convictions, and stand in as little awe of conscience, as if they had none at all. Hence we use to [*commonly*] say that such a man has not a conscience, because though he have it, he regards it not; and such a man has a conscience, because he makes use of it and listens to what it says. The *third* is that people seek more to approve themselves in outward and seen duties, than in inward and secret ones, and look more after men's approbation than God's, and lean more to, and lay more weight on outward testimonies from men, than to and on inward ones from their own conscience. If conscience were really believed to be, there would be as great awe of God, and as great loathness to sin in secret, as before many witnesses.

OBJECTION. But you will object and say, "Seeing everyone has a conscience, what can be the reason that many care so little for conscience?"

ANSWER. 1. What is the reason that men care so little for God? If they care not for the Lord and Maker, it is no wonder they care so little for the deputy and servant. Shall we therefore think that there is not such a thing at all as a conscience in such? No, by no means. It will prove indeed that they slight conscience, but not that they {lack} a conscience.

2. There is in many men a contending with and provoking of conscience, which in God's righteous judgment makes a silent conscience—when the Lord makes conscience quick, and sets it on to reprove and check for sin, and men do not listen to its checks and reproofs, conscience offends and will not reprove. Conscience being God's deputy, takes orders from Him,

cautioner that offered freely and frankly to pay your debt. And this will wait upon you, to make the prickings and piercings, the woundings and stoundings [*stabbing pains*], the gallings and gnawings of the conscience more deep and intolerable. Therefore let me in the name of the Lord (who is in earnest with you and we desire, according to our measure to be in earnest with you) warn you to flee the wrath to come. O know that you have consciences and that they (as I said before) will once awake; and when they shall begin to be roused, O! but they will challenge and accuse in a dreadful manner! Lay your account to meet with such unanswerable challenges and confounding accusations. And if there be no other ground whereon you can with safety bottom [*found; establish*] the eternal salvation of your immortal souls, but the righteousness of Christ; if nothing can possibly purge and pacify, cleanse and calm the conscience, but the coming to and washing at this fountain of the blood of Christ, O come in time! If you cannot wash yourselves, put Him to it, as David does in Psalm 51, when he cries, “Wash me, cleanse me, purge me, wash me thoroughly from mine iniquities.” It will be no excuse, I assure you, it will be no plea, no apology for you in the great day, to allege that you could not do it, since He offered Himself as a fountain to wash at and to wash you all in particular that hear me this day, and is doing so very seriously just now, if you will employ and put him to it.

Consider that sad word [in] Jeremiah 13:27. “Woe unto thee O Jerusalem, wilt thou not make thyself clean? when shall it once be?” It is not “canst thou not make thyself clean?” but “Wilt thou not be made clean?” “To wit, by Me, who am able to do it and offer to do it freely, if you be but honestly willing;” This will be the loud and terrible voice wherewith God and conscience will in that day cry to many a man and woman that lived under the gospel and had this offer, “Woe to you; you would not be made clean; you would not make use of the blood of Christ, of this blood of sprinkling, when it was in your offer; you would not come to Him that you *might have life* [John 5:40]; you would not take Him for a physician to heal you; but chose rather to lie still wallowing in your filthiness and to rot away and die in your sores and wounds, than to come to Him to be cleansed and cured by Him, though He offered to do both very freely.”

Amongst all the woes that will be denounced then and executed against sinners, those against professing Christians who have lived under this gospel and refused to come to Jesus Christ for life and neglected so great salvation, will be the loudest and most terrible. The woes of Chorazin and Bethsaida and of Capernaum, will be more intolerable in the day of judgment than those of Tyre and Sidon, yea, than those of Sodom and Gomorrah [cf. Matt. 11:21–23]; how yet more terrible and intolerable, suppose you, will be the woe and judgment of them that live now under the clear and bright sun-shine of gospel light? Let me therefore once more earnestly beseech and obtest you in the name of

the Lord, by the love you profess to bear to your own immortal souls, to take with your sin and to flee and speedily to flee to this *city of refuge* set open before you, lest the avenger of blood, the great avenger of this despised and trampled on *blood of the covenant*, this *blood of sprinkling*, overtake you. If you seek not to draw near to God by *this new and living way*, but live and die under your defilement and at distance from Him, woe upon you; woe upon woe will eternally take hold of you.

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

Fourteen Communion Sermons

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:3
The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 1 Corinthians 10:16

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ and of grace and glory in and through Him. Diligently searched into, clearly unfolded, and comfortably held forth, in fourteen rich gospel sermons preached on several texts at communions in Glasgow.

EDITIONS

- *1. Robert Sanders (Glasgow, 1685). Wing D2827.
- *2. Robert Sanders (Glasgow, 1695). D2828.
- *3. Heirs and successors of Andrew Anderson (Edinburgh, 1696). D2829.
- *4. Heirs and successors of Andrew Anderson (Edinburgh, 1704). ESTC T194970.
- *5. Robert Sanders (Glasgow, 1709). N35985.
- *6. Thomas Lumisden and John Robertson (Edinburgh, 1729). Not in ESTC.
- *7. T. Lumisden and J. Robertson (Edinburgh, 1745). T68122.
- *8. Alexander Weir (Glasgow, 1764). T68123.
- *9. John Bryce (Glasgow, 1773). N35981.
- *10. Patrick Mair (Falkirk, 1786). T68126.
- *11. W. Phorson; B. Law and Son (Berwick; London, 1794). ESTC T68120
12. Soli Deo Gloria Publications (Morgan, Pa., 2002).
13. In *Collected Sermons of James Durham* (2017).

*These editions are listed in Rev. George Christie, "A Bibliography of James Durham: 1622–1658," *Papers of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 1918, 42.

These sermons are undated, but are likely from 1655–1657. Because of the difficulties in fencing the table at the time due to the English occupation and the division between the Resolutioners and Protesters in Glasgow, the observance of the Lord's Supper in the city was suspended from 1650 until 1655 (Thomas Burns, *Old Scottish Communion Plate* [Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1902], 59). Due to a quarrel between the session and congregation it was suspended again except for two years until 1693, apparently after the April 1657 communion ("Origin of the Communion Services," *The Reformed Presbyterian Magazine* [March 1, 1866]: 105). Possibly some sermons may date to Durham's Blackfriars ministry (1648–1650), Carstares comment (p. 433) may preclude that. And while four or five communion seasons could conceivably accommodate these sermons (Sermon 5 is not likely from a communion occasion), the Burgh records only account for three observances, and it is possible the thirteen sermons are all the communion sermons Durham preached in the 1650s. There was a communion in the middle of June 1655 (conceivably Sermons 1–4, 6–7), again in October 1656 (8–12), and on the two last Sabbaths of April, 1657 (13–14). Cf. *Extracts from the Records of The Burgh of Glasgow, A.D. 1630–1662* [Glasgow: 1881], 316, 345, 347, 361, 362, 535; Chris R. Langley, *Worship, Civil War and Community, 1638–1660* (Routledge, 2016), 102. See also the note on page 586 in the *Sermons on Isaiah 53* (2017).

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY AND PREFATORY

To all Christians seriously pursuing conformity unto Christ, and panting after communion with God in Him, particularly the inhabitants of the city of Glasgow that are such; and especially to Mrs. Durham, the famous author's worthy reliēt and my sister-in-law, who has had a singular care to preserve her deceased husband's lectures and sermons, that they might be made forthcoming for the public use and edification of the church

DEAR FRIENDS,

Adam in innocence and integrity was in a state of perfect friendship with God, of beautiful conformity to His image, and of sweetly comfortable communion with Him. But, alas! He continued a very short time in that excellent state, for the entering in of sin by his transgressing the law and the condition of the covenant of works, quite broke off the friendship, utterly disfigured and defaced the conformity, and altogether interrupted and put a stop to the communion. He having thereby run himself and his posterity under a forfeiture of that desirable state, and of all the precious privileges annexed to it, under which himself and they had lain eternally had not God in the depth of His infinite wisdom, and in the exceeding and unsearchable riches of grace and mercy, devised and found out a way for taking off that forfeiture by sending "His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them who were under the law" [Gal. 4:4]; who according to the covenant of redemption, treated and transacted, finally concluded and agreed between Jehovah and Him, having made a most costly (but a most complete) satisfaction to provoked divine justice for the debt of the elect. In whose room for that end He did surrogate and substitute Himself as their surety and cautioner, has re-established the friendship, restored the conformity, and recovered the communion. Of which glad tidings of great joy, publication is made in the preached gospel; the tabernacle of the ordinances whereof is reared up among men that thereby *God the Lord may dwell among them* [cf. Exod. 29:46], these ordinances in their institution and nature, being means of communion and fellowship between God and men.

Among which divinely-instituted ordinances, that of the Lord's Supper bears expressly the name of *communion* because often and ordinarily the greatest measures and highest degrees of communion with God in Christ, attainable by sojourning and militant saints here on earth, are won at in the participation of that ordinance, the great pledge and love-token of our dying Lord's dearest respect to His disciples and followers, calling and obliging them in the use thereof, to a solemn commemoration of Him and of His love, and to a public and avouched declaration of His death till He comes again. Therefore is it beyond all other gospel ordinances, as it were, railed about with such injunctions, cautions and warnings, with such terrible threatenings, with such intimations of atrocious guilt, and with such denunciation of formidable judgments against unworthy communicants, thunders and lightnings (as it were) being spoken against such.

The desirable, deceased author of these few following sermons preached at communions, used to endeavor at such occasions, through grace, to rouse and work himself up to such a divineness of frame as very much suited the spiritual state and majesty of that ordinance, greatly fearing lest himself, or any of the people to whom he dispensed the same, should fall under the grievous guilt "of the body and blood of the Lord" [1 Cor. 11:27]. Then in a manner his face shone as being in the mount of communion and fellowship with God; and at some of those solemn and sweet occasions he spoke some way as a man who had been in heaven, commending Jesus Christ, making a glorious display of the banner of free grace, holding forth the riches of it very clearly and convincingly, and bringing the offers thereof very low, wonderfully low; so that in hearing some of those sermons, particularly that on Matthew 22, I was made to think that the rope or cord of the offer of salvation was let down and hung so low to sinners that those of the lowest stature among them all, though but as pigmies might catch hold of it, who through grace had any mind to do so, and so home [*to the heart of the matter*], so vehemently and urgently pressed on so sweet and easy terms to be embraced that I have been sometimes made to wonder how the hearers could refuse or shift them. But there is no saving belief of this report made by the prophets, apostles, yea, or by blessed Jesus Himself in His own personal ministry but where "the arm of the Lord is revealed" [Isa. 53:1; John 12:38]. "No man" can or will (invite, beseech and persuade who will, if it were not only men, but even angels) "come to the Son except the Father who sent Him draws him" [cf. John 6:44]. There is no moving here without a pull of omnipotence; none are nor can be willing to yield themselves to Christ till the day of His *power* pass on their hearts [cf. Ps. 110:3]; till then, they will sit [*disregard the summons of*] the most pressing calls of the gospel; but then they can sit no longer; they must, they will rise then, and run after Him. They will then (as the word signifies) make a *free will-offering* of themselves to Him. However inexorable and inflexible they had

shown themselves before, they will then make an absolute, entire, universal, unexceptioned and irreversible surrender and resignation of themselves to Him, to be at His disposal, to be guided and saved by Him in His own way.

I know the remembrance of those communion sabbaths, *high sabbaths*, and other ordinary sabbaths and weekdays—wherein your sister, and other serious seekers of God in Glasgow in particular, “heard the joyful sound, walked in the light of God’s countenance, and rejoiced in His name all the day” [Ps. 89:15–16], living in a holy crowd of precious gospel ordinances, and having, as it were, the heavenly manna of the gospel falling abundantly about your camp every day, making you think and say that it was good to *be there* [cf. Matt. 17:4]—is this day sweet and savory to you, and helps you in a good measure to keep up a suitable and due esteem of fellowship and communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, which is commended and endeared to your souls, and to the souls of others of the Lord’s people, by the choice, rare, excellent and nonesuch nature and properties of it, it being found by you all, with privileged admission to the enjoyment thereof in your experience, to be:

1. First, most *real*, and no chimerical fancy, or a thing that has no being but in the deluded imagination of the person. “And truly,” says the Apostle John (1 John 1:3), “our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” It has most real effects, though spiritual; gracious souls being more lively affected with them than their very external senses are by the rarest and most remarkable objects. And no doubt, the more spiritual anything is, it has in it the greater reality and works the more powerfully and efficaciously. It is incontrovertible and quite removed from all reach of rational debate, that God is the greatest reality; and by proportion communion with God, whereby nearest and closest approaches are made to Him, must be very real. Marvelous are the effects of this communion, *and that your souls know right well*, as the psalmist speaks in another case (Psalm 139:14).

2. Second, it is an *awful* fellowship and full of dread. It impresses the soul with a deep yet kindly veneration of the glorious majesty of the great and holy God who, as it is said (Psalm 89:7), “is greatly to be feared in the assemblies of His saints” (where they are admitted to fellowship with Him) “and to be had in reverence by all who are around him.” When Jacob was admitted to very near communion with Him, he said, “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware” (Genesis 28:16), and in verse 17 it is said of him that he “was afraid” and said, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Familiarity here breeds no contempt, nor is it waited [*attended*] with any neglect or forgetfulness to keep due distance.

3. Third, it is a deeply *humbling* and holily self-debasing fellowship, as appears in the case of Abraham (Genesis 18), who being as God’s special friend, admitted to talk with Him at an unusual and extraordinary rate of familiarity, yet interlines (as it were) his discourse, almost in every period

of it, with deeply self-debasing acknowledgments of his being but *dust and ashes*, and deprecating of God's anger for His taking upon Him to speak to him, between whom and himself there was so infinitely vast a disproportion. So [as well] the prophet Isaiah, when he had that glorious vision of the majesty of God, and heard the seraphims, those purely intellectual creatures, having their faces covered with their wings, as not being able to behold the brightness of the glory of the most absolutely perfect holiness of God, crying in a transport of admiration each to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; the earth is full of his glory," he says, "Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell in the midst of a people of polluted lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Isa. 6:3, 5). So also Job, nonesuch in his time according to divine testimony, when he is admitted to unusual nearness to God, says, "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6). The nearest approaches to that light wherein there is no darkness at all make the clearest discoveries of the most eminent saints of their unworthiness, nothingness and vileness.

4. Fourth, it is a *transforming* fellowship, and assimilates the person privileged with admission to it to Him that is conversed with, and with whom fellowship is attained unto. There is no real communion with Him but the result of it is some lineament of further likeness to Him. "We all" (says the apostle, 2 Cor. 3:18), "beholding the glory of the Lord as in a glass, are changed" (or transformed) "into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." Communion with and conformity to God have mutual influence and reciprocal force each upon other. The more communion with Him, the more likeness and conformity to Him; the more likeness to Him, the more communion with Him. Little communion with Him makes little conformity to Him, and little conformity to Him cannot but be attended with little communion with Him.

5. Fifth, it is a *wonderful* fellowship, a fellowship that even sometimes transports, in a manner, the soul admitted to it, especially in any more than ordinary way or measure, into a sort of rapture and ecstasy of admiration at it. Thus it did David: "Who" (he says in 2 Samuel 7:18) "am I, O Lord, and what is my father's house, that Thou hast brought me hitherto?" And Solomon, who was very near to God in that solemn prayer of his at the dedication of the temple, says (1 Kings 8:27), "But will God indeed dwell with men on earth?" and (as it is in 2 Chronicles 6:18), "But will God in very deed dwell with men on Earth?" And indeed, it is no great wonder that it be greatly wondered at that the infinitely great and holy God—who "inhabits eternity," the "high and lofty One who dwells in the high and holy place" [Isa. 57:15], and is surrounded and attended there with "an innumerable company of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect" [Heb. 12:22-23],

all of them shining in light and burning in zeal, none of them wearying to do Him service—should humble Himself so far and stoop so low, so very low, as to dwell “also” (an emphatic *also*) with sinful, though “humble and contrite” creatures [Isa. 57:15], “who dwell in cottages of clay” and “whose habitation is in the dust” [cf. Job 4:19], that He who is “of purer eyes than” that He can “behold iniquity” [Hab. 1:13] without detestation and abhorrence, should yet humble Himself, not only to *behold*, but with delight to *dwell* and keep fellowship with them who are in a great measure unholy, and have so much of that dwelling in them which His soul hates; that the glorious persons of the dreadful and adorable Godhead should come and make their abode with such in whom so great a remainder of stinking, unmortified corruption has still its abode; that infinitely pure and perfect light should have fellowship with them in whom there is so much darkness.

6. Sixth, it is an *eStranging* fellowship from all idols, and whatever is displeasing to God and eStranging from Him. Accordingly Ephraim, being brought near to Him, says (Hos. 14:8), “What have I to do any more with idols?” And the people of God, supposed to be in a good spiritual frame and near to Him, say to every idol (which they cast away as a menstruous cloth), with indignation and abhorrence, “Get thee hence” (Isa. 30:22). David, being admitted to very near communion with God, says to wicked men, by whose company he might have been eStranged from Him, “Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping; the Lord hath heard the voice of my supplication” (Ps. 6:8). And indeed it is highly suitable and congruous that it should be so; “for what agreement has the temple of God with idols?” And believers “are the temple of the living God,” as the apostle affirms (2 Cor. 6:16).

7. Seventh, it is a heart-quickenings and *reviving* fellowship. Therefore He is said (Isa. 57:15), “to dwell with him that is humble and of a contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite one.”

8. Eighth, it is a *heart-staying, calming, and composing* fellowship. It hushes into silence and drives away disquieting, perplexing and excruciating fears. Therefore the psalmist says when near to God (Ps. 3:5–6), “I laid me down and slept. I awaked, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about,” and (Ps. 4:8), “I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.” So [also] Psalm 27:13–14.

9. Ninth, it is a *heart-cheering, refreshing, and rejoicing* fellowship. The refreshment and joy that result from fellowship with God quite surpass and transcend the joy that the men of the world have in the enjoyment of all their earthly pleasures. “Lift thou up,” says the psalmist in the name of the godly (Psalm 4:[6]–7)—in contradistinction from and opposition to those *many* who cry, “Who will show us any good?” debasing and in a manner, brutifying themselves, as if they had no rational and immortal souls capable

of enjoying God, the chief good, the only object suited completely to satisfy their most enlarged desires—"Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us"; for "Thou" hast caused more joy of heart to me (to wit, thereby) than "when their corn and wine" abound.

And Psalm 89:16 those who "walk in the light of His countenance" are said to "rejoice in His name all the day." Thus when he prays in Psalm 43 for admission to fellowship with God in His public ordinances (to which he had gone with others of his people, "with the voice of joy and gladness," as "they that kept holy days," as he tells us in the preceding psalm [Ps. 42:4]), he promises in that case that he will go "unto the altar of God, unto God his exceeding joy," the gladness or joy of his joy, the very heart and soul of his joy, or the cream of it, as some translations render the word. There is reality, solidity, strength and efficacy in that joy; it is *heart joy*, while as in the very midst of the carnal joy, jollity and mirth of natural men, arising from the greatest affluence of worldly pleasures and enjoyments, their *heart is sorrowful*, as Solomon says [Prov. 14:13]; there is no solidity in it; it has no bottom [*base; foundation*]. If they would but a little retire within themselves and ask for a reason of their laughter, mirth and jollity, it would instantly vanish and their hearts would die within them as stones. It is kept up, to their delusion and ruin, by their abstracting from and non-reflecting upon the unsolidity and irrelevancy of the grounds thereof. But the more the ground of this joy of the godly is reflected on, considered and searched into, they are found to be the more able to bear the highest superstructures of their joy.

10. Tenth, it is such a fellowship that whatever measure of it is attained by sojourning saints, it weakens desires, sharpens appetite[s], and stirs up kindly longings for more and more of it till it is completed. Thus Moses, the man of God, and His great favorite, "whom He knew face to face," when admitted to very much familiar fellowship with Him, and is told "that he had found grace in His sight, that He knew him by name," and that at his earnest desire His presence should go with him (Exodus 33:12-14), yet he says to the Lord in verse 18, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." So holy Job, God's darling, "whose candle shone on his head, by whose light he walked through darkness," and on "whose tabernacle the secret of God was" [cf. Job 29:3, 4], yet with much holy longing cries, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him! I would come even to his seat" (Job 23:3). And he comforts himself amidst all his sorrows with the assured hope of the fully satisfying sight and enjoyment of his Redeemer at the latter day [Job 19:25]. So likewise the spouse in the Song [of Solomon], who had often been brought into the banqueting house, having the banner of her beloved's love spread over her; whose left hand had lain often under her head, and whose right hand had embraced her; who had often sat down under his shadow with great delight, and found his fruit sweet to her taste; whose spikenard did send forth the smell thereof while the king sat at his table; who had frequently

found, by the kisses of his mouth, his love to be better than wine, and to whom he had often given his loves in the vineyards, yet cries, in the conclusion of that high song, “Make haste” (or flee), “my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart on the mountains of spices” [Song of Sol. 8:14].

So was it also with David, “the man according to God’s heart” [cf. 1 Sam. 13:14], who had much sweet communion with Him in his wanderings and wilderness condition, in caves and dens of the earth, and had often seen His power and His glory in the sanctuary; yet pants and breathes after more fellowship with Him, even as the chased hart does after the water-brooks, and cries, “When shall I come and appear before God” (Psalm 42:[2])? So in like manner was it with the Apostle Paul, Christ’s great minion [*darling*], who besides all the good days he had in dispensing gospel ordinances, in planting and watering churches, in converting and edifying multitudes of souls, in his triumphing by making manifest the savor of Christ’s knowledge, had been ravished into the third heavens [*sic*], caught up into paradise, and heard there unspeakable words that were not lawful or possible to be uttered [2 Cor. 12:2–4]; yet, as if he had never been with Him, desired to be dissolved and to be with Christ as best of all [Phil. 1:23], and groans within himself, longing to be “absent from the body, and present with the Lord” [2 Cor. 5:6]. And thus was it, finally, with John the divine, the *beloved disciple* [cf. John 19:26] who had often lain in his sweet Master’s bosom, and could confidently say, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ” [1 John 1:3], closes his revelations with that holly passionate desire, “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”

Dear friends, let it be more than ever your great work and business to keep yourselves in case and capacity to enjoy His blessed company and fellowship. And in order to this end:

1. Study to keep yourselves through grace as chaste virgins to Christ Jesus as your one Husband. Let Him be to you as the loving hart and pleasant roe; let His embraces satisfy you at all times, and be you always ravished with His love, and beware of embracing the bosom of a stranger. Let Him be to you as a bundle of myrrh lying all night between your breasts; be for Him and not for another; so shall He be for and with you, resting in His love, and rejoicing over you with singing [2 Cor. 11:2; Prov. 5:19–20; Song of Sol. 1:13].

2. Touch no unclean thing; hate the very garment spotted with the flesh; abstain tenderly from all appearance of evil. O! defile not those temples of the living God, of the Holy Ghost, which temples you are; let no unclean thing be harbored or tolerated there, nothing that may provoke Him to leave or loathe His dwelling and temple, nothing that may make His abode in them grievous, unpleasant, loathsome or wearisome to Him [2 Cor. 6:17; Jude 1:23; 1 Thess. 5:22; 1 Cor. 3:17; 1 Cor. 6:19].

3. Let all His ordinances and duties of His worship be high in your esteem, and much commended and even endeared to your hearts, as means

of communion and fellowship with Him. O! be much in love with “the habitation of His house, and the place where His honor dwells” [Ps. 26:8]. Let His tabernacles be very amiable to you; these are His haunts, and let them be yours.

4. Beware of all sinful dalliances with idols, whereby the soul is estranged from communion with God; for there is “no agreement between the temple of God and idols.” From love of fellowship with Him and from zeal to His glory, bid them all with indignation, be gone, saying to them, “What have we any more to do with idols” [Hos. 14:8]? and as to a menstruous cloth, “Get you hence” [Isa. 30:22].

5. When He hides His face, withdraws His presence, and suspends you from fellowship with Him, be troubled; arise, shake off laziness, sloth and security; be holily restless and go the round (as it were) of all commanded duties till you find Him. Seek Him diligently in the night watches on your bed [Ps. 63:6]; go forth to the streets and broad places; go to the watchmen and seek Him whom your souls love. You will have gone but a little and you shall find Him, and when you have found Him, hold Him and let Him not go; do not awaken nor raise Him till He please [Song of Sol. 3:1–5].

6. Study to be very humble, tender and contrite of heart, to be poor in spirit, constantly sensible of your spiritual poverty, emptiness, wants and indigencies, and tremble at His words, at His commands, lest they be not suitably obeyed; at threatenings, lest they be executed; at promises, lest you seem to come short of them. For it is in persons thus qualified that He delights to dwell, and it is to such that He loves to look, as is very clear from Isaiah 57:15 and 66:2.

7. Love, prize, improve, and, as you have access, study to keep up (as you, Sister, in particular are helped through grace to do beyond many) the communion of saints, those excellent ones of the earth in whom, next to His own blessed self, all your delights should be. In communion with those saints, communion with the King of saints is readily attained, it being there that He commands “the blessing, even life for evermore” [Ps. 133:3].

8. Be much in the lively exercise of faith in and of love to the Lord Jesus, and be spiritually precise, strict, exact, accurate and punctual in obedience to all His commands from principles of faith and love, and “Christ and His Father will love you, and come and make their abode with you,” as He promises in John 14:21, 23. O! desirable guests and worthy of all possible welcome, of all ready and cheerful entertainment: follow hard after Him, constantly and closely pursue conformity to Him and communion with Him. It is but a little while and the conformity to Him shall be completed, and you will be likened perfectly to Him, according to creature-capacity; and the communion with Him which is now but in part (as all the spiritual privileges and enjoyments of the people of God, while upon earth, are) shall be fully perfected, shall be immediate, without the intervention

of the comparatively dark glass of ordinances, even to seeing Him face to face, and as He is [cf. 1 Cor. 13:9–12]; and shall be eternally uninterrupted, without the least cloud or moment's eclipse. Now it is a cloud and a clear day, a sunblink and anon a shower, *rara hora, brevia mora*, a rare hour, but quickly gone; it shall not be so then.¹ O desirable and delightful day! O sweet, singularly sweet and solacious day! O rare and ravishing day! Let all other days pass and hasten away, and let that glorious day come. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, and tarry not.

I am, beloved Christian friends, and dear sister, your very affectionate friend, and seriously well-wishing servant in the gospel,

J. C. [John Carstairs]

I heartily wish that this mite of service may be acceptable to the saints, it being not improbable that it may be the last service of this kind that I shall have access to do them.²

February 4, 1685

1. [This a common rendering of the famous saying of Bernard, "Sed, heu! rara hora, et parva mora!" *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum*, Sermo XXIII, Migne, *Patrologiæ cursus completus*, series Latina, vol. 183, col. 892.]

2. [This expectation proved premature. Through an "unexpected and surprising providence," Carstairs subsequently prepared for the press *Great Gain of Contenting Godliness* (1685) and *Great Corruption of Subtle Self* (1686), which appeared in one volume in 1686 (see his comment at the end of the dedication on page 802). This was possibly after his death, though the two works appearing in one volume, the latter work appearing first, at least present the possibility the work appeared while he was still living early in 1686. His death is noted to have been on February 5, 1686, and interment in Greyfriars on February 7, 1686. See *Memoirs of Mrs. William Veitch, Mr. Thomas Hog of Kiltearn, Mr. Henry Erskine and Mr. John Carstairs* (1846), 152; Robert Herbert Story, *William Carstairs: A Character and Career of the Revolutionary Epoch, 1649–1715*. London: Macmillan, 1874), 133; Scottish Record Society, *Register of Interments in the Greyfriars Burying-ground, Edinburgh, 1658–1700*, edited by Henry Paton (Edinburgh: 1902), 112. Mrs. Janet Mure Carstairs died in June of 1685 and was interred in Greyfriars on June 17, 1685. The Greyfriars memorial monument to Carstairs' famous son, William, and to his grandson William Dunlop, assigns a June 15, 1685 death to John Carstairs. This monument was erected after July 20, 1726 sometime in 1727, but had declined into such poor condition that the original inscription faded away. The monument was restored in 1876, but as no record of the original inscription survived, in creating a new one, apparently the wrong date of death was given for John Carstairs. Cf. *The epitaphs and monumental inscriptions in Greyfriars churchyard, Edinburgh* (1867), lxxxii. "Notice of the monument of Principal Carstairs," *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, vol. 11 (1876), 525–529.]

THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST
AND OF GRACE AND GLORY
IN AND THROUGH HIM

I. A PREPARATION SERMON FOR THE COMMUNION

1 Corinthians 11:29. *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

IT HAS BEEN so ordered in the good providence of God that you have lately heard of that main, very comprehensive and indispensably necessary duty called for from all that would worthily partake of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for which we are now making ready, *viz., self-examination*. In reference to which the apostle, having perceived many faults and failings in these Corinthians, and much unsuitableness as to their communicating [*communing*], gives advertisement that whoever for the time to come would aright approach the Table of the Lord would *examine themselves, and so eat*. And knowing well that this is a difficult exercise, and that there is naturally a great deal of averseness in people's hearts from it, he judges it meet to press the exhortation to that necessary though difficult duty by a reason or motive set down in the words now read in your hearing: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." As if he had said, "You had need to look well to the examination of yourselves, for if you neglect or miscarry in that duty, your hazard and danger is dreadfully great through unworthy communicating; if you would escape, then make conscience narrowly and carefully to examine yourselves." The last words of the verse are a confirmation of the reason and do show why the Lord is so holily severe in punishing and plaguing those who approach His table unworthily through not examining themselves, because *they discern not the Lord's body*. The force whereof is that there is a most singular and gracious presence of the Lord Christ in the sacrament of His supper, and therefore the person who goes not aright about it puts a great disrespect upon, yea, even vilifies Him who is thus present in that ordinance.

It is the *first* part of these words which at this time we would mainly speak to, wherein we would explicate the meaning of these *three*: 1. To eat and drink unworthily here is to eat and drink unsuitably or unbecomingly, as when the apostle when he wills the Roman Christians (Rom. 16:2) to receive

Phebe *as becometh* and is suitable to saints, he makes use of the word *worthily*, for so it is in the original. And this, being the opposite of that, is to be understood *unsuitably* and *unbecomingly* to such a manifestation of the love of Christ in giving Himself to and for His people. As in our common language, when a man does a thing unsuitably, we say he did it unworthily when it answers not the end proposed.

2. *Judgment*, or *damnation*, here takes in these *three* things: (1) A temporal stroke, as verses 30–31: “For this cause many among you are sickly and weak, and many sleep.” (2) It may look to eternal judgment, as damnation is often taken in Scripture. (3) It may look to spiritual judgments, for though a believer is not capable of eternal judgment, yet by unworthy communicating he may draw upon himself temporal strokes and spiritual judgments. He may much wear out the life of grace and bring himself under blasting and withering; and unbelievers draw upon themselves not only those, but eternal damnation, and that with a higher degree of aggravation.

3. That he is said to *eat and drink* this to *himself*, as in the former verse a man is commanded to *examine himself*. It may take in these *two* as aimed at by the apostle: (1) It is to provoke every man to his particular duty from this particular hazard: he hazards his own soul. (2) It is put here to show the restriction of the judgment according to the sin; and so if a man examine himself, though others neglect it, the judgment shall not overtake him. But if he examine not himself, whoever escape judgment, he shall not escape it. And thus it is an encouragement to a man to go about the duty of self-examination as well as being a motive of terror; Corinth being corrupted with many abuses, one person could not amend all: “Well,” he says, “*let a man examine himself*, and so he shall escape the hazard; if not, he will fall under it.”

We shall first draw some OBSERVATIONS from the words, and then speak a word for USE.

OBSERVATION ONE. *It is supposed here that in this ordinance of the Lord's Supper there is a special eminency, excellency, dignity and worth, or that this ordinance of the Lord's Supper is of a singular, solemn nature.* And this I gather partly from this verse considered in itself. *He that eats and drinks unworthily* implies that there is a special worthiness in it to [which] a man should not offer indignity, and partly from the connection of this verse with the former, for it is made a reason why he presses particular and strict self-examination, which shows that there is a more singular excellency in this ordinance than in others; and partly from the context, for every circumstance speaks out a solemnity in this ordinance. As 1. The night when it was instituted (verse 23): “the same night in which He was betrayed;” and when He was taking His goodnight of His disciples. 2. His jealousy of and his quarrelling and threatening for the abuse of this ordinance, speaks out a special excellency in the ordinance, that all who approach thereunto should

be suitably affected with. All the ordinances of the Lord are excellent; for if all His works are excellent, then much more the gospel ordinances are a step above those. And yet this ordinance of the Lord's Supper seems dignified with an eminency and excellency above them all:

1. In reference to what it sets out and exhibits. They all set out love, but this sets out love in an eminent degree; for it sets forth the Lord's death, wherein the most eminent step and degree of His love shines. Yea, this ordinance sets out His actual dying, and so sets out His love in its liveliest colors, and as the great masterpiece of it.

2. In respect of the excellent benefits communicated in it. It is true, there is no other thing on the matter communicated in it than there is communicated in the Word and baptism. Yet, if we look to the words *Take ye, eat ye, this is My body*, they hold out Christ Jesus not so much giving any particular gift, but as actually conferring Himself in His death and suffering, and the main scope being to confer Christ and all that is in Him to the believer, it holds out some way the excellency of this ordinance beyond others.

3. In respect of the manner how our Lord Jesus makes over Himself, whereby I mean not only the clearness of His making over Himself—for in this ordinance there is the clearest view of a slain Savior, and of covenanting with God, and often the most comfortable manifestations of love go along with it, for which cause it is called eminently *the communion*—but also that there is here a clear glance of heaven upon earth, Jesus Christ and His people mixing (to speak so) and being familiar together, He condescending not only to keep company with them, but to be their food and refreshment; and He giving them not only the Word to their faith, but Himself (as it were) to their sense, insofar as the means whereby He communicates Himself is more sensible. It is by His Spirit that the means is made effectual, and there is not only a fixedness of faith on our part, but a sort of divineness in the ordinance itself, the very first fruits of heaven being communicated, as it were, to the very senses of the believer. "I say unto you," says the Lord (Matt. 26:29), "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine until that day I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom," where He seems to point out a more special way of keeping communion with His people in this ordinance, in resemblance to that which He will have with them in heaven, there being here a more special union and communion between the Head and members sealed up, a type of that which is to be in heaven, a taste whereof is sometimes given in this ordinance of the communion. Hence it is not only called the *communion*, as in the foregoing chapter, *but the communion of the body and blood of Christ*, and the *Table of the Lord*.

USE ONE. The first use of it serves to let us see how much we are obliged to Christ Jesus. What could He have given more than Himself? And what means could have been invented that could have more confirmed and

warmed the hearts of His people than this, which is so lively a representation and commemoration of His blessed body? Very likely we might come to discern His body better if there were a more high estimation of this ordinance; not as if there were any efficacy in it of itself to communicate grace, yet in respect of Christ's institution, it is a most lively means of grace. And there is not a circumstance in all the action but it is to be wondered at—as that it was instituted the same night He was betrayed, and after the paschal supper, when the traitor Judas was going to bring the band of soldiers to take Him, that He warrants us to take it, and that we have therein sweet communion amongst ourselves—everything in it ought to draw us to admire His sufferings, the great love they came from, and the notable effects thereof to us.

USE TWO. The second use serves to provoke us to study to be in a solemn, divine heavenly frame, for such a solemn divine heavenly action as this is, and thoroughly to examine ourselves and to see that all things are in good order; like to a bride who is to be married tomorrow, who will be trying on her marriage clothes and seeing that all things are right. I shall not descend to particulars, but in *three or four* words in the general, only point at such a frame as we conceive is called for from you.

1. It should be such a frame as you would desire to be in if Christ were coming personally and visibly to marry you tomorrow. And, O! that this night might thus be a bridal or marriage evening to us all! Consider what frame we would wish to be in if we were to meet with Him, and strike hands with Him personally and visibly—study and seek after such a frame.

2. It should be such a frame as we would desire to have if we were going to give up the ghost, when all earthly things will be insignificant and of little worth to us, even such a frame as if our eternal peace and happiness were depending on that chock [*shock*].¹ This would be the night of making our testament (as it were), of adjusting our accounts with God, and of putting things to a point between Him and us. Otherwise our debt may increase and grow greater, and it will not be so easy for us to win a discharge of it.

3. It should be such a frame as we would desire to be found in if the day of judgment were coming, and if that day were to be tomorrow. O! how humble, how abstracted from the things of a present world, and how confirmed in the faith of God's love would we study to be if the voice of the archangel and of the last trumpet were sounding, and a solemn meeting of all before the tribunal of Christ were presently to be? What a frame (I say) would you desire to be in, in such a case! Even such a frame should you study to be in this night, as you would desire to be found in, in that

1. [*Chock*. This may be a mistake in the first edition (the 2002 changed *that chock* to *on it*). If not, this seems to be *chock*, i.e. *shock*, possibly in the military sense of shock of battle, and possibly as in OED *n*³, 3. transf. and fig. a. A sudden and violent effect tending to impair the stability or permanence of something; a damaging blow; Opposition, clashing, conflict.]

day. We fear it will be to many then a prick and a sting in their consciences within them, that they made so little conscience to be in a suitable frame for this so solemn an ordinance. The *text* tells that a sentence will pass on everyone of you, and you would by all means labor to be in such a posture that the sentence may not be terrible to you.

4. It should be a heavenly and divine frame, for if it be a heavenly and divine action, you would consider what a frame it calls for; how abstracted (as I just now said) the heart should be from the world, and from your carnal delights; how much in heaven and conversant with God; what a pitch your communion with God should be raised to in apprehending of and meditating on Him, in considering and admiring the sufferings of Christ, and at the love they came from; tasting that He is good, and even delighting and solacing yourselves in His love, which is the Lord's allowance on His people when the action is humbly and reverently gone about.

OBSERVATION TWO. Observe, *that though this is a most singularly solemn ordinance, and solemnly to be gone about, yet oftentimes men and women go most unworthily about it and abuse it.* This is implied in the words, and we do not need many proofs of it. If we read from the 20th verse to this one, we will find it sufficiently proved; and if we look forward to verses 30 and 31, we will find that many sad strokes came on these Corinthians for abusing and profaning this ordinance, and the apostle would have them gathering their unworthy communing from these strokes. There is a readiness in both unbelievers and in believers themselves to miscarry in going about this ordinance: a readiness in unbelievers, for as they spoil all things, all ordinances and duties they meddle with, *all things being unclean to the unbeliever* [cf. 1 Cor. 7:14], so there is a miserable and woeful necessity lying upon them to spoil this ordinance: and a readiness even in believers, who also may miscarry therein, as is implied in the last words of the chapter compared with verse 32: "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Some of them who were believers were chastised for this fault to prevent their eternal ruin, and are there any acquainted with their own corrupt nature, but they may and will in some measure find in themselves an aptitude to miscarry, as in all other duties and ordinances, so in this? But the doctrine holds out a singular and peculiar bentness [*disposition*] to miscarry in this duty and ordinance; so that one who will pray with advertency, and be carried fairly through in that and several other duties, may yet in this ordinance fall under the guilt of unworthy communicating. The reasons for it may be these:

1. Because the more solemn the duty be, and the greater concurrence of duties be in it, there is the greater difficulty in going about it; for a soul cannot be right in this except it be right in a number of other duties and graces, as in prayer, faith, love and repentance. And that word, *Let a man examine himself*, takes in a complication of duties and graces. There would

be a good state and a good frame, and graces would be in some vigor, and every duty suitable and proportionable to the nature of the action and of the day. And if it is a great and difficult work to carry rightly on an ordinary sabbath, or in prayer, or meditation, or other duties any day, what a difficult work it must be to have all these rightly yoked together?

2. A second reason may be drawn not only from the complication of graces and duties that are required in this action, but from the nature of the thing itself, {which} calls for duties in a high degree of spirituality. If any ordinance or duty calls for a spiritual frame, it is this; it requires that the exercise of the judgment be most clear, that faith be most distinct, that meditation be most divine, etc. And the more spiritual the duty is, there is certainly the more aptness in us, through our corruption, to miscarry in it.

3. A third reason is because there is in men and women naturally and ordinarily but very little study and endeavor to know and take up aright the nature of this ordinance; there is in the most part a great ignorance of the strain and series of the gospel. But generally there is a greater ignorance, darkness and blindness as to the right partaking of this ordinance, than as to most others, either through the difficulty of it, or through our laziness that puts us to not study it better. So that if it were asked of many of us who may have some affection, "What is communion? And what is the right way of partaking of it?" there would be found but very little distinctness in the thing, and many content themselves to live without clearness about it. And this makes people incapable of going about it aright.

4. A fourth reason is from people's loathness to bestir themselves in the work of preparation for it. There is some self-examination requisite for every duty, but there is a more solemn self-examination enjoined in reference to this—and how very reluctant we are to it! And seeing that examination of ourselves is as the door and entry to this duty, is it any wonder that most persons communicate unworthily? This exercise of self-searching is so much slighted, which is to the most part so very difficult, and to many through their own fault, impossible.

USE ONE. The first use serves for warning as to this matter. It is easy to get a communion token² and to come to the table, but it is not so easy *to eat and drink worthily*, not so easy *to discern the Lord's body*, and to get Christ Himself in the ordinance, and in a word, so to go about partaking of the Lord's Supper as you may have solid quietness of mind in reflecting on it. Is it not a wonder then, that the most part do so securely and in a manner even desperately rush upon it, who have, it may be, lain some ten, some twenty, some thirty years without trouble under this guilt? We would think it a good piece of preparation if you were seriously afraid to become guilty

2. [Communion tokens were given to those examined and approved to partake by the church elders. These would be handed in at the observance of the Lord's supper in order to be allowed to come to the table.]

of the body and blood of the Lord. Want of this holy fear breeds security, keeps from stirring up to duty, and from reflecting on ourselves; whereas, if the heart were stirred and roused with such a fear, there would be greater and more seriously sharpened diligence in all these duties, whereof we heard from the foregoing words, to which this is a strong and pressing motive.

Use Two. The second use serves for trial, who among the great company gathered together here this day are afraid of sinning against God, and taking His name in vain in so solemn an ordinance. Many think they are prepared, but we think not that person the better prepared who is not afraid and holily jealous over himself. Woe, woe to many on account of the communion days that are past and gone without fear; it were good if you were afraid lest this day prove like many former days, and lest any of you come short of what has been attained on former communion days.

OBSERVATION THREE. Observe, *that the sin of unworthy communicating is a wrath-provoking and a judgment-drawing-on sin—he that eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks damnation to himself.* There is hardly any sin that the Lord will more readily, speedily and sadly plague and punish than this one. It is true, the Lord has annexed that certification to the third command, that He “will not hold him guiltless” who “taketh His name in vain,” but is there any ordinance wherein the threatening is more expressed, and in reference to which the judgment has been more severely and in some way indifferently inflicted? As is clear whether we read before or after the words of the text. And there is good reason for it. 1. For first, if the duty is more solemn, if the presence in it is more gracious, and the bounty that flows in it is more abundant, then surely the sin of abusing or of unbecoming going about it, must be the greater.

2. If we look to the sin not only in respect of its greatness in several other respects, but in respect of the nature of it, it is a more direct disrespect put upon and despite done in some respect even unto Christ. It is to be guilty *of the body and blood of the Lord*; it is as if the spear had been in such a man’s hand who pierced Christ’s side, and as if he had driven by his own hand the nails through His hands and feet. The reason is that Christ in this ordinance brings Himself and His death so very near that the sinner is put to it in a special manner either to receive Him or to refuse and reject Him. And when he refuses and rejects Him, he thereby practically says that he makes but very little or no account of Him at all, and that if he had been living in those days when He was crucified, he would also have joined with the multitude and cried, “Away with Him!” Thus such a one “crucifies the Son of God afresh, and puts Him to an open shame” [Heb. 6:6]. O! heinous and horrid guilt!

USE ONE. The first use serves to alarm you; that if the fear of sin will not prevail with you, the fear of judgment, of God’s curse and wrath and of the vengeance of the Mediator (represented in this ordinance very clearly as

crucified and bleeding out His precious life for sinners) here and eternally hereafter, may prevail with you to be serious in the work you are now called to.

USE TWO. Let me (which is a second and more particular use of the doctrine) advise you, as to examine yourselves seriously in reference to all your other ways, so to take a special look of your bygone communicating. O! that many of you who are so whole at the heart that there is no provoking nor awakening you, and who are so senseless that you fear at nothing, could be prevailed with to charge yourselves with this horrid sin of being *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord*, that thereby you may be awakened. It will certainly one day awaken you; therefore in your self-examination take special notice if you have not communicated [*communed*] unworthily, make special addresses to God for removing this dreadful guilt, and have a special eye for the time to come that you fall not in it. I say again, take a special review of your bygone carriage in this ordinance, and say to yourselves whether we are guilty of this sin, and whether we are in hazard to fall into it anew? And to stir you up to this, consider: 1. What temporal strokes from God have come or may come for it. Who knows but our outward captivity, the blood that has been shed, the many new and unheard-of or but very little heard-of diseases that are among us, have in a great part been for this sin.

2. Know that besides temporal strokes on the outward man, you may fall under spiritual plagues. The Lord may blast the ordinances for the time to come, so that they shall do you no good. And He may blast any parts and gifts that you have. He may make your ears dull of hearing, and your eyes blind and your hearts fat. And if you quench any convictions that you may possibly be under for the time, it may be that you shall never be privileged with such convictions again, nor be brought so near heaven hereafter; but more delusion and seduction by error, more profanity, security, hypocrisy and presumption may break in among you. And though these are not thought much of now, by some at least, but looked at as very light things, yet the day will come when they will be found to be insupportably heavy, and men will be put rather to wish that this house wherein we now are had fallen on them and bruised them, or that the sword had fallen in upon them and slain them, than to lie under such a weight.

3. Know that it may bring eternal judgment. And O! but this will draw deep on the score of many professors, even the abuse of the Lord's Table, in partaking of His table and of the table of devils [1 Cor. 10:21]. I shall name but a few sins here that you would notice them and try yourselves in this. (1) You have often communicated. Have you also often examined yourselves? Can many of you pitch on such an hour, or half-hour, that you set apart to try your soul's condition? (2) I would ask, what repentance has there been? Right examination makes discovery of guilt, and discovery of guilt brings out repentance, which has some pricking and soul-panging with it. (3) What effect has followed? What engagements have been kept? How

have many of us reformed our walk? Is not our carriage as it was? Passion and pride as quick and lively as they had wont to be? Deadness, security and worldly-mindedness as they were before? Are we not as little self-denied, as unready to forgive, as ignorant and having as little knowledge of gospel-mysteries as we were, and had many a year since? But very few can say on good grounds that they have made any progress in mortification and holiness; and except it be some conviction, some flash of affection, or some faint resolution to amend things amiss, what use has been made of, or what benefit has been reaped by many, and that not of the worst sort, by the communion?

4.³ And therefore in the next place, let me say that it would not be unbecoming or unsuitable to the communion to make this night a night of humiliation before God, and of prayer to Him to be delivered from *blood-guiltiness*. There is no more legible evidence of our untenderness than our being little pricked at the heart for this sin. A word of reflection from our neighbor, or the apprehension of some great man's displeasure and feud, has lain nearer our hearts than wronging the Son of God at this rate has done, for which it were good now to cast an eye to look to Him, to mourn "as one mourneth for his only son" [Zech. 12:10], and to go to Zion weeping as we go, asking the way thitherward [cf Jer. 50:4, 5]. These are no uncouth or strange things, but such as are ordinarily pressed upon us. We are afraid that many have loathed and left the simple way of godliness to get and look after some shining and glistening thing to the eye, and that way will never profit them. Take a serious look of your soul's condition, and be in good earnest in the exercise of repentance as the life of your preparation; even that you may come, knowing well what you need and what you are to receive if you come aright.

USE THREE. The third and main use is that seeing there is so great ground to fear communicating unworthily, and that so great judgments follow upon it, it would be as our fear to communicate unworthily, so our uptaking business how we may commune worthily; this is the end of the day, and should be our task and work this night, even to endeavor to be worthy communicants tomorrow. You will readily ask, "How is such a frame to be attained and come by?" I would for answer, desire you seriously to mind what you have heard on these words, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat*, which comprehend the sum of what is called for from you. And we shall now add these *four* things, that in preparing yourselves to communicate rightly and worthily, you would seriously mind: 1. A right uptaking of yourselves. 2. A right uptaking of the ordinance. 3. A right acting in reference to both. 4. A right manner of acting, or a right frame in your going about the work.

1. For the first we say there would be a right uptaking of ourselves, that we may know what we are, what our sins are, spiritual wants and

3. [This and the preceding points were continuous in one paragraph under the second use, and so this would seem to be appropriately numbered "4."]

THE GREAT CORRUPTION
OF SUBTLE SELF

*Discovered and Driven from its Lurking-places and
Starting-holes, and the contrary grace, self-denial
commended, as an indispensably necessary requisite
to the acceptable and successful performance of all
commanded duties, and as notably fitting for taking up
of the cross and following Christ*

*Then said Jesus unto his disciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himself,
and take up his Cross and follow me. Matthew 16:24*

The Great Corruption of Subtle Self, Discovered and Driven from its Lurking-places and Starting-holes. And the contrary grace, self-denial commended, as an indispensably necessary requisite to the acceptable and successful performance of all commanded duties, and as notably fitting for taking up of the cross and following Christ. In Seven Sermons by Master James Durham, late Minister of the Gospel in Glasgow.

EDITIONS

- *1. Heir of Andrew Anderson (Edinburgh, 1686). Wing D2814.
- *2. James Duncan (Glasgow, 1723). ESTC T166278.
3. In *Collected Sermons of James Durham* (2017).

*This edition is listed in Rev. George Christie, "A Bibliography of James Durham: 1622–1658," *Papers of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 1918, 46.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

To the right honorable and very noble Ladies, my Lady Duchess of Rothes, and her Grace's Eldest Daughter the Countess of Rothes, who Christianly ambitions it as her greatest honor in following the Lord, to tread in the footsteps of her living noble mother, and of her deceased grandmother, the Countess of Crawford, sister-german to the two illustrious Princes, James and William, late Dukes of Hamilton, and of Her great grandmother my Lady Boyd, all three eminent patterns of piety in their day¹

MOST NOBLE LADIES,

The incomprehensibly great and glorious *JEHOVAH*, the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, who is and was and is to come, the First and the Last, *Alpha* and *Omega*, the Beginning and the Ending, the beginning of all without beginning, and the end to which all refer without end, who has eternally His being only and altogether in and from Himself, without participation with or derivation from any other, and from whom as the first fountain and original being (the sole-self-being and being of beings) all the creatures inanimate, vegetative, sensitive and rational, whether angels or men, are but derivated [*derived*] and borrowed bits of being in comparison with whom they are but upstarts of yesterday, and (as it were) time-nothings, *hath* (as it is highly rational, just, equal and congruous He should) “made all things for himself” [Prov. 16:4]; and has in a more special manner formed and new-made His own chosen and peculiar people for “himself that they might shew forth his praise,” and “hath bought them with a price, and redeemed them, not with corruptible things, as silver and gold from their vain conversation, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot,

1. [This epistle is dedicated to Lady Anne Lindsay, Duchess of Rothes and her daughter, Lady Margaret Hamilton, whose grandmother and great-grandmother were respectively Lady Mary Johnson, Countess of Crawford, and Christian Hamilton, Lady Boyd. See the several biographies in James Anderson, *The Ladies of the Covenant: memoirs of distinguished Scottish female characters embracing the period of the Covenant and the persecution* (1848; other editions).]

slain from the foundation of the world”; who are therefore “not their own,” but infinitely obliged “to glorify God both in their spirits and bodies which are God’s”; none of whom beyond all living, ought “to live to himself, nor die to himself;” but living and dying ought to be “the Lord’s.” Since “the Lord Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might” in a peculiar manner, “be Lord of them both living and dead,” it becomes them “from the constraining power of the love of Christ to judge thus, that they should not live to themselves, but unto him, who” out of love “died for them,”² and to endeavor through grace to be in a capacity, each of them for him and herself to say, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me”; and “to me to live is Christ.”³

The very end and scope that I propose to myself in desiring life with any of the conveniences, accommodations and comforts thereof, is the honor and glory of Jesus Christ: as of all persons in the world, it is most unworthy of them, and worst becoming them, to be inordinate self-lovers, self-pleasure[r]s, or self-seekers, so it is highly suitable for them (being singularly and signally obliged thereto) “to deny themselves and to take up their cross and follow” Him [Matt. 16:24]. And yet notwithstanding all these mighty, matchless and marvelous obligations, they, even they, alas! are frequently and not altogether without success, insinuated upon by deceitful corrupt *self*, {which} mixes with their best and most spiritual duties, and in part spoils them—they are the more called and concerned watchfully to guard against it, that it does [not],⁴ as a thin, subtle, spiritual humor very secretly, and insensibly diffuse itself through the whole mass and body of the duties of religion, and by its venomous quality, in less or more, tinctures and vitiates them all; the most sovereign antidote against which poison, and the most powerful extractor and sucker out of it, is sincere love to Jesus Christ, flowing from the lively faith of His love.

Your Noble *Ladyships* (as His genuine and kindly disciples), have been a considerable time trained up in His school, and been by Him, the great Teacher, taken much pains upon (I hope with good success) that you might be made to learn well, to take out, and be spiritually perqueir [*exact; accurate by heart*] in that first great high and difficult lesson of Christian religion, *self-denial* (which as it is absolutely necessary and indispensably requisite to the whole of it, so it is universally influential on the same, and more particularly on bearing Christ’s cross after Him); as otherwise so by the late great breaches that the holy Lord has thought good to make, and

2. [See Isaiah 43:21; 1 Peter 1:9; 1 Corinthians 6:20, 7:23; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Revelation 13:8; Romans 14:7, 9; 2 Corinthians 5:14–15.]

3. [See Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21.]

4. [There is either a missing negation or perhaps this should be read, “to guard against it, {which} does as a thin, subtle, spiritual humor...”]

that within a very short space of time, upon several of your noble near and dear relations,⁵ thereby at once laying very heavy loads of crosses and afflictions upon you, and graciously instructing you with a strong hand *to deny yourselves*, that you may Christianly bear them, and be made observable proficients by them; taking His own infinite and all-sufficient Self to fill the empty rooms of these deceased dear relations, which all the world cannot do (which is your great and highly valuable mercy, whatever strangers to Him may think to the contrary), yet He that has filled heaven and earth can easily do it. O! blessed design. Let Him with your most cordial allowance and at your most earnest desires drive it vigorously and successfully about you, [so] that when others of His people shall hear and “see your ways and doings, they may be comforted, and made to say, verily God hath not done in vain,” nor without precious and blessed fruit, “all that he hath done” [Ezek. 14:23], to yonder noble *Ladies*—which very excellent and singularly useful grace of *self-denial* is notably cleared and commended in these few following *sermons*; as the contrary corruption of sly and subtle *self* is by diligent search found out and chased from its many lurking places and starting holes, and the *hue and cry* raised after it, as a common and notorious thief, that is always secretly and sacrilegiously filching, pilfering, pilloining and stealing somewhat from us, that is God’s due in all that we do;

5. [Amongst other sad strokes in these ladies’ lives, Carstares may have in view at the least a tragedy recorded in the life of Lady Boyd: “In the autumn of the year 1640, Lady Boyd met with a painful trial in the death of three of her brothers, and others of her relatives, in very distressing circumstances. Thomas, second earl of Haddington, and Robert Hamilton of West Binning, in the county of Linlithgow, her brothers by her father’s second wife, Patrick Hamilton, her natural brother, Sir John Hamilton of Redhouse, her cousin-german, and Sir Alexander Erskine, fourth son of the seventh earl of Mar, brother-in-law to her brother Thomas, all perished at Dunglass castle (in the county of Haddington) when it was blown up on the 30th of August that year. They had attached themselves to the covenanters; and when General Leslie marched into England that same year against Charles I., they were left behind by the Scottish parliament, in order to resist the English incursions: and Thomas, second earl of Haddington, who had the command of the party thus left, fixed his quarters at Dunglass castle. While his lordship, about midday, on the 30th of August, was standing in a court of the castle, surrounded by his friends now named, and several other gentlemen, to whom he was reading a letter he had just received from General Leslie, a magazine of gunpowder contained in a vault in the castle blew up; and one of the side walls instantly overwhelmed him and all his companions, with the exception of four, who were thrown by the force of the explosion to a considerable distance. The earl’s body was found among the rubbish, and buried at Tynninghame. Besides this nobleman, three or four score of gentlemen lost their lives. It was reported that the magazine was designedly blown up by the earl’s page, Edward Paris, an English boy, who was so enraged, on account of his master having jestingly told him that his countrymen were a pack of cowards, to suffer themselves to be beaten and to run away at Newburn, that he took a red-hot iron and thrust it into one of the powder-barrels, perishing himself with the rest. One of the most beautiful of Rutherford’s letters was addressed to Lady Boyd on this melancholy occasion.” James Anderson, *The Ladies of the Covenant* (1880), 43–44. See Letter CCXCIX to Lady Boyd, in *Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, edited by Andrew Bonar (1891), 603–606.]

which therefore on the *cry* we would earnestly and closely pursue, as one of His greatest enemies, which saucily and malapertly presumes to rival it with Him, and lifts itself up to sit on His throne and to bring Him down to stand at its foot-stool, the very image (as it were) of *jealousy provoking to jealousy* [1 Cor. 10:22], making us so far as it prevails, to be gross idolaters, and also one of our own greatest enemies, whatever be its plausible pretense of friendship to us, and in whatever handsome-like dress and shape (for it can in a manner nimbly turn itself into all shapes) it officiously offers to commend itself to us. It (as it were) eats much of the fat and drinks much of the sweet of our sacrifices of praises [cf. Neh. 8:10], prayers and of all our other duties; it pitifully impoverishes us, when we might be rich and seem to be so, and makes us when we appear to be very fruitful, to be almost utterly *empty vines*, because by its means a great part of *our fruit is brought forth to ourselves* [Hos. 10:1]. Now, heartily desiring that these few very searching, but very sweetly savoring *sermons* of the singularly self-denied long since deceased author, may come along to all the readers of them, and to your *Ladyships* in particular, with a full blessing; and hoping that you will not offend at my adventuring to shroud [*adorn*] them under the umbrage of your noble names, I am, most Noble *Ladies*, your Grace's and your *Ladyship's* servant in the gospel.

J. C. [John Carstairs]

THE GREAT CORRUPTION
OF SUBTLE SELF

SERMON ONE OF SEVEN

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. Matthew 16:24.

THESE WORDS CONTAIN a main and most profitable point of doctrine, which our blessed Lord Jesus taught His disciples before His suffering. He had been telling them that He was to go up to Jerusalem, and what things He was to meet with and suffer there, {which} discourse had a very strange-like aspect upon them. They could not away with it, nor digest it, that their Lord and Master should suffer and be thus reproachfully dealt with. Peter therefore rashly and inconsiderately takes Him aside and presumptuously arrogates to himself the liberty to rebuke Him, and to offer Him (as he for the time thought) a more safe advice. "Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee" [v. 22]; he will by no means have Him go to Jerusalem, as judging it unsafe and unreasonable at such a time; for which presumption (as having a tendency to defeat the grand design of His coming into the world, to Peter's own and the unspeakably great prejudice of many others), after the Lord had rebuked him sharply (even at a higher rate of severity than He did for his thrice denying Him), He does on this occasion deliver a GENERAL DOCTRINE concerning the necessity of their and of all His disciples denying themselves and taking up their cross, without which they could not be His disciples, nor follow Him, who eminently denied Himself and took up the cross for their sakes, and who would have them to follow Him in the same way.

There are four very considerable things in the words. I. The great work and business that all Christ's disciples and believers in Him are called to, which is to come after Him and to follow Him. {Christ says,} *If any man will come after me ... and follow me.* II. The great let [*hindrance*] and obstruction that lies in the way of ready, resolute and cheerful following of Christ; and that is a man's own self, or selfishness, which if it be not removed, laid by and overcome in some measure, he cannot come after Christ, nor follow Him. *Let him deny himself, and follow me.* III. The great duty that lies on all the followers of Christ, or that whereby they are fitted and helped to follow Him; *viz.*, right bearing of the cross. *Let him take up his cross and*

follow me. IV. There is the great necessity of this doctrine. *Let him deny himself, and take up his cross.* Luke has it (Luke 14:27), “Whosoever beareth not his cross, cannot be my disciple.” It must be; it is indispensably necessary.

But before I come to these main things in the text, I shall speak a little to three circumstances set down therein, which will make way for clearing the purpose. i. Who gives out this doctrine? It is Jesus. *Then said Jesus.* ii. To whom is it given? *Unto his disciples.* iii. When, at what time and on what occasion was it given? *Then, viz.,* after and upon occasion of Peter’s carnal advice suggested to Him in the foregoing words. A word to each of these shortly.

i. As for the first, considering Christ as the great prophet and teacher of His people—not only in general, teaching what doctrines He in His wisdom judged needful for them, but as teaching His disciples this point of doctrine in particular, which He leaves with them when He is about to leave them—we may thence observe, *that the great scope of Christ’s teaching is to bring men from themselves to Him.*

If we join the two parts of the verse together, this will be clear. *If* (says the Lord) *any man will come after me, he must deny himself and follow me.* It is in effect the end not only of His doctrine, but of His dying and rising again. So the apostle speaking of Christ’s dying says (2 Cor. 5:[14–]15), “If one died for all, then were all dead”; that henceforth, these who “live, should not live unto themselves, but unto him” who “died for them, and rose again.” It is held forth as the end of Christ’s dying and of Paul’s preaching Him. This implies these three things {that are} Christ’s end in teaching. 1. To draw men {in what they do} [away] from themselves as their highest end and to bring them to set the Lord always before them, and to design His glory as the principal and ultimate end of all their actions; that they may seek to have Him (as it were) *increasing*, though they should *decrease*, as John speaks in John 3:30—to debase, bring down and lay themselves low, and to exalt and set Him very high on His own throne.

2. To draw them from resting on, from trusting in and leaning to themselves, to resting on, trusting in and leaning to Himself only. “We had,” the apostle says (2 Cor. 1:9), “the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in” Him who “raiseth the dead.” And Solomon says (Prov. 28:25 [*sic* 26]), “He who trusts in his own heart is a fool.” This then is a second branch of Christ’s drift in the doctrine of the gospel, even to draw men from resting on themselves for salvation, or anything truly good, and to bring them to Himself, that they may rest on Him alone for all things.

3. To draw men from delighting in themselves or in anything in themselves, and to bring them singly to delight in Him; for as men have a direct act (so to speak) in looking to themselves, so they have a reflex act in delighting in themselves or in some excellency they fancy to have found in themselves. That men may be brought from these broken cisterns, and from all trust and delight in themselves, or in anything in the creatures, and

may come to Him, the fountain of living waters in whom only quietness and rest to souls is most certainly to be found, is the great drift and design of His doctrine, as is very clear in Isaiah 55:2–3, and elsewhere [cf. Jer. 2:13].

USE ONE. The uses are to teach us to take well with, and to study to take out this lesson of self-denial, to be weaned from self and from all things in self. It is amongst Christ's last lessons to His disciples when he is about (as it were) to make His testament and last-will; it would therefore be the better and more exactly learned.

USE TWO. To show you what is indeed Christ's doctrine and what is not. More especially in such times of temptation and trial as these are, wherein several points of doctrine come to be controverted and called {into} question, you would try [*discern*] if it aims at this as its great scope: to draw you from making yourself your end, and from trusting and delighting in yourself, to the exalting of Him [and] to trusting and delighting in Him. Whatever doctrine is not consonant with, or is contrary to this is certainly not from Christ; with whatever specious and plausible pretences it may be palliated and varnished over, whatsoever it be, if it draw you not from, but to yourself, to idolize yourself, or anything in yourself, it is not (I say) from Christ. But as it draws you from yourself and drives you to debase yourself and to exalt Him, and to give Him His own room and place, it is of God; it is of Christ.

USE THREE. To let you know how you profit in Christ's school, what progress you make in His gospel, and what good you have got of it: insofar as you make progress in denying and debasing yourselves and in exalting and setting up of Christ very high, insofar have you profited and got good by the gospel. This appears eminently in Paul {who says} (Gal. 2:19–20), "Through the Law I am dead to the law, that I might live unto God; I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." His estimation of himself is quite gone; his own righteousness is slain; he is dead to the law in that respect, that he may live to God. This was through grace, the effect of God's law on him, that he was brought very low in his own esteem, even crucified and dead to himself, and Christ set up in him and extolled very high. And to the same purpose he says (Gal. 6:14), "God forbid that I should glory in anything, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, whereby the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." He was a greatly mortified man; his corruptions in some respect as much slain and put to death as if he had been out of the world. There was neither strength nor beauty in them to draw him from delighting in Christ. He saw no worth in them, to be so much as a temptation to him. Nay, Christ Himself has such room in his heart that the very cross of Christ and His reproach bulk more [*were of more importance and weight*] in his eye than all the world beside. I fear there is more of this in notion and discourse, than in experience and practice amongst us. However, you would know that coming to

Christ or following Him in profession only, is not the kindly fruit of the gospel; but it is the bringing of self low and the setting up of Christ high in your hearts, and so the coming to Him and following of Him really and sincerely; which is the genuine fruit thereof.

ii. For the second, to whom is this doctrine given out? It is to *his disciples*. Mark (Mark 8:34) takes in the *multitude* with the disciples. He taught them all this lesson. Hence observe, *that there is none, neither ignorant nor more knowing, neither believer nor unbeliever, but they have need to be taught this lesson of self-denial*. We need not stand to prove it. Even Peter has need of it, who by his unsanctified and unseasonable advice offered to the Lord, *was an offence to him*, and thereby bewrays [*reveals*] much sinful selfishness. The rest of the disciples and the multitude have need of it, so deeply rooted is this principle of self in all; and who has not need of it?

USE ONE. The first use serves for humbling of us, when even the disciples of Christ have need to be taught this lesson of self-denial, we sure have much more, who are not so well acquainted with the way of following Christ as they were; and therefore have much reason to fear that this evil of selfishness is much prevalent amongst us.

USE TWO. The second use serves, in a word, to *exhort* all, whatever their condition and degree, or proficiency in Christianity be, to study this lesson well. It is profitable to all, not only beginners, but those who are further advanced. All stand greatly in need of it.

iii. As for the third, to wit, the time and occasion at and on which He taught this great lesson: it was *Then*, which we may look upon several ways. 1. As it is knit with the temptation, {which} He saw Peter led away with; for He knew the natural propensity of them all unto it. Whence observe, *that oftentimes we may read and discern our own corruptions in the discoveries of the corruptions of others*. Yea, it is profitable for us so to do. Christ holds not here at the rebuking of Peter; but knowing that all had need of the same lesson, He accordingly teaches them all. This were a far more profitable way of looking upon the falls and failings of others, to take warning and receive instruction to ourselves from them, than to be rigidly censuring them, or to be vainly overvaluing ourselves, or superciliously undervaluing others because of them. "They were broken off because of unbelief," the apostle says {to the believing Gentiles} concerning the unbelieving Jews, "and thou standest by faith, be not high minded, but fear"; and he says (1 Cor. 10:12), "Let him that thinketh that he standeth take heed lest he fall."

2. Or we may look on it thus, that when Christ sees a temptation take hold on Peter, He takes occasion therefrom to break the force of it and to beat and bear it down, lest it take hold of and infect the rest by its contagion. Whence observe, *that whoever would resist any temptation, and more especially temptations to self-seeking, would do it in the entry and at the very first*. When any idol of self sets up its head, we would instantly knock

**THE GREAT GAIN OF
CONTENTING GODLINESS**

Commended in Four Sermons

But godliness with contentment is great gain. 1 Timothy 6:6

The Great Gain of Contenting Godliness commended in four sermons by Master James Durham, to which is prefixed a preface on the same subject by Mr. John Carstares both late eminent ministers of the gospel in the city of Glasgow.

EDITIONS

- *1. Heir of Andrew Anderson (Edinburgh, 1685). Wing D2814A.
- *2. John Brice (Glasgow, 1777). ESTC T166278.
3. In *Collected Sermons of James Durham* (2017).

*This edition is listed in Rev. George Christie, "A Bibliography of James Durham: 1622–1658," *Papers of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society*, 1918, 46. Of the first Christie writes: "Published with Durham's *Great Corruption of Subtle Self*, dated 1686. They were printed at the same time, however, as the earlier in date comes second, and its title-page is actually the last folio of signature H in its predecessor." Of the Bryce edition Christie notes, "Published with the 1777 edition of *The Law Unsealed*. . . . It has its own title but is continuous with the other in signatures and pagination. The lengthy Dedicatory Epistle of Carstairs in the first issue is here cut down to a few of the concluding sentences." The sermons are presented in the order published, with these with the title page dated 1685 following the previous sermons dated 1686.

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY AND PREFATORY

To all Christians exercised unto godliness, more particularly to the inhabitants of the City of Glasgow that are such; and in special to these two honorable Ladies, my Lady Cochran, daughter to the late noble and renowned Earl of Cassils,¹ that excellent patriot, and eminent pattern and patron of piety; and my Lady of Lochend, dowager, daughter to the late noble Lord Alexander, sometime Lord Secretary for the Kingdom of Scotland to the August Monarch our late dread sovereign King Charles the First.²

AMONGST THESE MANY and various things wherewith the sons of men are exercised, busied and taken up, if we stand to the award of the Holy Ghost, whose judgment of persons and things is always according to truth, and who by the most absolute perfection of His blessed nature is infinitely removed

1. [Margaret Kennedy Burnett, who with her mother Jeane Hamilton first wife of “the great Presbyterian nobleman” John Kennedy, Sixth Earl of Cassilis (d. 1668), are the few ladies known to have subscribed the National Covenant of 1638. Margaret married Gilbert Burnet, who later became Bishop of Salisbury in 1689. She died in May of 1685. See the note in Anderson, *Ladies of the Covenant* (1880 ed.), 15–16. George Gillespie served as chaplain to the Earl of Cassilis during the time he was writing *A Dispute Against the English Popish Ceremonies*. See *Dispute* (2013), xxviii–xxix.]

2. [Lady Lochend may refer to Magdalene Carnegie (d. 16??), daughter of David, Lord Carnegie who married Margaret Hamilton in 1613, the sister of the Jean Hamilton noted above. Magdalene married Gideon Baillie of Lochend in 1636, who was killed in the same explosion as several Hamilton relatives, noted in the preface to the previous work (see the note on page 653). Their daughter Margaret married secondly an Archibald Sterling, no close relation to William Alexander, Earl of Stirling who served as Lord Secretary. However, she was not apparently known as Lady Lochend and had died in 1677. Carstares was in poor health and may have confused some facts or the printers may have embellished the dedication due to misreading the manuscript or on purpose due to the times and the suspicion the government had of Carstares. Unless there is some other Lady Lochend, the only direct link found of Magdalene Carnegie Baillie (later Crawford) to the Earl of Stirling is her listing as a creditor against the Earl’s estate, he being a debtor to Gideon Baillie. Magdalene’s second husband, John Crawford, died in 1662, and she may not have remarried a third time and thus dowager would have been an appropriate designation.]

from all possibility of being reached with any error or mistake in what He gives a judgment of, without all controversy godliness has the preference and preeminence: as being the most indispensably necessary thing, “even the one thing necessary” [cf. Luke 10:42], in comparison with which nothing else in the world is necessary; the most truly noble and honorable thing, advancing the rational creature to a glorious conformity to the image of God, and to a participation of the divine nature, and capacitating for the enjoyment of fellowship with Him, wherein consists both the excellency and happiness thereof; the most pleasant and delightful thing, “all the ways thereof being ways of pleasantness”; the most peaceful, heart calming, and composing thing, “all its ways being ways of peace” [cf. Prov. 3:17], and “the work of righteousness being peace, and the effect thereof, quietness and assurance forever” [cf. Isa. 32:17]; the most contenting and soul-satisfying thing, godliness having contentment inseparably joined with it; the Christian “learning by it in every state wherein he is, therewith to be content, to be full and to be hungry, to be abased and to abound, to abound, and to suffer need” [Phil. 4:11–12]; not to be up with having, nor down with wanting, but in all the varieties and vicissitudes of his lot in the world to be *semper idem*, always contented, well pleased and satisfied; convincingly proving to himself, and to all attentive beholders, the truth of that notable saying of the Lord, that “a man’s life doth not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” [Luke 12:15]. And that contentment is the very life of a man’s life—such a one has enough and is well pleased with that which the Lord affords his estate and his mind being made matches—which contentment itself springs also out of godliness. For he that has God has all things with Him. *Qui habet habentem omnia, habet omnia*.³ He has all things that has Him, who has, yea, who is all things. True piety always has plenty and is never without a full contenting sufficiency, a self-sufficiency. For “a good man,” as Solomon says in Proverbs 14:14, “is satisfied from himself”; whereas the wicked “in the fullness of his sufficiency is in straits” (Job 20:22). The godly man in the fullness of his straits is in a sufficiency; and being withal the most gainful and profitable thing, even “profitable for all things,” universally profitable, as nothing else in the world is, “having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come” [1 Tim. 4:8]; “godliness with contentment” being “great gain” [1 Tim. 6:6]; not only gain, but great gain. If so, then most certainly it concerns us exceedingly above what can be said, according to the Holy Ghost’s exhortation by the apostle to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:7) “to exercise ourselves to godliness,” to bestir ourselves actively, and as it were to cast our coat for it;⁴ to make it the

3. [“He has all things who has the possessor of them all.” “He has all who has Him that is all in all” Augustine on Psalm 72:26–27, “The reward belonging to God, is God Himself.”]

4. The words in the original being γύμναζε σεαυτὸν, *make thyself naked*, in allusion be-like to the exercises of wrestlers, who used to strip themselves of their upper and lower garments at least, that they might with the greater nimbleness and agility catch hold of and overthrow the other party wrestled with.

Revelation], but this is clear: He says, *He cometh quickly, to judge the world, to raise your bodies, to make up the union between him and them, to solemnize the marriage, to bring you to the wedding, that love his appearing;* and all that you have heard spoken of it shall be made good.

USE FIVE. Lastly, know you {who} slight Christ's coming, that are not preparing and longing for it, you mar yourselves of much comfort. Your loss is great here, for you {lack} the comfort that comes by the promise of His coming; and your loss shall be unspeakable hereafter, when you shall be shut from His presence eternally (Luke 21:26, 28). These two are put together, and Christ's coming in the middle. "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things that are coming." But speaking to the disciples, and in them to all believers, He says, "When these things come to pass, then look, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth near;" your happiness shall then be completed. Seeing then it is the language of the Lord, *Behold, I come quickly;* and the language of the Spirit, and the Bride, of John, and all believers, *Even so, come Lord Jesus;* all of you endeavor such a frame as you may join in that petition on good grounds.

And secondly, let your hearts close and give an hearty echo to that word, *I come quickly,* out of love and longing for His coming, and say, *Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.* And even so, let Him come quickly. *Amen.*

7. A SERMON ON EPHESIANS 4:11–12¹

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.

WE WOULD NOT BE LONG in clearing the scope. Any that will read from the beginning of the chapter will find it plain. The apostle in the former part of this epistle has laid down the sum of saving doctrine from the beginning to this chapter, and in this and forward to the end he sets down what concerns our Christian practice in our Christian conversation. More especially he begins the chapter with a pithy exhortation, “I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” This general he enlarges in many particulars following, and begins with pressing them to unity and peace as the main part of their duty and a prime part of their walking worthy of this vocation and calling wherewith they were called (Eph. 4:1–7). And in the following verses he ushers in this duty of endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, as the thing he aims at to have unity in the bond of Christ: the unity of the spirit kept in the bond of peace. And because this is a main duty, and yet a duty wherein their hearts are often deficient, therefore he presses it by many arguments, which may be drawn to two sorts: (1) from some common grounds to verse 7, which are taken from the many bonds that are among all Christians to bind them up together. “There is one body and spirit,” etc. (2) From verse 7 {through 16} he lays down and follows forth

1. “5 October 1652 Ephes. 4 11. 12. For the edifying of the body of Christ A Sermon taught before the Synod assembled in Glasgow: by Mr Ja: Durhame,” Sermons preached before the Synodal Assembly in Glasgow [manuscript], 1652, 1658. Sermons on 1 Corinthians 1, v.10, by James Fergusson April 5, 1658, and on Ephesians 4, v.11 and 12, by Mr. James Durham, October 5, 1652. Folger Shakespeare Library, X.d.424, MS Add. 257. For historical background and a straight transcription of this sermon, see “*Antiquary*: A Transcription of James Durham’s Sermon on Ephesians 4:11–12, taught before the Synod of Glasgow, October 5, 1652,” *The Confessional Presbyterian* 12 (2016): 262–283. The text here has been updated for modern spelling, grammar and punctuation. Obvious errors, most punctuation, division of the text and numbering and naming of points are added without notice. Editorial insertions are in [square brackets] and {braces} denote text that has been smoothed out or interpolated due to defects or roughness in the original. Some common archaic or Scottish terms such as fra (from), nor (than), promove (promote, further), etc. are changed without notice or noted by braces. Other terms are defined in square brackets or in footnotes. Definition of Scottish terms are from Jamieson’s Scottish Dictionary unless otherwise noted. All footnotes are the editor’s.

a new argument by way of preoccupation or anticipation of an objection; for it might be objected, the church is an heterogeneous body, all have not the same, nor like gifts, but some one sort of gifts, some another sort. He answers that if they consider the end wherefore Christ has given such diversity of gifts, they will find it a tie and bond to bind them together. For whatever gifts or graces men have {received} they ought to be subservient to the unity of the body, {because} they are all given for the good of the body. He has given some to be apostles, some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastor and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints.

The word in the Greek is for the right jointing of the body, or that that the saints, the members of the body, may be rightly jointed, both for the work of the members and for the edifying of the body of Christ—not for this or that particular soul’s good or benefit mainly, but for edifying the whole body. So ministers’ work is to joint above particular joint in its right place and then keep all in and as one body. And that is further confirmed in the next words, “till we all come in the unity of the faith,” etc. So long as folks are here in this life there will be some imperfection and weakness and need of all these bonds to bind them together, and He has appointed them a means to further the unity of His church till the time come they be completed.

We shall not stand in further clearing of the words. Something here concerning the body of Christ were worthy to be spoken of. We would exclude neither the invisible body of Christ, {as it} mainly and only has ordinances appointed for their good in a {saving}² way, nor the visible body of Christ, the catholic visible church, for ministers have the elect to feed and edify not as they are members of the invisible but as they are members of the visible church under their oversight and charge. And that visible body being of extent to take in all the elect to be gathered, it must not be any particular congregation, but the evangelical catholic church as the duty pressed unto and as the ties and motives common to all people prove. But we shall leave this and several other things and speak mainly to three things that clearly arise from the words, or take them in this threefold consideration:

DOCTRINE ONE. Consider the words simply in themselves and they hold out the great end for which God has appointed ministers and that is for the edifying of the body of Christ.

DOCTRINE TWO. Consider [the words] in reference to the scope and they hold out that ministers would so study unity and so promote unity as a main part of edification.

DOCTRINE THREE. Consider these two, unity and edification, and as the one of them relates to and infers the other and holds out this, that as unity infers edification, so edification follows from unity that edifies that unity, and that [which] unites [also] edifies. They are linked together.

DOCTRINE ONE. For the scope of these it is a clear doctrine, *that it is the*

2. In the manuscript the letter form is unclear; also possibly “sealing.”

very end wherefore God has given a ministry to edify this body of Christ, to build up His people. The building up of the body, the perfecting of the saints, is the end of the apostle's call, as all he goes about: "we do all things dearly beloved for your edifying" (2 Cor. 12:19); "Let all things be done to edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26). We shall not here insist what edification is, but shortly it comprehends these two: the bringing in of new incomers,³ the joining of more members to Christ, the wedding of more souls to the bridegroom; and the {building up of} the faith of those that are brought in.

USE ONE. We come to the use of the doctrine, and what precious use might it yield us, [such] as the necessity of a [gospel] ministry. It is needful {for} the edifying of Christ's body. If faith and salvation are needful, so is it (Rom. 10:14-15). (2) How precious a work the ministry is, which is a meddling with the body of Christ. The salvation of souls that Christ has bought and their edifying depend upon it, which shows the dignity of the ministry; seeing it is a work that is taken up about the building of Christ's body. It is not employed about gold, or silver or precious stones, but about that which is more precious to Christ, about souls that He has bought with His blood (Acts 20:28). (3) The greatness of the work of the ministry. It is no small work to be taken up in the edifying of Christ's body. Who is sufficient for such a work? (4) And therefore if it be so necessary, so precious, so worthy and great work, how carefully and cheerfully should ministers go about it, and [how] tender and watchful should they be in the following forth of it. For if it be so precious and so great a work, {it has a high trust and the greater account following it}. Oh! What a work it is to have the charge of souls! It is a work of pains and labor. Therefore the apostle says, "Besides the things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. 11:28-29). When the care of souls comes upon him, it is beyond all his burdens.

But on these we do not {insist}, only it concerns ministers to walk soberly, to have right thoughts of the excellence of the work [in which] they are employed, [lest] souls may be brought to the door of salvation and suffered to stay back through their thoughtlessness. Especially let ministers beware of making themselves or their ministry contemptible. It is not for naught said to ministers, "Let no man despise thee" (1 Tim. 4:12), as if they had that in keeping. But mainly we would make this use of it: if Christ has given His ministry mainly for the edification of the body, it lets us see what ministers should be mainly aiming at, and where they should level all their actions of all sorts, and know what to cast [aside] and what to choose that comes in their way. Those things should be chosen that may gain ardor in souls to Christ, or help further that ardor to Him.

We shall instance this in some few things. (1) In a minister's public

3. *Incomer*: "one who has recently come to a place" (Sc. Jamieson).

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