

The third Warrant and special Motive to believe in Christ, is the strait and *awful command of God*, charging all the hearers of the gospel to approach to Christ in the order set down by him, and to believe in him; holden forth, 1 *John* iii. 23.

*This is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another., as he gave us commandment.*

Wherein the apostle giveth us to understand these five doctrines:

1. That if any man shall not be taken with the sweet invitation of God, nor with the humble and loving request of God, made to him to be reconciled, he shall find he hath to do with the sovereign authority of the highest Majesty; *for this is his commandment, that we believe in him*, saith he.

2. That if any man look upon this, commandment as he hath looked heretofore upon the neglected commandments of the law, he must consider that this is a command of the gospel, posterior to the law, given for making use of the remedy of all sins; which, if it be disobeyed, there is no other command to follow but this, "Go, ye cursed, into the everlasting fire of hell;" *for this is his commandment*; the obedience of which is most pleasant in his sight, Ver. 22, and without which it is impossible to please him, Heb. xi. 6.

3. That every one who heareth the gospel, must make conscience of the duty of lively faith in Christ; the weak believer must not think it presumption to do what is commanded; the person inclined to desperation must take up himself, and think upon obedience unto this sweet and saving command; the strong believer must dip yet more in the sense of his need he hath of Jesus Christ, and more and more grow in the obedience of this command; yea, the most impenitent, profane, and wicked person must not thrust, out himself, or be thrust out by others, from orderly aiming at this duty, how desperate soever his condition seems to be; for he that commands all men to believe in Christ, doth thereby command all men to believe that they are damned and lost without Christ; he thereby commands all men to acknowledge their sins, and their need of Christ, and in effect commands all men to repent, that they may believe in him. And whosoever do refuse to repent of their bygone sins, are guilty of disobedience to this command given to all hearers, but especially to those that are within the visible church: *for this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ*, saith he.

4. That he who obeyeth this commandment hath built his salvation on a solid ground: for, (1.) He hath found the promised Messiah, completely furnished with all perfections unto the perfect execution of the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King; for he is that Christ in whom the man doth believe. (2.) He hath embraced a Saviour, who is able to save to the uttermost, yea, and who doth effectually save every one that cometh to God through him; for he is Jesus, the true Saviour of his people from their sins. (3.) He that obeyeth this command hath built his salvation on the Rock, that is, on the Son of God, to whom it is no robbery to be called equal to the Father, and who is worthy to be the object of saving faith, and of spiritual worship: *for this is his command*, (saith he,) *That we believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ*.

5. That he who hath believed on Jesus Christ, though he be freed from the curse of the law, is not freed from the command and obedience of the law, but tied thereunto by a new obligation, and a new command from Christ; which new command from Christ importeth help to obey the command: unto which command from Christ, the Father addeth his authority and command also; for *this is his commandment*, (saith John,) *That we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he hath commanded us*. The first part of which command, enjoining belief in him, necessarily implieth love to God, and so obedience to the first table; for believing in God, and loving God, are inseparable; and the second part of the command enjoineth love to our neighbour, (especially to the household of faith,) and so obedience to the second table of the law.

Hence may a weak believer strengthen himself, by reasoning from this ground after this manner:

"Whosoever, in the sense of his own sinfulness, and fear of God's wrath, at the command of God, is fled to Jesus Christ, the only remedy of sin and misery, and hath engaged his heart to the obedience of the law of love, his faith is not presumptuous or dead, but true and saving faith:

"But I, (may the weak believer say,) in the sense of my own sinfulness, and fear of God's wrath, am fled to Jesus Christ, the only remedy of sin and misery, and have engaged my heart to the obedience of the law of love:

"Therefore my faith is not a presumptuous and dead faith, but true and saving faith."