

*And to you, O Lord, belongs mercy; for you give to everyone according to what he has done. –*  
Psalm 62:12

Some translations say “kindness” and others “goodness”, but I don’t think there’s any dispute as to the underlying meaning of the phrase which in this translation, is “unfailing love”.

Most Christians, however, following what they’ve heard and been taught, would see in this verse something different to what they’re used to seeing. In order for the psalm to fit with what they understand, the verse would need to be changed to say “And to you, O Lord, belongs *justice*; for you give to everyone according to what he has done.

In and of itself, this passage is quite remarkable. But at present, I won’t clarify exactly why I’ve chosen this text for the sermon that follows. It goes without saying that I don’t intend to use it as a basis for logical persuasion.

Let’s try to see clearly what we mean when we use the word *justice*, and whether what we mean is true – especially in relation to God. Let’s come closer to knowing what we should understand by justice - that is, God’s justice - for God’s justice is the living and active justice, and it’s this justice of God which makes it possible for us to have the idea of justice in our hearts and minds. Because God is just, we too have the capability to know what justice is. It’s because God is just that we have the idea of justice so deeply rooted within us.

What do we normally mean by *justice*? Don’t we mean the carrying out of the law, the application of the penalty assigned to a crime? And when we think of a just judge, we mean a person who administers the law without any prejudice, without any favour for or against someone. And where the person is guilty, a just judge will punish the person to the extent the law allows, but certainly no more. Yet even here, justice may not have been done. It may be that the law itself is an unjust law, or perhaps that the judge makes a mistake. Probably more likely, the outworking of the law may be tainted by those who have the power to do so, for their own gain. Yet even if the law is good, and carried out properly, it’s still not a “given” that justice is done.

Suppose my watch has been stolen from my pocket. I find the thief and drag him before the magistrate. He is proven guilty of the theft and sentenced to a just imprisonment. Does it follow that I must then go home satisfied with this result? Has justice been done to me?

Certainly, the thief may have had justice done to him, but where is my watch? It’s gone, and I remain a man wronged. Who has wronged me? The thief. Who can make the wrong right? The thief, and only the thief. Nobody except the man that did the wrong can make the wrong right. God may be able to move the man to right the wrong, but God himself cannot right the wrong without the man.

Suppose my watch is found and restored to me. Is the debt settled between me and the thief? By all means I may forgive him, but is the wrong removed? In no way! But suppose the thief repents. Let’s say he’s not able to return the watch, but he comes to me and tells me he’s sorry he stole it. He begs me to accept for now the little he can bring as a beginning of making it up to me. How then should I regard things between us? Wouldn’t I feel that he’d gone a long way to make it up to me, and that he’d actually done more to right the wrong than if he had simply returned the watch? And when the thief confessed to me, submitted himself to me and restored to me what he could, wouldn’t I feel an appeal to the character of God within me, and that after all, we were

brothers? Wouldn't this in fact be a sufficient atonement from one man to another? If he offered to take whatever suffering or further punishment I chose to lay on him, would I feel it necessary, so that justice was done, to inflict some particular suffering on him as righteousness demanded? He would still owe me my watch, but wouldn't I be liable to want to forget about it? The one who commits the crime can make up for it, and only that person.

One thing should be very clear: the punishment of the wrongdoer does not make atonement for the wrong done. How could the punishment of the man make it up to me for the stealing of my watch? The wrong done would still exist. I am not saying the man should not be punished; far from it. I'm only saying that the punishment does not make anything up to the man wronged.

Suppose the thief, with the watch in his pocket, were to inflict the most severe self-harm: would that lessen my sense that I had been wronged? Would it make anything right between us? Would it in any way atone? Would it give him a right to keep the watch? Punishment may indeed do some good to the thief, but while punishment is important, it is completely different to justice.

Something else which should be clear is that even if it were impossible for the actual watch to be returned to me, the repentance of the thief takes away the offence, where no amount of suffering can. As for me, I would feel that there was nothing more between us. I would even feel that what he had given to me – a repentant brother – was infinitely more valuable than the returning of the watch he had taken from me. True: he owed me himself as well as the watch; but giving me the greater thing of himself in repentance contains even more than the return of a watch.

If you say to me: "You might forgive him, but the man has still sinned against God!", then I say to you that mercy must not be a part of God's character, and that a man is able to be more merciful than his maker! At least that's what your logic says. You're really saying that a man may do something which would be too merciful for God to do! If that's the case, then mercy is not an attribute of God, because it might be too much. Mercy must not be infinite and therefore cannot possibly be of God.

"Mercy can be different from, and even opposite to justice."

Never – if you mean what I mean by justice. If there is such a thing against justice, it cannot be called *mercy*, because it's cruelty. *And to you, O Lord, belongs mercy; for you give to everyone according to what he has done.* There is absolutely no conflict between mercy and justice. Those who say that justice means the punishing of sin, and mercy means the not punishing of sin, and then say that both justice and mercy are of God, would force a division in the very idea of God. And this leads me to the question: What is meant by divine justice, God's justice?

Human justice may well be a poor distortion of justice, more like a shadow of justice; but the justice of God must of course be perfect. We cannot outwit or outsmart justice, but are we fair to justice in our own idea of what it is? If you were to ask any ordinary churchgoer what was meant by the justice of God, wouldn't 95% of them answer that it means his punishing of sin? But think for a moment what kind of justice it would show if the justice of a man was that he punished every wrong. A Roman emperor or a Turkish prince might do that, and indeed be the most unjust of both men and judges. Ahab might be just when sitting on his kingly throne, and yet the murderer of Naboth in his own home.

In God, are we to pretend that there is a difference in what he does and in who he is? God is one, and a theology which speaks of God as if he had different functions and different actions is surely the most foolish of theologies. It puts a division in the very nature of God himself. As an example, it portrays God as having to do that as a judge which he would never do as a father! Think of it: the love of the father makes him desire to be unjust as a judge!

How foolish the mind that explains God before obeying him! How foolish the mind that tries to logically compartmentalise God, instead of crying out, "Lord, what do you want me to do?"

God is no judge, but if he were, he would be a judge only because he was a father. God's rights as a father cover every right that anyone might suppose him to have. And even though the following phrase is not perfect, but will have to do, this then is the justice of God: that he gives every man, woman, child, animal, and everything else that has breath, *fair play*. He gives to everyone according to what he has done.

And there lies his perfect mercy, for nothing else could be merciful to the person, and nothing but mercy could be fair to him. God does nothing to which any man would not say "That is fair" – assuming, of course, that the man was just, and had the thing put fairly and fully before him so he understood it plainly.

I repeat: who would say that a man was a just man because he insisted on punishing every single offender? A scoundrel might do that. Yet the justice of God, apparently, is his punishment of sin! No! A just man is one who cares for, and always tries to give fair play to everyone in everything. When we speak of the justice of God, let's make sure we do indeed mean justice! Punishment of the guilty may be connected with justice, but it is not the justice of God one iota more than it is the justice of man.

"But no-one has any doubt that God gives fair play."

That may be true – but it doesn't count for much, if you claim that God does something which is not in itself fair.

"If God does something, you can be sure it is, by definition, fair."

Without doubt; or he wouldn't be God – except of course to demons. But you say he does this thing, and is just in doing it; I say he does not do that same thing, and is just in not doing it. You say that he does so, because the Bible says it; I say that if the Bible did say it, then the Bible would lie. But the Bible does not say so. The Lord of life rebukes men for not judging correctly.

To say on the authority of the Bible that God does a thing that no honourable man would do is to lie against God. To say that it's therefore right, is to lie against the very spirit of God. To continue with a lie for God's sake is in reality to be against God, not for him. God cannot be lied for. He is the truth. The truth alone is on his side. And even if his child could not see the rightness of something, God would infinitely rather have the child claim that God could not do that thing, than to have him believe that he did do it. If the man were convinced that God did it, the thing he should say would be "Then there must be something about it which I don't know, and which if I did know, would cause me to see the thing differently."

But where something evil is invented to explain and account for something good, and someone who loves God is called on to believe the invention or else be shunned, then he should not mind being shunned, for he is shunned into the company of Jesus. Where the only reason to believe that God does something is that others have believed and taught it, then the man who listens to such men instead of his own conscience of God is not a true man. If some authority tells me to believe something about God which I do not and could not believe about a fellow man, then I ignore that authority. If some explanation of God means that I need to believe something about God which I would reject as false and unfair in a man, then I don't accept that explanation.

If you say, "It might be right for God to do something which would not be right for man to do", then I answer: Yes, it might, because the relation between the maker and his creatures is very different from the relation between one creature and another. And so God has to do things to and for his creation which require of him what no man would have the right to do to his fellow-man. Nevertheless, God cannot do anything which is not both just and merciful. More is required of God, by his own act of creation, than can be required of men. More justice and righteousness, and indeed higher justice and righteousness, are required of God by himself, the Truth – greater nobleness, more penetrating sympathy, and nothing that an honest man would not say was right.

If it's something man cannot understand, then man can't comment on whether it's right or wrong. He can't even know for sure that God does *it*, when he can't even understand the *it*. What the man calls *it* might well be just the smallest part of a complex action. His part in it should be silence.

If it's said by anybody that God does something, and that thing seems to me to be unjust, then either I don't really know what that thing is, or else God does not do it at all. Either the thing can't mean what it seems to mean, or else it's not true. If, for example, it was said that God visits the sins of the fathers on the children, then a man who thinks that *visits upon* means *punishes*, and that *the children* means *the innocent children* should say: "Either I do not understand the statement, or else it's not true, whoever says it." God may well do what to a man does not seem right, but it should seem not right to the man because God works on far higher and different principles; principles which are too right for a selfish, unfair or unloving man to understand. But in no way at all should we ever accept some low understanding of justice in a man, and then argue from that that God is just in doing exactly the same.

To summarise: most people's understanding of the justice of God is that his justice is his punishing of sin. And so in the hope of providing a bigger idea of the justice of God than simply punishment, I now ask: "Why is God bound to punish sin?"

"How could he be a just God and not punish sin?"

Mercy is a good and right thing and if it weren't for sin, there would be no mercy. We are implored to forgive and to be merciful; to be as our Father in heaven. Two rights cannot possibly be opposed to each other. If God punishes sin, then it must be merciful to punish sin. If God forgives sin, then it must be just to forgive sin. We are required to forgive, and the reason given is that our father forgives. This means that it must be right to forgive. Every attribute of God must be as infinite as himself. It's impossible for God to sometimes be merciful but not always merciful. He can't be just, but not always just. Mercy is of God, and needs no theological wrangling to justify it.

"So you're saying that it's wrong to punish sin, and therefore God does not punish sin?"

Not at all. God does punish sin, but there is no conflict between punishment and forgiveness. The one might well be essential to the possibility of the other. Why, I repeat, does God punish sin? That's the real question I'm asking.

"Because sin, as sin, deserves punishment."

If that were true, how could God tell us to forgive it?

"What about this: He punishes first, and then he forgives?"

That won't do. If it's true that sin demands punishment, and the righteous punishment is given, then it must be true that as a result of the punishment the man is free. Why then should he be forgiven?

"He needs forgiveness because no amount of punishment will make up for what he has done."

At present, I avoid the logical consequence of this reply.

Then why not forgive him straight away if the punishment is not enough? Even more, can that which is not adequate – punishment – be therefore required? You might answer that God should be pleased to take what little he can get, and that answer brings me to the major problem in the whole idea.

Punishment in no way compensates for sin. Sometimes foolish people will say "When I have sinned, I have suffered." True enough, but so what? What good is there in that? Even if you had put the suffering on yourself, what did that do to make up for the wrong done? It might be good for you that you were made better because of your suffering, but how has the suffering made amends for the wrong? The whole idea is false.

Punishment, when it's deserved, is not an antidote to sin. It's no use trying to balance sin with punishment. The punishment won't move the scale even a hair's breadth. Against sin, suffering weighs nothing. It's not of the same kind, nor under the same laws, any more than are the immaterial and the material. We say a man deserves punishment. However, when we forgive and do not punish him, we do not *always* feel that we have done wrong. Neither do we feel that any amends have been made for his wrongdoing when we do punish him. If in fact punishment were a counterbalance to sin, then God would be bound to punish for the sake of the punishment. But he cannot be so bound, because he forgives. This means that the punishment God gives is not given for its own sake, as an end in itself, but rather for some other reason, as a means to some other outcome. It is not given for justice; otherwise, how could God show mercy, since that would involve injustice?

The important thing is that God is not bound to *punish* sin, but he is bound to *destroy* sin. If he were not the maker, he might not be bound to destroy sin – I don't know. But since he has created creatures who sin, and therefore sin has, through the creating act of God, come into the world, God is, in his own rightness, bound to destroy sin.

"But that must mean he is to show no mercy."

You are mistaken. God does destroy sin; he is always destroying sin. I trust that God is destroying sin in me. He is always saving the sinner from his sins, and that is destroying sin. But punishment of the sinner in return for sin, the law of a tooth for a tooth, is not in the heart of God, nor in his hand. If the object of the divine wrath is the sinner and the sin, then there can indeed be no mercy. In that case, sin will certainly come to an end with the destruction of the sinner along with sin. But by this, no atonement – no making amends for wrongdoing – would take place. Nothing would be done to make up for the wrong God has allowed to come into existence by creating man. There must be an atonement, a making amends, a bringing together, an atonement which, I stress, cannot be made except by the man who has sinned.

I repeat: Punishment is not what God requires. God requires the absolute destruction of sin. How is the world better, how is the sinner better, how is God better, how is truth better, if the sinner suffers, and even continues suffering through all eternity? Would there somehow be less sin in the universe? Would there be any making amends for sin? Would it show God right in doing something which he knew would bring sin into the world, and right in making creatures who he knew would sin? What putting-things-right would result from the sinner's suffering? If justice demands it, if suffering is the counterbalance for sin, then the sinner must suffer and God is bound to make sure the sinner suffers and is not pardoned. This would mean that the making of man was a tyrannical act, a creative cruelty.

But even if the sinner deserves to suffer, no amount of suffering can in any way make amends for his sin. To suffer throughout all eternity could not make up for one unjust word. Does that imply, then, that for one unjust word I deserve to suffer through all eternity? The unjust word is an eternally evil thing, and nothing but God in my heart can cleanse me from the evil that spoke it. But does it logically follow that I was so perfectly aware of the evil I did, that eternal punishment for it would be just? Sorrow and confession and humbling oneself will make up for the evil word; suffering will not. For abstract evil, nothing can be done. It is eternally evil. But I may be saved from it by learning to loathe it, to hate it, to flee from it with an eternal avoidance. The only vengeance worth having on sin is to make the sinner himself its executioner.

Sin and punishment are not in conflict within man, any more than forgiveness and punishment are in conflict within God. They can perfectly co-exist. The one naturally follows from the other. Punishment is born from sin, because evil exists only by the life of good, and has no life of its own, since it is in reality death. Sin and suffering are not natural opposites. The opposite of evil is good, not suffering. The opposite of sin is not suffering, but righteousness. The path across the gulf that divides right from wrong is not the fire of suffering, but repentance.

If my friend has wronged me, will it console me to see him punished? Will that be a making-amends of what is due to him? Will his agony be healing to my deep wound? Would I even be fit for any friendship, if that were possible even with regards to my enemy? But wouldn't the shadow of repentant grief, the light of reviving love in his being, heal the wound at once, no matter how deep?

Take any of those wicked people in Dante's version of hell, and ask how justice is served by their punishment. Mind you, I am not saying it is not right to punish them. I am, however, stating that justice is not, and can never be satisfied by suffering. In fact, justice cannot have any satisfaction in or from suffering. Human resentment, human revenge or human hate may well have satisfaction in suffering. Such justice as Dante's keeps wickedness alive in its most terrible forms. The life of God goes forth to give a home to victorious evil. Isn't God defeated every time that one of those

lost souls defies him? All hell cannot make the vilest thief say "I was wrong". I stress that God is triumphantly defeated throughout the hell of his vengeance. Although it is against evil, his vengeance is merely the wasted cruelty of a tyrant. There is no destruction of evil, but rather a magnifying of its horrible power in the midst of the most disgusting and agonising tortures a *divine* imagination can invent. If sin must be kept alive, then hell must be kept alive.

But while I regard the smallest sin as infinitely loathsome, I do not believe that any creature, being never good enough to see the essential ugliness of sin, could sin so as to *deserve* such punishment. However, I am not now dealing with the question of the duration of punishment, but with the idea of punishment itself. I would only comment in passing, that the idea that a creature born imperfect – born with impulses to evil not of his own generating, and which he could not help having – a creature to whom the true face of God was never presented, and by whom it never could have been seen, should be condemned to neverending suffering, is an evil lie against God. Such a lie could only find a place in a heart too undeveloped to understand what justice is, and a heart too low to look up into the face of Jesus. It never in truth found place in anyone's heart, though it has found a place in many quibbling minds. There is only one thing lower than to deliberately believe such a lie, and that is to worship the God of whom it is believed.

The only way that a deep, true, high, fitting and most wholesome suffering can take place is if it is generated in the wicked by a vision, a true sight, more or less complete, of the ugliness of their lives, and of the horror of the wrongs they have done. Physical suffering may certainly be a factor in rousing this mental pain; but "I wish I was never born" was the cry of Judas not because of the hellfire around him, but because he loathed the man that betrayed his friend, the friend of the world.

When a man loathes himself, he has begun to be saved. Punishment helps lead to this result. Not for its own sake, not as an antidote to sin, not for divine revenge, and not for any satisfaction to justice, can punishment exist. Punishment is for the sake of making amends and for atonement. God is bound by his love to punish sin in order to deliver his creatures. He is bound by his justice to destroy sin in his creation.

Love is justice; love is the fulfilling of the law, for God as well as for his children. This is the reason for punishment; this is why justice requires that the wicked shall not go unpunished; so that they, through the eye-opening power of pain, may come to see justice and to do justice, so that they may be brought to desire amends and to make all possible amends, and so become just. Such punishment concerns justice in the deepest degree. For Justice - that is God - is bound in himself to see justice done by his children – not in the mere outward act, but in their very being. He is bound in himself to make up for wrong done by his children, and he can do nothing to make up for wrong done but by bringing about the repentance of the wrongdoer. When the man says "I did wrong; I hate myself and what I did; I cannot even contemplate that I did what I did!", then atonement has begun. Without that, all that the Lord did would be lost. He would have made no atonement.

Repentance, restitution, confession, prayer for forgiveness, dealing rightly from then on, is the only possible, the only true making-amends for sin. Christ died for nothing less than this. When a man acknowledges the right which he denied before, and when he says to the wrong "I repudiate you, I loathe you, I see now what you are. I could not see it before because I would not. God forgive me, make me clean or let me die," then justice - that is God - has conquered, and not before.

“What atonement exists then?”

Every atonement which God desires exists; the work of Jesus Christ on earth was the creative atonement, because it works atonement in every heart. He is constantly bringing both God and man, and man and man, into perfect unity. “I in them and you in me, that they may be made perfect in unity.”

“That is a dangerous doctrine!”

It certainly is! In fact, it’s more dangerous than you think in regards to many other things – it’s dangerous to every evil, to every lie, and to every misplaced trust in what Christ did, rather than in Christ himself. Paul glories in the cross of Christ, but he does not trust in the cross: he trusts in the living Christ and his living father.

What this means is that justice requires that sin should be destroyed; and not only that, but also that it should be atoned for. Where punishment can do anything to help bring this about, where it can help the sinner to know exactly what he is guilty of, where it can soften his heart to see his pride and wrong and cruelty, then justice requires that punishment is not withheld. And the more we believe in God, the more convinced we will be that he will use suffering in order to save his child from death. If suffering cannot serve this end, then there is no point to hell; rather, we can only expect the destruction of sin by virtue of the destruction of the sinner. It seems to me, though, that this would mean that God would suffer defeat – certainly, he would be blameless, but he would also be defeated.

If God is defeated, then he must ultimately destroy – that is, he must withdraw life. How can he possibly go on sending his life into souls which cannot ever be reclaimed? How can he keep sin alive in them throughout the ages of eternity? If indeed this were the case, then no atonement could be made for the wrongs they had done. God would remain defeated, for he would have created that which sinned, and which would not repent and make amends for its sin. But those who believe that God will be defeated by many souls in this way must also be those who don’t believe he cares enough to do his very best for them. He *is* their Father; he had the power to make them out of himself, separate from himself, and capable of being in unity with him: surely he will somehow save and keep them! Not even the power of sin itself can close *all* the channels between creating and the created.

The idea of suffering as an antidote or counterbalance for sin, the foolish idea that a man by suffering punishment may wriggle out from the hostile claim to which his wrongdoing has subjected him, comes primarily from the satisfaction we feel when wrong doesn’t succeed. Why do we feel this satisfaction? Because we hate wrong; but since we ourselves are not righteous, we more or less hate the one who does the wrong as well as the wrong he does. So we are not merely happy (and rightly so) when we see the disapproval of the law proclaimed in the punishment, but also happy (but not rightly so) with his suffering, because of the impact of his wrong on us. It’s in this way that our inborn sense of justice becomes evil. Although it’s often pleasing to us to see the wicked suffer, it’s no pleasure whatsoever to God. To think of any suffering with satisfaction – unless it’s sympathetically for its healing quality – comes from evil; it’s inhuman because it’s not divine; it’s something God is not capable of. His nature is always to forgive, and precisely because he forgives, he also punishes. Since God is so completely alien to wrong, since it grieves his heart that one of his little children should do something evil, there is no extreme of suffering to which



he would not subject them. But he only does this in order to destroy the evil thing within them. A man might flatter, or bribe, or coax a tyrant, but there is no place to hide from the love of God. That love will, for the sake of love, insist on the making of every amends.

“But that’s not the sort of love I care about!”

No. How should you? I believe you wholeheartedly! You cannot possibly care about it until you begin to know it. But the eternal love will not allow the selfishness that is killing you to have the final victory. What lover would allow a drug addiction to consume his lady? You may well sneer at such love, but the Son of God, who took and bore the weight of that love, is content with it; so is everyone who knows that love. The love of the Father is a radiant perfection. The lord of the universe is love and not self-love.

The reason justice demands that you be punished is that justice demands the destruction of your sin; and it will have its way. Justice demands you be punished because it demands that your father should do his best for you. God, being the God of justice, the God of fair play, is in himself bound to punish us in order to deliver us. After all, he made us what we are: liable to fall and capable of being raised again. If he wasn’t bound to do this, his relationship with us would appear worse than the relationship between an earthly father and his son. *“And to you, O Lord, belongs mercy; for you give to everyone according to what he has done.”* A man’s work is his character, and God in his mercy is not indifferent, but treats him according to his work.

The idea that the salvation of Jesus is a salvation from the consequences of our sins, is a false idea, a low idea. The salvation of Christ is salvation from the smallest tendency or leaning to sin. It is a deliverance into the pure air of God’s ways of thinking and feeling. It is a salvation that makes the heart pure, with the will and choice of the heart to be pure. To such a heart, sin is disgusting. It sees things as they are – that is, as God sees them, for God sees all things as they are. The soul saved in this way would rather sink into the flames of hell than slip into heaven and avoid responsibility for his sin under the shadow of a righteousness credited to him. No soul that is truly saved would prefer sin to hell. Jesus did not die to save us from punishment; he was called Jesus because he would save his people from their sins.

If, as I’m saying, punishment is not atonement, how does this impact on the theology of so-called Christianity – so-called because this is what those who oppose Christianity see it as? Most of us have been more or less trained in this way of thinking, and some of us have learned, thank God, what it is – an evil thing, to be completely put out of heart and mind. Many imagine it dead and gone, but the reality is that it lies at the intellectual root of the greater part of the teaching of Christianity.

What’s more, it is believed – as far as it is possible to believe what is false – by many who think they have left it behind, when all they have done is left out the truest and most shocking ways of expressing its doctrines. It is humiliating to discover how many generally honest people think they get rid of a falsehood by softening its description and by giving it the form and position in which it will least assert itself. By doing this, these people have a good chance of retaining fellowship both with those who hold it absolutely, and with those who would revolt against it if it were set out plainly.

Once for all I will now relieve my soul in regards to this horrendous illusion. I have not changed my thinking on it since I first began to write or speak, but I have written little and spoken less about it, because I do not want to always preach negatively. My work has not been to destroy the false, unless, of course, it was in the course of building the true. Therefore, I set out to speak what I believed, while saying little of what I did not believe. I trusted then, as I do now, in the true to displace the false, and I kept away from disputes. I have no desire at all to change the opinion of anyone. Every person may hold whatever opinion he likes. But I will do my absolute best in this: For those who think that salvation can only be gained when correct beliefs and opinions are held, I will attempt to prevent them from laying any such burden on men and women. If any such burdens already exist, then I would gladly help to ease that burden. The only requirement for salvation is to take on the yoke of their Master. Let the Lord himself teach them. No man has the mind of Christ except him who makes it his business to obey him. And a man who does not have the mind of Christ cannot have correct opinions concerning him. Even if he could have correct opinions about Christ, they would be of no value to him. He would not be better for them; rather, he would be worse. Our business in life is not to think correctly, but rather to live truly. When that happens it may be possible for us to think correctly.

One main cause of the sheer amount of unbelief in the world is that people who have tasted the glory of Christ set about making theories about him rather than obeying him. When they teach men, they do not teach them Christ, but rather they teach them about Christ. Since they are far more interested in theoretical truth than in doing the truth, they have remained in a condition of their heart in which it is impossible for them to truly understand. They have presumed to explain a Christ whom only years and years of obedience could have made them able to comprehend. And so their teaching of him has been abhorrent to the common sense of many people; even to those people who did not have half of their privileges but in whom, as with Nathaniel, there was no guile. Naturally, such people force their theories on others, and insist that they think about Christ as they themselves think, rather than urging them to go to Christ so that he can teach them whatever he chooses to teach him. Although they don't intend it, they do their absolute worst to stop all growth and all life. From such people and from their false teaching I would most gladly help to deliver those true of heart. Let the dead bury their dead, but I would do whatever I could to stop them from burying the living.

And if justice cannot be satisfied in the mere punishment of the wrongdoer, what are we to make of the idea of satisfying justice by causing someone to suffer who is not the wrongdoer? Furthermore, what shall we say to the idea that, just because he is not the one who deserves to be punished, even though he is absolutely innocent, his suffering gives perfect satisfaction to the perfect justice? Even though the injustice is carried out with the consent of the person wronged, this makes no difference.

It makes it even worse since justice requires the punishment of the *sinner* (so they say), and yet here is one far more than innocent. They have moved the goalposts! It is no longer punishment, but apparently now simply suffering which the law requires! The whole thing gets worse and worse. I declare here my complete and utter rejection of the idea in any form whatsoever. I would rather be driven from humanity and dwell with the wild animals who do not even have reason enough to be unreasonable than to believe the following: that a justice – that is, a God – could have his righteousness satisfied by the suffering of a man who did no wrong in the place of a wrongdoer.

What?!?!? Is God, the Father of Jesus Christ, like that? Is his justice happy with the worst injustice? Is the anger of him who will in no way clear the guilty appeased by the suffering of the innocent? God forbid! Observe this: apparently, the evil desire of God actually substitutes for punishment not just suffering, but in fact, a suffering which is as far away as possible from punishment. What's more, this is supposed to happen even though (as I have already shown) the most severe punishment cannot possibly satisfy justice!

How did this even come to be imagined? It sprang from the fear-without-trust which cannot believe in the forgiveness of the Father; which cannot believe that even God will do something for nothing; which cannot trust him without a binding legal agreement. How many people, having failed to trust God, fall back on a *text*, as they call it! It sprang from the human pride which is content to understand what it cannot understand, even before it will obey what it sees. The person who will understand first – before he obeys – will believe a lie. This is a lie from which only long-term obedience will deliver him.

“But I believe what you abhor.”

Your punishment for being able to believe it as that you do believe it. It is the lowest, poorest and most shameful fiction, invented without even the realisation that it was an invention. It was able to satisfy the intellect of the inventor; otherwise, he could not have invented it. It has also appeared to satisfy many humble souls, which have been content to receive what was given them without stopping to think. They were happy for someone else to think for them, and tell them what was the mind of the Father in heaven. I say again: let the one who is able to be satisfied with this fiction be satisfied with it; I have no quarrel with him. The fact that he is able to be happy with it points to the fact that he is not ready to receive anything better. So long as he is capable of believing false things about God, he is one who is able to believe them. How much or little he himself is to blame, only God knows. His opinion, whether right or wrong, will do nothing to save him. My desire for him is that he would think no more about this opinion or any other, but would rather set himself to do the work of the Master. I have nothing to do with his opinions, true or false. I have a right to speak only because of this: Such people as him force evil doctrines upon their fellow men – whether by directly saying them or only implying them from their position of authority – despite it causing their hearers agony, paralysis, unbelief, indignation and stumbling. My desire is to save my fellow men from having whatever idea of God is possible to them from being blotted out by a lie.

If it is asked how it has been possible for so many to have believed the doctrine of substitution for so long – if it is false, then I answer this: It's possible in the same way that God accepted the sacrifices which men had invented – in their lack of faith – as a way of pleasing him. Some children will tell lies to please the parents who hate lying. They may even confess to wrongdoing which they did not commit, reasoning that since their parents teach them to confess, they would like them to confess to this. God accepted men's sacrifices until he could get them to realise that he is not interested in such things. He has not yet succeeded with many people, both outside and inside the church.

“But then how has the teaching remained so powerful for so long?”

Because it has in it an idea of God and his Christ. This idea is poor and faint, but it is precisely because of its faintness that it fits the weakness and unbelief of men. After all, it was men who invented it to meet and ease the demand made on their own weakness and unbelief. This is how

the yeast has spread. The truth is there. It is Christ the glory of God. But as soon as the darkness begins to spread, the idea that breeds concerning this glory is another thing entirely. Truth is too good for men to believe. They must water it down before they can take it in. They must dilute it before they are brave enough to give it. They must make it less true before they can believe it enough to get any good from it.

Since they were unable to believe in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, they invented a mediator in his mother. By this, they were able to approach a little where before they had remained hidden. Since they were unable to believe in the ability of their father in heaven to forgive, they invented a way to be forgiven that would not demand so much from him. This way would make it right for him to forgive and would save them from having to believe completely in the tenderness of his father-heart, since they found that impossible. They thought that he was bound to punish for the sake of punishing, to make up for their sin. They could not believe in clear forgiveness; that did not seem worthy of God. Punishment needed itself to be made right, so they invented a horrible injustice to do this. This injustice involved all that was bad in sacrifice, and even human sacrifice. They invented a satisfaction for sin which was an insult to God. He did not seek satisfaction for sin, but rather an obedient return to the Father. Whatever satisfaction was needed he made himself. He did this in his actions designed to cause them to turn from evil and return to him. The whole thing was too simple for complicated unbelief and the divisive spirit.

I would gladly help their followers to loathe such thoughts of God. If not for such thoughts, they themselves would not help but to grow into better men and women. As long as they were capable of being satisfied by these thoughts, there would be no advantage in their becoming convinced in their minds that such thoughts were wrong. I will not speak a single word to persuade them of it. Success would be worthless. They would simply remain what they were - children capable of thinking that their father was evil. But once the heart recoils from these thoughts, seeing clearly how horrible it would be to have such an illusion for a God, it will start to wonder whether it should really accept such thoughts. Such a heart will search after a real God to hold onto, a real God to deliver them from the terrible god-idol. I write for people such as these who are so moved; I do not write at all for the sake of arguing with those who love the lie they hold – whether they are to blame or not. I do not write for those who, like the ancient Jews, would put out of their synagogue any man who doubts that their caricature of God is true, who doubts their corruption of the grandest truth in the universe, who doubts the atonement of Jesus Christ. Of such a man who doubts these things, they will report without any qualms that he does not believe in the atonement. Nevertheless, a lie for God is against God; such a lie carries within itself the death sentence.

Instead of focussing their energies on doing what God wants, men of power have focussed them on the construction of a system by which they can explain why Christ needed to die and what God was hoping to accomplish in permitting his death. And men of power in recent times, while getting rid of much of the good in the teaching of the Roman Catholic church, have instead clung to the morally and spiritually horrendous idea of justice and satisfaction. This idea was held by pagan Rome and strengthened by the Jewish idea of sacrifice; all this took place in the home of the mother of all Western churches! It would have been better if the Reformers had kept their belief in a purgatory, but let go of what is called vicarious sacrifice!

Their system is this: God must punish sin, and punish it to the fullest. His justice requires that sin be punished. But he loves mankind, and does not want to punish him if he can help it. Jesus Christ says "I will take his punishment upon myself." God accepts his offer, and lets man go unpunished –

with a condition. His justice is more than satisfied by the punishment of an infinite being instead of a world of worthless creatures. The suffering of Jesus is far more valuable than the suffering of all the generations, through endless ages, because he is infinite, pure, perfect in love and truth, being, of course, God's own everlasting son. God's condition with man is that he believes in Christ's atonement as here explained. A man must say "I have sinned, and deserve to be tortured for all eternity. But Christ has paid my debts, by being punished instead of me. Therefore he is my Saviour. I am now bound by thankfulness to him to turn away from evil." No doubt some people would insist on such a man saying a good deal more than this, but it is enough for my purpose.

As for the justice of God requiring that the sinner be punished, I have said enough. I have also tried to show that the suffering of the sinner in and of itself cannot possibly satisfy justice. If the suffering of the sinner is indeed required, then let it be administered. But what shall we say to counteract the low idea that it is not punishment that is required, neither the suffering of the sinner, but rather suffering itself!

And as if this were not low enough – to make heathen ways appear to be God's ways – we have the idea that the suffering of the innocent, to make amends for wrong done, is unspeakably better in his eyes than the suffering of the wicked. And again, "a lower depth in the lowest depth", to think that the suffering of the holy, the suffering of the loving, the suffering of the eternally and perfectly good, can supremely and completely satisfy the pure justice of the Father of spirits! In this system, not even all the suffering that could be heaped upon the wicked could buy them even a moment's relief, so small is their suffering a counterpoint to their wrong. In the outworking of this law of equivalents, this *lex talionis*, the suffering of millions of years could not equal the sin of even a moment, and could not pay off one penny of the deep debt. But apparently, so much more valuable, precious and dear is the suffering of the innocent – and so much more a satisfaction to the *justice* of God – that in return for that suffering another wrong is done: the sinners who deserve and should be punished are set free.

I am aware of the root of everything that can be said on the subject; the idea is imbedded in the gray matter of my Scottish brains. If I reject it, I know full well what I reject. For the love of God, my heart rose early against this low invention. How strange it is that in a so-called Christian land it should need to be stated that it is unjust to punish the innocent and let the guilty go free! It wrongs the innocent, it wrongs the guilty, and it wrongs God himself. It would be the worst of all wrongs to the guilty to treat them as innocent. The whole thing is a piece of spiritual trickery – fit only to be thrown into jail. If indeed the wicked should be punished, then it is the worst possible perversion of justice to take a righteous being – however strong – and punish him instead of the sinner – however weak. To the poorest idea of justice in punishment, it is essential that the sinner, and no-one apart from the sinner, should take the punishment. The strong being who was willing to bear such a punishment might well be regarded as worthy of worship, but what about the God whose so-called justice he thereby defeats?

If you say that it is justice, not God, which demands the suffering, I say that justice cannot demand something which is unjust; and the whole thing is unjust. God is absolutely just, and there is no deliverance from his justice, which is at one with his mercy. The system is absurd – grotesque and deformed. To portray the living God as a party to such an action is to cover with a mask of cruelty and hypocrisy the face whose glory can only be seen in the face of Jesus. It is to put an angry tirade of crude Roman legality into the mouth of the Lord God merciful and gracious, who will by no means let the guilty go free. If I had to believe such ugly foolishness of him whose name is enough to make those who know him run to him; if I had to believe about him that which would

make me avoid the same things in a fellow man at the risk of my life, I would rather die. I would rather say "There is no God. Let us neither eat nor drink, so that we may die! For this is not our God! This is not the one we have waited for!" But I have seen his face and heard his voice in the face and voice of Jesus Christ; and I say that this is our God. This is our Creator, and he makes it infinitely wonderful for us to be the created ones. I will not have the God of the scribes or the Pharisees, whether Jewish or Christian, whether Protestant, Roman or Greek, but I will have your father, O Christ! He is my God. If you say "That is our God, not yours!", I answer "Your portrait of your God is an evil caricature of the face of Christ."

To believe in a sacrifice made by one in the place of another is to take refuge with the Son from the righteousness of the Father; is to take refuge with his work instead of with the Son himself; to take refuge with a theory of that work instead of the work itself; to shelter behind a false quirk of law rather than to nestle in the eternal heart of the unchangeable and righteous Father. He is merciful because he gives to every man according to his work, and he compels their obedience; he does not, though, allow judicial deception. God will never let a man off with any fault. He must have him clean. He will excuse him to the very extreme of truth, but not a hair's-breadth beyond it. He is his true father and will have his child as true as his son Jesus Christ is true. He will credit to him nothing that he does not have, but will remember the smallest good that he has. He will not quench a burning branch, nor break a bruised reed, but he will send forth judgment into victory. He is God far beyond all that the heart hungriest for love and righteousness could desire through all eternity.

If you say that the best of men have held the opinions which I ridicule, then I answer: Some of the best of men have indeed held these theories, and some of them I have loved and honoured heartily and humbly. But I did this because of what they were, not because of what they thought; they were what they were because of their obedient faith, not because of their opinions. They were certainly not better men because they held these theories. By virtue of knowing God by obeying His son, they rose above the theories they had never seriously considered, and so had never recognised as evil. In the normal progress of their spiritual growth, many have arrived at the point where they must abandon these theories. The man of whom I knew the most good gave them up gladly. The man who holds them may worship God well, and I hate the theories even more because of it. They are lies that burrow as near the heart of the good man as they can go. They work by staying near the truth mingled with them. No matter who may hold a lie, and no matter why they hold it, the lie is still a lie. There is nothing for it but to be cast into the pit of hell.

Yet until the man sees the thing as a lie, all he can do is hold onto it. There are, to be sure, mingled in with it, shadows of the best truth in the universe. As long as a man can love a lie, he is unable to see it as a lie. He who is true through and through will know an untruth straight away; to that knowledge we must all arrive. I am not writing for those who make or willingly accept any lie. When they see the glory of God, they will see the eternal difference between the false and the true, and not before. I am writing for those who, because of such teaching, have been enveloped in a cloud through which they cannot see the stars of heaven; perhaps they even doubt whether there are any stars of heaven.

For the holy ones who believed and taught these things in days gone by, all is well. Many of the holiest of them got rid of the lies from themselves long before the current proponents of the lies were born. Many would never have invented the lies themselves. Yet they received them because of the testimony of so many good men; they took them in their humility as recognised truths, instead of inventions of men. Oppressed by the authority of men far inferior to themselves, they

did not dare to dispute them, but started to arrange their lives by these truths. So they had their reward, the reward of obedience. And by that obedience they were brought to know God; their knowledge of God broke away the net of a self-styled orthodoxy. Every man who tries to obey the Master is my brother, whether or not he counts me a brother, and I hold him in high regard. But should I ever give an inch to what I see to be a lie, simply because my brother believes it? No matter who holds it, the lie is not of God.

“Well then, if you cast away the doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, what theory do you propose to replace it with?”

In the name of truth: *None*. I will not put forward any theory of mine to create new whirlwinds of dust mixed with dirt, straw and holy words, which hide the Master in talk about him. If I have any such words, I will not cast them out on the paths as I walk, but will present them fairly to the one whom I think it may be wise to show them. Only those eyes opened by the sun of righteousness, and made whole by obedience, can judge even the poor pearl of formulated thought. Say if you like that I am afraid to show my opinion. Is the man who will not fling his child to the wolves a coward? The faith I have, I will keep to myself before God, until I see a better reason for uttering it than I do now.

“So will you take away my faith, and not lead me to another?”

Your faith! God forbid. Your theory is not your faith, nor anything like your faith. Your faith is precisely your obedience; I have no idea what your theory is. Yes, I will gladly leave you without any of what you call faith. Trust in God. Obey the word – every word – of the Master. That is faith; and in believing, your opinion will grow out of your true life, and then be worthy of it. Peter says that the Lord gives the Spirit to those that obey him: the spirit of the Master, and that alone, can guide you to any theory that will be useful to you. A theory arrived at any other way is not worth the time spent on it.

Jesus is the creating and saving lord of our minds as well as of our more precious hearts; nothing he does not think is worth thinking. No man can think as he thinks, unless that man is pure as he is pure. No man can be pure like him, unless he walks with him and learns from him. To put off obeying him until we find a credible theory concerning him, is to ignore the medicine we know we must drink, in favour of studying the various schools of therapy.

You know what Christ requires of you is right; much of it you certainly believe to be right, and you believe it to be your duty, whether he said it or not. *Do it*.

If you do not do what you already know of the truth, I am not surprised that you seek it intellectually, because that kind of search may well be a comfort even to the fallen angels. But if you gain anything that way, do not call it *The Truth*. How can you, not caring to *be* true, make judgements concerning the one whose life was to do for love the things you know are your duty, but do not do? Obey the truth, I say, and let theory wait. Theory may spring from life, but life will never spring from theory.

So then, I will not tell you what I think, but I will tell any man who cares to hear it what I believe. I will do it now. Of course, what I say is essentially theoretical, and so I cannot prove it; I can only try to order my life by it.

I believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, my elder brother, my lord and master.

I believe that he has a right to my absolute obedience as soon as, and in whatever situations, I come to know his will.

I believe that to obey him is to ascend to the pinnacle of my being; that to not obey him would be to deny him.

I believe that he died so that I might die like him – die to any ruling power in me apart from the will of God – and so that I can live ready to be nailed to the cross as he was, if God wants it.

I believe that he is my Saviour from myself, and from all that has resulted from loving myself, from all that God does not love, and would not want me to love – all that is not worth loving.

I believe that he died so that the justice, the mercy of God, might have its way with me, making me just as God is just, merciful as he is merciful, perfect as my father in heaven is perfect.

I believe and pray that he will give me whatever punishment I need to set me right, or else keep me from going wrong.

I believe that he died to deliver me from all meanness, all hypocrisy, all falseness, all unfairness, all poverty of spirit, all cowardice, all fear, all anxiety, all forms of self-love, all trust or hope in materialism, to make me happy as a child, the child of our father in heaven, that I will love nothing apart from what is lovely, desire nothing I should be ashamed to let the universe of God see me desire.

I believe that God is just like Jesus, only greater yet, because Jesus said so.

I believe that God is absolutely and brilliantly beautiful, even as the highest soul of man counts beauty, but infinitely beyond that soul's highest idea.

I believe God is beautiful with the beauty that creates beauty, not merely shows it, or exists as beauty in itself.

I believe that God has always done, and is always doing best for everyone; that no man is miserable because God is forgetting him; that he is not a God to crouch before, but is our father, to whom the heart of a child cries gladly "Do with me as you will".

I believe that there is nothing good for me or any man but God, and more and more of God; and that only through knowing Christ can we come nearer to him.

I believe that no man is ever condemned for any sin except one – that he will not leave his sins and come out of them, and be the child of the one who is his father.

I believe that justice and mercy are simply one and the same. Without justice to the full there can be no mercy, and without mercy to the full there can be no justice.

I believe that such is the mercy of God that he will hold his children in the consuming fire of his distance until they pay the absolute last penny, until they drop the purse of selfishness with all the



rubbish that is in it, and rush home to the Father and the Son, and the many brothers – rush inside the centre of the life-giving fire whose outer circles burn.

I believe that no hell will be lacking which would help the just mercy of God to redeem his children.

I believe that to him who obeys, and thus opens the doors of his heart to receive the eternal gift, God gives the spirit of his Son, the spirit of himself, to be in him, and lead him to the understanding of all truth; that the true disciple will therefore always know what he should do, though not necessarily what someone else should do; that the spirit of the father and son brings light by teaching righteousness.

I believe that no teacher should strive to make men think like he thinks, but rather should lead them to the living Truth, to the Master himself. It is only from him that they can learn anything, and it is only he who will make them know in themselves what is true when they see it.

I believe that the inspiration of the Almighty alone gives understanding.

I believe that to be the follower of Christ is the ultimate goal of existing; that to persuade men to be his followers is the ultimate goal of teaching.

“But does this mean that you do not believe in the atonement?”

I believe in Jesus Christ. Nowhere am I requested to believe *in* anything, or *in* any statement, but everywhere I am instructed to believe in God and in Jesus Christ. What I have already written must make it plain enough that I do not believe in what you call *the atonement*. God forbid that I should, for it would be to believe a lie, and a lie which is to blame for much of the rejection of the gospel in this and other lands. But, as the word was used by the best English writers when the Bible translations were made, with all my heart, soul, strength and mind, I believe in the atonement, whether you call it the *a-tone-ment*, or the *at-one-ment*. I believe that Jesus Christ is our atonement, that through him we are reconciled to, and made one with God.

There is not one word in the New Testament about reconciling God to us; it is we who have to be reconciled to God. I am not now writing, nor do I wish to write, a thesis on the atonement, since my business is to persuade men to be atoned to God. I will, however, meet my questioner partway - I do not expect to satisfy him, and neither do I care whether I do so or not, for his *opinion* is of no value to me (though his truth is of endless value to me and the universe) - in this: that even in the sense of the atonement being a making-up for the evil done by men towards God, I believe in the atonement.

Did not the Lord cast himself into the eternal gulf of evil between the children and the Father? Did he not bring the Father to us, let us look on our eternal Father in the face of his true son, so that we might have that in our hearts which alone could make us love him – that being a true sight of him? Did he not insist on the one truth of the universe, the one saving truth, that God was just what he was? Did he not hold that assertion to the end, in the face of contradiction and death? Did he not also lay down his life, persuading us to lay down ours at the feet of the Father? Has not his very life by which he died now passed into those who have received him, and re-created theirs, so that they now live with the life which alone is life? Did he not outwit and destroy evil by letting all the power of its horror break upon him, wash over him, and die without resurrection?

Truly, he made atonement! *We* sacrifice to God! It is God who has sacrificed his own son to us; there was no other way of getting the light of himself into our hearts. Jesus sacrificed himself to his father and the children to bring them together – all the love on the side of the Father and the Son, but all the selfishness on the side of the children. If the joy that alone makes life worth living - the joy of knowing that we see God when we see Christ - is a true thing in my heart, how can I not believe in the atonement of Jesus Christ? I believe it heartily, as God means it.

And again, I believe in the atonement as the power that brings about a making-amends for any wrong done by one man to another. Who of those who believe in Jesus does not long to atone to his brother for the injury he has caused him? What repentant child, feeling he has wronged his father, does not want to make atonement? Who is the mover, the causer, the persuader and the creator of the repentance and passion that restores fourfold? Jesus, our propitiation, our atonement. He is the head and leader, the prince of the atonement. He could not do it without us, but he leads us to the Father's knee: he makes us make atonement.

Learning Christ, we are not simply sorry for what we have done wrong; we not only turn from it and hate it, but we become able to serve both God and man with an infinitely high and true service, a soul service. We are able to offer our whole being to God; it belongs to him by deepest right. Have I injured anyone? With him to help my justice, and as one newly risen from the dead, shall I not make good recompense for my wrong against that person? Have I failed to love my neighbour? Shall I not now love him with an infinitely better love than was possible to me before? I give thanks to him who is my atonement, and who makes me at one with God and my fellow men, for this: that I will and can make atonement. He is my life, my joy, my lord, my owner, the perfecter of my being by the perfection of his own. I would not dare say with Paul that I am the slave of Christ; but my highest aspiration and desire is to be the slave of Christ.

“But then does that mean you do not believe that the sufferings of Christ, as sufferings, made it right for the supreme ruler to do something which he would not have been able to do had Christ not suffered?”

I do not. I believe the idea is as unworthy of man's belief as it is dishonouring to God. No doubt it has its origin in a wholesome sense of sin; but sense of sin is not inspiration, even though it may not lie far from the temple door. It is indeed an eye-opener, but it opens the eyes to the defilement of self, not to heavenly truth. It is not the revealer of secrets. Also, there is another factor in the theory, and that is unbelief – inability to accept the freedom of God's forgiveness, inability to believe that it is God's chosen nature to forgive, inability to believe that he is bound in his own divinely willed nature to forgive. No atonement is necessary to him except that men should leave their sins and return to his heart.

But men cannot believe in the forgiveness of God. Therefore, they are in need, and so God gives them a mediator. And yet they still refuse to know him. They think of the father of souls as if he had abdicated his fatherhood for their sins, and transformed into the judge. If he were to cast off his fatherhood – which he could not do, since it is an eternal fact – then he would cast off with it all relationship to us. He cannot reject the essential and keep what is left. Men cannot, or will not, or dare not see that nothing apart from his being our father gives him any right over us – that nothing but that could give him a perfect right. They instead regard the father of their spirits as their governor! They give up the idea of the Ancient of Days, the glad creator, and put in its place a miserable, religious disciplinarian of a God, who cares not for righteousness, but for his rights; not for the eternal purities, but for conformity to appropriateness. The proclaimers of such a God take

all the glow, all the hope, all the colour, all the worth, out of life on earth, and offer you instead what they call eternal bliss – a pale hell without tears. Above all, turn away from a mean, poverty-stricken faith. But, if you are trapped within your own money-worshipping soul, how will you believe in a God any greater than one who can stand up in that jail cell?

I do not desire to begin a dispute, nor will I quarrel with any man, but for the sake of those whom certain *believers* trouble, I have spoken what is on my mind. I love the one God seen in the face of Jesus Christ. I turn away with horror and disgust from all copies of the portrait of God made by Jonathon Edwards – no matter how faded by time, no matter how softened by the use of duller colours. His God is not the God about whom John heard the message from Jesus: *that he is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*

THE END

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