

Divine Attributes – An Exhortation of Pardon Through Christ by William Bates (1625-1699)

John 3:16

I. The Text Opened

A. John 3:16

1. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life,” (John 3:16).

II. The Doctrine and Exhortation from the Text

A. Doctrine: Eternal Life is Only Through Jesus Christ.

1. The satisfaction of divine justice by the sufferings of Christ offers the strongest assurance to man that God is most ready to pardon sin.
 - a) In Christ, and by His sacrifice alone, the soul is not only freed from the fear of God’s anger but enjoys a lively hope of His favor and love.
 - b) This is expressed by the apostle (Heb. 12:23), when he notes among the privileges of believers that they “are come to God the judge of all, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.”
2. There are only two ways of appearing before the righteous and supreme Judge of the universe.
 - a) One is to possess innocence and sinless obedience when exposed to the light of the Law.
 - b) The other is to be adorned in the righteousness of Christ by grace through faith in His work on the cross.
 - (1) *The first cannot be performed by us because man is stained with original sin from conception.*
 - (2) *And the form of the law runs universally, “cursed is every one that obeys not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” (Gal. 3:10).*
 - (a) *The law justifies only the perfect, and condemns without distinction all that are guilty.*
 - c) Our only hope is to come by the righteousness of Christ.
 - (1) *This alone absolves us from the guilt of sin, saves us from hell, and is powerful enough to stand good in the trial of God’s tribunal.*
 - (2) *This the apostle prized as his invaluable treasure in Philippians 3:9 which he concluded, by comparison, “all other things are but dross and dung: that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”*
3. That which God ordained and provided in the person of His Son, our Redeemer, He can do nothing but accept.
 - a) Now this righteousness is meritoriously granted to those who by faith believe in the Gospel and depend solely on the will and grace of God for its effects.
 - b) The Lord Himself tells us that the benefit of the Gospel is communicated to those who believe. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, shall not perish,” (John 3:16).

c) The most universal hinderance to accepting God's gift of salvation is an unwillingness to comply with the conditions God requires, i.e., accepting Christ as Savior and obeying Him as Lord.

(1) Many would entertain Him as Savior to redeem them from hell, but reject His lordship.

(2) Those in the parable in Luke 6:14 who said, "we will not have this man to reign over us," expressed the silent thoughts of all carnal men.