

and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." When the Church of Israel worshiped him, they declared, "Thou art a God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." When the eternal Son would give us a true view of his father's character, he assures us, "There is none good but God." And when John, the beloved disciple, would teach us the nature of him, for whom his heart burned with such warm affection, exclaims, "God is love." This love he manifested when he wept over Jerusalem, and cried, "O, that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace!" And even now he pities sinners in their wanderings; and when he beholds them despising his proffered grace, and rushing on to destruction, he cries after them, "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil way, for why will ye die?" Why will ye consider yourselves unworthy this so great salvation, by continuing in sin? He exhorts: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." He invites: "Come, let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." He promises, if sinners will return unto the Lord their God, "then will I heal their backslidings and love them freely." And that he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but actually pardons his numberless transgressions when he flies to him for succor, he has confirmed it by an oath: "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Will such a tender lover of souls, think you, banish helpless infants, who have never actually transgressed his law, forever from his presence? Those infants of whom he is the creator, and for whom he gave his Son to die, will he cast them from him, and consign them to everlasting burnings? Let us reject the thought with indignation; to entertain it for a moment, is to reproach God.

4. The nature and extent of the atonement of Christ, authorizes the fullest assurance, that those who die in infancy are received into glory. This atonement re-

moves every obstruction on the part of God, to the salvation of the elect sinner, and in consistence with his law, truth and justice—eternal life is offered to every child of Adam, wherever his gospel is proclaimed. That all do not partake of this eternal life and are saved, is owing to the rejection of it by unholiness of life, impenitence and unbelief. But of this rejection, those who die in infancy are incapable, being destitute of knowledge and understanding. We may, therefore, confidently believe, that as they became guilty by the offence of the first Adam, so they obtain everlasting felicity through the obedience of the second, greater Adam, who came from heaven to repair the ruins of the fall. The Apostle declares that Christ did not die in vain, which can scarcely be true, if we confine the number of the saved to them only who believed and obeyed the gospel; for when we compare with them the greater number of the disobedient and unbelieving, they are scarcely worth mentioning. Give, then, to the Saviour those children who die in infancy, who are supposed to constitute one half of the human race, and he has a kingdom at once, redeemed out of every kindred, tongue and nation under heaven, who have come to Zion with songs and everlasting joys upon their heads, and praise God continually for his unutterable grace.

The Scripture uniformly teaches us, that as the whole family of mankind under the covenant of works are condemned in the first Adam—so the whole family of the Redeemer under the covenant of grace, are reconciled through Christ, the second Adam. If it should be asked, how is the salvation of infants consistent with the declarations of the gospel, which requires faith and repentance before we can become interested in Christ? How can this faith be exercised by those who are yet without understanding? We answer, that although they cannot exercise the same act of faith with adults, yet can they have what the Apostle calls the same spirit of faith—a temper of soul in consequence of its renewal by the Holy Ghost, to receive with proper dispositions every truth that God has revealed—which is the most important part of faith; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness. And when they are admitted into glory, their minds suddenly and rapturously expand.