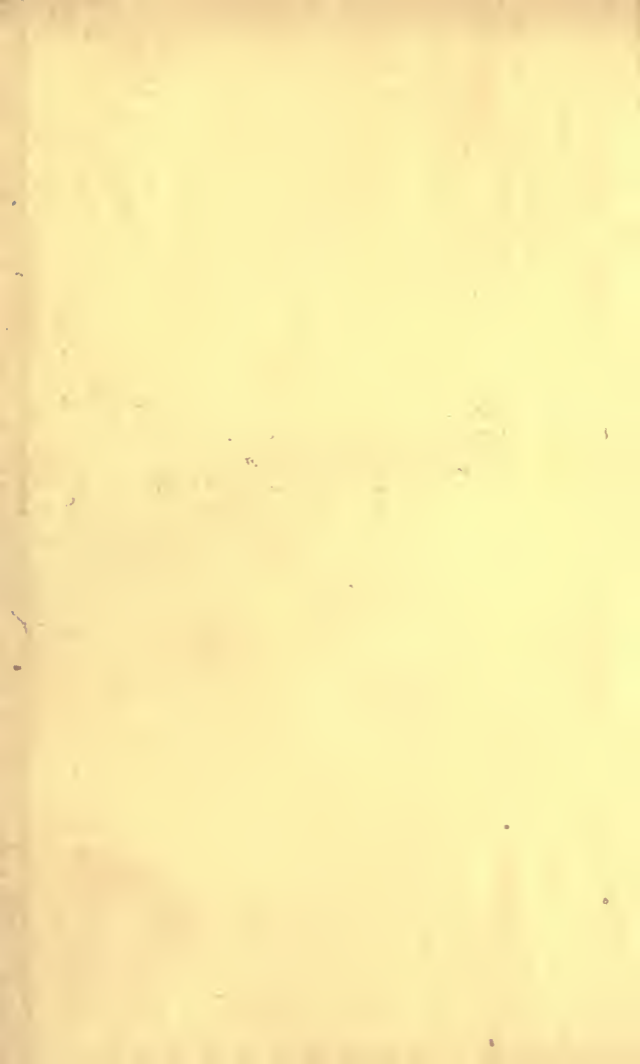


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AN

A L A R M

TO

UNCONVERTED SINNERS;

IN

A SERIOUS TREATISE

ON

CONVERSION.

BY REV. JOSEPH ALLEINE.

REVISED AND ABRIDGED.

PUBLISHED BY THE  
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(5 M)

In the revision of this work numerous obsolete or defective words or phrases have been altered, and some passages, including a few referring to denominational peculiarities, have been omitted.



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A L A R M  
TO  
UNCONVERTED SINNERS.

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INTRODUCTION.

An earnest Invitation to Sinners to turn to God.

DEARLY BELOVED, I gladly acknowledge myself a debtor to you, and am concerned, as I would be found a good steward of the household of God, to give to every one his portion. But the physician is most solicitous for those patients whose case is most doubtful and hazardous; and the father's pity is especially turned towards his dying child. So unconverted souls call for earnest compassion and prompt diligence to pluck them as brands from the burning, Jude 23; therefore to them I shall first apply myself in these pages.

But whence shall I fetch my argument? Where-with shall I win them? O that I could tell. I would write to them in tears, I would weep out every argument, I would empty my veins for ink, I

would petition them on my knees. O how thankful should I be if they would be prevailed with to repent and turn.

How long have I labored for you! How often would I have gathered you! This is what I have prayed for and studied for these many years, that I might bring you to God. O that I might now do it. Will you yet be entreated?

But, Lord, how insufficient am I for this work. Alas, wherewith shall I pierce the scales of Leviathan, or make the heart feel that it is hard as the nether millstone? Shall I go and speak to the grave, and expect the dead will obey me and come forth? Shall I make an oration to the rocks, or declaim to the mountains, and think to move them with arguments? Shall I give the blind to see? From the beginning of the world was it not heard that a man opened the eyes of the blind; but thou, O Lord, canst pierce the heart of the sinner; I can but draw the bow at a venture, but do thou direct the arrow between the joints of the harness, slay the sin, and save the soul of the sinner that casts his eyes on these pages.

There is no entering into heaven but by the strait passage of the second birth; without holiness you shall never see God. Now give yourselves unto the Lord. Now set yourselves to seek him. Now set up the Lord Jesus in your hearts, and set him up in your houses. Kiss the Son, Psalm 2:12, and em-

brace the tenders of mercy; touch his sceptre and live; for why will ye die? I beg not for myself, but would have you happy: this is the prize I run for. My soul's desire and prayer for you is, that you may be saved. Rom. 10:1. What greater joy to a minister than to hear of souls born unto Christ?

I beseech you suffer friendly plainness and freedom with you in your deepest concern. I am not playing the orator; these lines are upon a weighty errand indeed—to convince, to convert, and to save you. If I would quiet a crying infant, I might sing to him in a pleasing mood, and rock him asleep; but when the child is fallen into the fire, the parent takes another course; he will not try to still him with a song or a trifle. I know, if we speed not with you, you are lost; if we cannot get your consent to “arise and come away,” you perish for ever: no conversion, and no salvation: we must get your good-will, or leave you miserable.

But here the difficulty of my work again recurs upon me. Lord, choose my stones out of the brook. 1 Sam. 17:40, 45. I come in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. I come forth, like the stripling David, to wrestle, not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world. Eph. 6:12. This day let the Lord smite the Philistines, spoil the strong man of his armor, and give me the captives out of his hand. Lord, choose my words, choose

my weapons for me; and when I put my hand into the bag, and take thence a stone and sling it, do thou carry it to the mark, and make it sink, not into the forehead, but into the heart of the unconverted sinner, and smite him to the ground like Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9:4.

But I turn me unto you. Some of you do not know what I mean by conversion, and in vain shall I attempt to persuade you to that which you do not understand; therefore for your sakes I will show *what this conversion is*.

Others cherish secret hopes of mercy, though they continue as they are; and for them I must show *the necessity of conversion*.

Others are like to harden themselves with a vain conceit that they are converted already; to them I must show *the marks of the unconverted*.

Others, because they feel no harm, fear none, and so sleep as upon the top of a mast; to them I shall show *the misery of the unconverted*.

Others sit still, because they see not their way of escape; to them I shall show *the means of conversion*.

And finally, for the quickening of all, I shall close with the *motives to conversion*.

## CHAPTER I.

Showing what Conversion is not, and correcting some mistakes about it.

LET the blind Samaritans worship they know not what. John 4 : 22. Let the heathen Athenians inscribe their altar "To the unknown God." Acts 17 : 22. Let Papists commend ignorance as the mother of devotion. They that know man's constitution, and the nature of the reasonable soul, cannot but know that the understanding has such empire in the soul, that he who will go rationally to work must labor to let in light there. And therefore, that you may not mistake me, I shall first show what I mean by the conversion I persuade you to endeavor after.

Truly, my beloved, the devil hath made many counterfeits of conversion, and cheats one with this, and another with that; and such craft and artifice he hath in his mystery of deceits, that, if it were possible, he would deceive the very elect. Now, that I may cure the ruinous mistake of some who think they are converted when they are not, as well as remove the troubles and fears of others, who think they are not converted when they are, I shall show YOU THE NATURE OF CONVERSION, BOTH WHAT IT IS NOT, AND WHAT IT IS.

We will begin with the negative.

It is not the taking upon us the *profession* of Christianity. Christianity is more than a name. If we will hear Paul, it lies not in word, but in power. 1 Cor. 4:20. If to cease to be Jews and Pagans, and to put on the Christian profession, had been true conversion—as this is all that some would have to be understood by it—who better Christians than they of Sardis and Laodicea? These were all Christians by profession, and had a name to live only: but because they had a name, they are condemned by Christ, and threatened to be rejected. Rev. 3:1, 16. Are there not many that name the name of the Lord Jesus, that yet depart not from iniquity, 2 Tim. 2:19, and “profess they know God, but in works deny him?” Titus 1:16. And will God receive these for true converts? What, converts from sin, when yet they live in sin? It is a visible contradiction. Surely, if the lamp of profession would have served the turn, the foolish virgins had never been shut out. Matt. 25:12. We find not only professors, but preachers of Christ, and wonder-workers, rejected, because evil-workers. Matt. 7:22, 23.

It is not putting on the badge of Christ in *baptism*. Ananias, and Sapphira, and Simon Magus were baptized as well as the rest. How fondly do many mistake here, deceiving and being deceived; dreaming that effectual grace is necessarily tied to the external administration of baptism—which, what is it but to revive the popish tenet of the sacraments



working grace?—and thus, that every baptized person is regenerated, not only sacramentally, but really and properly. Hence, men fancy, that being regenerated already when baptized, they need no farther work. But if this were so, then all that have been baptized must necessarily be saved, because the promise of pardon and salvation is made to conversion and regeneration. Acts 3:19; Matt. 19:28. And indeed, were conversion and baptism the same, then men would do well to carry but a certificate of their baptism when they died, and upon sight of this there were no doubt of their admission into heaven.

In short, if there be no more necessary to conversion, or regeneration, than to be baptized, this will fly directly in the face of that scripture, Matthew 7:13, 14, as well as multitudes of others; for, first, we shall then no more say, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way;" for if all that were baptized are saved, the door is exceeding wide, and we shall henceforth say, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth unto life." If this be true, thousands may go in abreast; and we will no more teach that the righteous are scarcely saved, or that there is need of such a stir in taking the kingdom of heaven by violence, and striving to enter in. Surely, if the way be so easy as many suppose, that there is little more necessary than to be baptized and to cry, "Lord, have mercy," we need not put ourselves to

such seeking, and knocking, and wrestling, as the word requires in order to salvation. Secondly, if this be true, we shall no more say, "Few there be that find it;" yea, we will rather say, "Few there be that miss it." We shall no more say, that of the "many" that are "called, but few are chosen," Matt. 22:14, and that even of the professing "Israel but a remnant shall be saved." Rom. 9:27. If this doctrine be true, we shall not say any more with the disciples, "Who then shall be saved?" but rather, "Who then shall not be saved?" Then, if a man be baptized, though he be a fornicator, or a railer or covetous, or a drunkard, yet he shall inherit the kingdom of God. 1 Cor. 5:11, and 6:9, 10.

But some will reply, Such as these, though they did receive regenerating grace in baptism, are since fallen away, and must be renewed again, or else they cannot be saved.

I answer, 1. There is an infallible connection between regeneration and salvation, as we have already shown. 2. Then man must be born again a second time, which carries a great deal of absurdity in its face: and why may not men be twice born in nature as well as in grace? But, 3, and above all, this grants, however, the thing I contend for, that whatever men do or pretend to receive in baptism, if they be found afterwards to be grossly ignorant, or profane, or formal, without the power of godliness, they "must be born again," or else be shut out of the

kingdom of God. So then they must have more to plead for themselves than their baptismal regeneration.

Well, in this you see all are agreed, that, be it more or less that is received in baptism, if men are evidently unsanctified, they must be renewed again by a thorough and powerful change, or else they cannot escape the damnation of hell. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." Whether it be your baptism, or whatever else you pretend, I tell you from the living God, that if any of you be a prayerless person, or unclean, or malicious, or covetous, or riotous, or a scoffer, or a lover of evil company, Prov. 13:20, in a word, if you are not a holy, strict, and self-denying Christian, you cannot be saved. Heb. 12:14; Matt. 15:14.

Paul, while unconverted, touching the righteousness which is in the law, was blameless. Phil. 3:6. The Pharisee could say, "I am no extortioner, adulterer, unjust," etc. Thou must have something *more than all this* to show, Luke 18:11, or else, however thou mayest justify thyself, God will condemn thee. I condemn not morality, but warn thee not to rest in it; piety includes morality, as Christianity doth humanity, and grace, reason; but we must not divide the tables.

It is also manifest that men may have a *form of godliness*, without the power. 2 Tim. 3:5. Men may pray long, Matt. 23:14; and fast often, Luke

18:12; and hear gladly, Mark 6:20; and be very forward in the service of God, though costly and expensive, Isa. 1:11; and yet be strangers to conversion. They must have more to plead for themselves than that they go to church, give alms, and make use of prayer, to prove themselves sound converts. There is no outward service but a hypocrite may do it, even to the "giving all his goods to feed the poor, and his body to be burned." 1 Cor. 13:3.

Conversion is not the mere *chaining up of corruption* by education, human laws, or the force of affliction. It is too common and easy to mistake education for grace; but if this were enough, who a better man than Jehoshaphat? While Jehoida, his uncle, lived, he was very forward in God's service, and calls upon him to repair the house of the Lord, 2 Kings, 12:2, 7; but here was nothing more than good education all this while; for when his good tutor was taken out of the way, he appears to have been but a wolf chained up, and falls into idolatry.

In short, conversion consists not in illumination or conviction, in a superficial change or partial reformation. An apostate may be an enlightened man, Heb. 6:4; and a Felix tremble under conviction, Acts 24:25; and a Herod do many things, Mark 6:20. It is one thing to have sin alarmed only by convictions, and another to have it crucified by converting grace. Many, because they have been troubled in

conscience for their sins, think well of their case, miserably mistaking conviction for conversion. With these, Cain might have passed for a convert, who ran up and down the world like a man distracted, under the rage of a guilty conscience, till, with building and business, he had stifled it. Others think, that because they have given over their riotous courses, and are broken off from evil company or some particular lust, and are reduced to sobriety and civility, they are now no other than real converts; forgetting that there is a vast difference between being sanctified and civilized; and that many seek to enter into the kingdom of heaven, and are not far from it, and arrive to the *almost* of Christianity, and yet fall short at last. While conscience holds the whip over them, many will pray, hear, read, and forbear their delightful sins; but no sooner is the lion asleep than they are at their sins again. Who more religious than the Jews when God's hand was upon them: yet no sooner was the affliction over, than they forgot God. Thou mayst have forsaken a troublesome sin, and have escaped the gross pollutions of the world, and yet in all this not have changed thy carnal nature.

You may cast lead out of the rude mass into the form and features of a man, yet all the while it is but lead still; so a man may pass through divers transmutations, from ignorance to knowledge, from profaneness to civility, and thence to a form of relig-

ion, and all this time he is but carnal and unregenerate whilst his nature remains unchanged.

Hear then, O sinners, hear as you would live. Why would you wilfully deceive yourselves, or build your hopes upon the sand? I know that he may find hard work that goes to pluck away your hopes. It cannot but be ungrateful to you, and truly it is not pleasing to me. I set about it as a surgeon when about to cut off a mortified limb from his well-beloved friend, which of necessity he must do, though with an aching heart. But understand me, beloved, I am only taking down the ruinous house, which will otherwise speedily fall of itself and bury you in the ruins, that I may build it fair, strong, and firm for ever. The hope of the wicked shall perish. Prov. 11: 7. And hadst not thou better, O sinner, let the word convince thee now in time, and let go thy false and self-deluding hopes, than have death too late open thine eyes, and find thyself in hell before thou art aware? I should be a false and faithless shepherd if I should not tell you, that you, who have built your hopes upon no better grounds than these before mentioned, are yet in your sins. Let conscience speak: What is it that you have to plead for yourselves? Is it that you wear Christ's livery; that you bear his name; that you are of the visible church; that you have knowledge in the points of religion, are civilized, perform religious duties, are

just in your dealings, have been troubled in conscience for your sins? I tell you, from the Lord, these pleas will never be accepted at God's bar: all this, though good in itself, will not prove you converted, and so will not suffice to your salvation. O look about you, and bethink yourselves of turning speedily and entirely. Study your own hearts; rest not till God has made thorough work with you; for you must be other men, or else you are lost men.

But if these persons be short of conversion, what shall I say of the *profane sinner*? It may be he will scarcely cast his eyes on, or lend his ear to this discourse; but if there be any such reading, or within hearing, he must know from the Lord that made him, that he is far from the kingdom of God. May a man keep company with the wise virgins, and yet be shut out; and shall not a companion of fools much more be destroyed? May a man be true in his dealings, and yet not be justified of God? What then will become of thee, O wretched man, whose conscience tells thee thou art false in thy trade, and false to thy word, and makest thy advantage by a lying tongue? If men may be enlightened and brought to the external performance of holy duties, and yet go down to perdition for resting in them and sitting down on this side of conversion, what will become of you, O miserable families, that live without God in the world? and of you, O wretched sinners, with whom God is scarcely in all

your thoughts ; that are so ignorant that you cannot, or so careless that you will not pray? O repent and be converted ; break off your sins by righteousness ; away to Christ for pardoning and renewing grace ; give up yourselves to him, to walk with him in holiness, or you shall never see God. O that you would take the warnings of God ! In his name I once more admonish you : Turn ye at my reproof. Forsake the foolish, and live. Be sober, righteous, and godly. Wash your hands, ye sinners ; purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. But if you will go on, you must die.



## CHAPTER II.

## SHOWING POSITIVELY WHAT CONVERSION IS.

I MAY not leave you with your eyes half open, like him that saw "men as trees walking." The word is profitable for doctrine as well as reproof. And therefore, having thus far conducted you by the shelves and rocks of so many dangerous mistakes, I would guide you at length into the haven of truth.

Conversion then, in short, lies in THE THOROUGH CHANGE BOTH OF THE HEART AND LIFE. I shall briefly describe it in its nature and causes.

I. The AUTHOR of conversion is the Spirit of God, and therefore it is called "the sanctification of the Spirit," and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," yet not excluding the other persons in the Trinity; for the apostle teacheth us to "bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope." And Christ is said to "give repentance unto Israel," and is called the "everlasting Father," and we his seed, and the children which God hath given him. Yet this work is principally ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and so we are said to be "born of the Spirit."

So then regeneration is a work of God: "We are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:13. If ever thou

wouldst be savingly converted, thou must despair of doing it in thine own strength. It is a resurrection from the dead, Eph. 2 : 1 ; a new creation, Gal. 6 : 15 ; Eph. 2 : 10 ; a work of absolute omnipotence, Eph. 1 : 19. If thou hast no more than thou hadst by thy first birth, a good nature, a meek and chaste temper, etc., thou art a stranger to true conversion : this is a supernatural work.

II. The EFFICIENT CAUSE of conversion is internal, or external.

1. The internal cause is free grace alone. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy he saved us," and "by the renewing of the Holy Ghost." "Of his own will begat he us." We are chosen and called *unto* sanctification, not *for* it.

God finds nothing in man to excite his love : enough to provoke his loathing. Look back upon thyself, O Christian ! Do not thine own clothes abhor thee ? Job 9 : 31. How then should holiness and pureness love thee ? Be astonished, O heavens, at this ; be moved, O earth. Who but must needs cry, Grace, grace. Hear and blush, ye children of the Most High—O ye unthankful men ! that free grace is no more in your mouths, in your thoughts ; no more adored, admired, and commended by such as you. One would think you should be doing nothing but praising and admiring God wherever you are. How can you forget such grace, or

pass it over with a slight and formal mention? What but free grace could move God to love you, unless enmity could do it, unless deformity could do it? How affectionately doth Peter lift up his hands: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again." How feelingly doth Paul magnify the free mercy of God in it: "God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ. By grace ye are saved."

2. The external cause is the merit and intercession of the blessed Jesus. He hath obtained gifts for the rebellious, and through him it is that God worketh in us what is well pleasing in his sight. Through him are all spiritual blessings bestowed upon us in heavenly things. Every convert is the fruit of his travail. He is made sanctification to us. He sanctified himself—that is, set apart himself as a sacrifice—that we may be sanctified. "We are sanctified through the offering of his body once for all." Heb. 10:10.

It is nothing, then, but the merit and intercession of Christ, that prevails with God to bestow on us converting grace. If thou art a new creature, thou knowest to whom thou owest it; to Christ's agonies and prayers. And whither else shouldst thou go? If any in the world can show that for thy heart which Christ can, let them do it. Doth Satan claim thee? Doth the world court thee? Doth sin sue

for thy heart? But were these crucified for thee? O Christian, love and serve the Lord whilst thou hast a being.

III. The INSTRUMENT of conversion is either personal or real. The personal is the ministry. I have begotten you in Christ through the Gospel. 1 Cor. 4:15. Christ's ministers are they that are sent to open men's eyes, and to turn them to God. Acts 26:18.

O unthankful world, little do you know what you are doing while you are persecuting the messengers of the Lord. These are they whose business it is, under Christ, to save you. Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you exalted your voice, and lifted your eyes on high? "These are the servants of the most high God, that show unto you the way of salvation," and do you thus requite them, O foolish and unwise! O sons of ingratitude, against whom do ye sport yourselves? These are the instruments that God uses to convert and save sinners: and do you revile your physicians, and throw your pilots overboard? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

The real instrument is the word. We are begotten by the word of truth. This it is that enlightens the eye; that converts the soul, Psalm 19:7, 8; that maketh wise to salvation. 2 Tim. 3:15. This is the incorruptible seed, by which we are born again. 1 Pet. 1:23. If we are washed, it is by the word.

Eph. 5 : 26. If we are sanctified, it is through the truth. John 17 : 17. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." James 1 : 18.

O ye saints, how should ye love the word ; for by this you have been converted : O ye sinners, how should you ply the word ; for by means of this you must be converted. You that have felt its renewing power, make much of it while you live ; be forever thankful for it ; tie it about your neck ; write it upon your hand ; lay it in your bosom. When you go, let it lead you ; when you sleep, let it keep you ; when you wake, let it talk with you : say with holy David, "I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou hast quickened me." You that are unconverted, read the word with diligence ; flock to it where powerfully preached : pray for the coming of the Spirit in the word ; come from your knees to the sermon, and come to your knees from the sermon. The seed doth not prosper, because not watered by prayers and tears, nor covered by meditation.

IV. The FINAL CAUSE OR END of conversion is man's salvation, and God's glory. We are chosen through sanctification to salvation ; called that we might be glorified ; but especially that God may be glorified, that we should "show forth his praise," and "be fruitful in good works." O Christian, do not forget the end of thy calling ; "let thy light shine," let thy lamp burn ; let thy fruits be good, and many, and in season ; let all thy designs

fall in with God's, that he may "be magnified in thee."

V. The SUBJECT of conversion is the sinner, and that in all his parts and powers, members and mind. Those who are drawn to Christ, or come to him by believing, are his sheep, "whom the Father hath given him." John 6:37, 44. Wouldst thou know whether thou art given to Christ? prove thy conversion, and then never doubt of thy election; or, if thou canst not prove it, set upon a present and thorough turning. Whatever God's purposes be, which are secret, I am sure his precepts are plain. How desperately do rebels argue! "If I am elected I shall be saved, do what I will: if not, I shall be damned, do what I can." Perverse sinner, wilt thou begin where thou shouldst end? Is not the word before thee? What saith it? "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." "If you mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live." "Believe and be saved." What can be plainer? Do not stand still disputing about thine election, but set to repenting and believing; cry to God for converting grace. Revealed things belong to thee; in these busy thyself. It is just, as one well said, that they who will not feed on the plain food of the word should be choked with the bones. Whatever God's purposes be, I am sure his promises are true; whatever the decrees of heaven be, I am sure that if I repent and believe I shall be saved;

and that if I repent not, I shall be damned. Is not here plain ground for thee; and wilt thou yet run upon the rocks?

More particularly, this change of conversion passes THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE MAN. A carnal person may have some shreds of good morality, but he is never good throughout. Conversion is not a repairing of the old building; but it takes all down, and erects a new structure: it is not the putting in a patch of holiness; but, with the true convert, holiness is woven into all his powers, principles, and practice. The sincere Christian is quite a new fabric, from the foundation to the top-stone. He is a new man, a new creature. All things are become new. Conversion is a deep work, a heart-work. It makes a new man in a new world. It goes throughout with men, throughout the mind, throughout the members, throughout the motions of the whole life.

1. Throughout the *mind*. It makes a universal change within.

(1.) It turns the balance of *the judgment*; so that God and his glory outweigh all carnal and worldly interests. It opens the eye of the mind, and makes the scales of its native ignorance fall off, and turns men from darkness to light. The man that before saw no danger in his condition, now concludes himself lost, and for ever undone, Acts 2:37, except renewed by the power of grace. He that formerly thought there was little harm in sin, now comes to

see it to be the chief of evils ; he sees the unreasonableness, the unrighteousness, the deformity and filthiness of sin ; so that he is affrighted with it, loathes it, dreads it, flees from it, and even abhors himself for it. He that could see little sin in himself, and could find no matter for confession, now sees the rottenness of his heart, the desperate and deep pollution of his whole nature. He cries, Unclean, unclean : Lord, purge me with hyssop, wash me thoroughly, create in me a clean heart. He sees himself altogether filthy, corrupt, both root and tree ; he writes unclean upon all his parts, and powers, and performances ; he discovers the filthy corners that he was never aware of, and sees the blasphemy, and theft, and murder, and adultery, that is in his heart, of which before he was ignorant. Heretofore he saw no form nor comeliness in Christ, nor beauty, that he should desire him ; but now he finds the hidden treasure, and will sell all to buy this field. Christ is the pearl he seeks.

Now, according to this new light, the man is of another mind, another judgment, than he was before. Now God is all with him, he hath none in heaven, nor in earth like him ; he truly prefers him before all the world ; his favor is his life, the light of his countenance is more than corn, or wine, and oil. A hypocrite may come to yield a general assent that God is the chief good ; yea, the wiser heathens, some few of them, have at last stumbled



upon this : but no hypocrite comes so far as to look upon God as the most desirable and suitable good to him, and thereupon to acquiesce in him. This is the convert's voice : "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

(2.) It turns the bias of *the will* both as to means and end. The intentions of the will are altered. Now the man hath new ends and designs ; now he intends God above all, and desires and designs nothing in all the world, so much as that Christ may be magnified in him. He counts himself more happy in this than in all that the earth could yield, that he may be serviceable to Christ, and bring him glory. This is the mark he aims at, that the name of Jesus may be great in the world.

Reader, dost thou view this, and never ask thyself whether it be thus with thee ? Pause a while, and breathe on this great concern.

The choice is also changed. He pitcheth upon God as his blessedness, and upon Christ and holiness as means to bring him to God. He chooseth Jesus for his Lord. He is not merely forced to Christ, by the storm, nor doth he take Christ for bare necessity, but he comes freely. His choice is not made in a fright, as with the terrified conscience, or the dying sinner that will seemingly do any thing for Christ,

but only takes Christ rather than hell. He deliberately resolves that Christ is his best choice, and would rather have him than all the good of this world, might he enjoy it while he would. Phil. 1:23. Again, he takes holiness for his path; he does not of mere necessity submit to it, but he likes and loves it: "I have chosen the way of thy precepts." He takes God's testimonies, not as his bondage, but as his heritage; yea, heritage for ever. He counts them not his burden, but his bliss; not his cords, but his cordials. He does not only bear, but takes up Christ's yoke: he takes not holiness as the stomach does the loathed potion, which a man will take rather than die, but as the hungry doth his beloved food. No time passeth so sweetly with him, when he is himself, as that he spends in the exercises of holiness. These are both his aliment and element, the desire of his eyes and the joy of his heart. Put it to thy conscience whether thou art the man. O happy man, if this be thy case! But see thou be impartial in the search.

(3.) It turns the bent of *the affections*. These run all in a new channel. The Jordan is now driven back, and the water runs upwards against its natural course. Christ is his hope. This is his prize. Here his eye is: here his heart. He is contented to cast all overboard, as the merchant in the storm ready to perish, so he may but keep this jewel.

The first of his desires is not after gold, but grace.

He hungers after it, he seeks it as silver, he digs for it as for hid treasure; he had rather be gracious than be great; he had rather be the holiest man on earth than the most learned, the most famous, the most prosperous. While carnal, he said, O if I were but in great esteem, rolling in wealth, and swimming in pleasure; if my debts were paid, and I and mine provided for, then I were a happy man. But now the tone is changed. O, saith the convert, if I had but my corruptions subdued, if I had such a measure of grace, such fellowship with God, though I were poor and despised I should not care, I should account myself a blessed man. Reader, is this the language of thy soul?

His *joys* are changed. He rejoiceth in the ways of God's testimonies as much as in all riches. He delights in the law of the Lord, wherein once he had little savor. He hath no such joy as in the thoughts of Christ, the fruition of his company, the prosperity of his people.

His *cares* are quite altered. He was once set for the world, and any scrap of by-time was enough for his soul: now his cry is, "What shall I do to be saved?" His great solicitude is to secure his soul. O how would he bless you if you could but put him out of doubt of this! His fears are not so much of suffering as of sinning. Once he was afraid of nothing so much as the loss of his estate or reputation; nothing sounded so terrible to him as pain,

or poverty, or disgrace ; now these are little to him, in comparison of God's dishonor or displeasure. How warily doth he walk, lest he should tread upon a snare ! He feareth alway ; he hath his eye upon his heart, and is ever watchful lest he should be overtaken with sin. It kills his heart to think of losing God's favor ; this he dreads as his only undoing. No thought would pain him so much as to think of parting with Christ.

His *love* runs a new course, My Love was crucified, saith Ignatius ; that is, my Christ. This is my Beloved, saith the spouse. Cant. 5 : 16. How doth Augustine often pour his love upon Christ ! O "eternal blessedness !" He can find no words sweet enough. "Let me see thee, O light of mine eyes. Come O thou joy of my spirit. Let me behold thee, O life of my soul. Appear unto me, O my great delight, my sweet comfort : O my God, my life, and the whole glory of my soul. Let me find thee, O desire of my heart. Let me hold thee, O love of my soul. Let me embrace thee, O heavenly bridegroom. Let me possess thee !"

His *sorrows* have now a new vent. The view of his sins, the sight of Christ crucified, that could scarcely stir him before, now how much do they affect his heart !

His hatred boils, his anger burns against sin. He hath no patience with himself : he calls himself fool and beast, and thinks any name too good for him-

self, when his indignation is stirred up against sin. Psalm 73 : 22 ; Prov. 30 : 2. He could once delight in it with much pleasure ; now he loathes the thought of returning to it.

Commune then with thine own heart, and attend to the general current of thine affections, whether they be towards God in Christ above all other concerns. Indeed, sudden and strong motions of the affections are oftentimes found in hypocrites, especially where the natural temperament is warm. And, contrariwise, the sanctified themselves are many times without sensible stirring of the affections, where the temper is more slow, dry, and dull. The great inquiry is, whether the judgment and will be steadily determined for God above all other good, real or apparent ; if so, and if the affections do sincerely follow their choice and conduct, though it be not so strongly and sensibly as is to be desired, there is no doubt but the change is saving.

2. Throughout *the members*. Those that were before the instruments of sin, are now become the holy vessels of Christ's living kingdom. He that before dishonored his body, now possesses his vessel in sanctification and honor, in temperance, chastity, and sobriety, and dedicates it to the Lord.

The *eye*, that was once a wandering eye, a wanton eye, a haughty, a covetous eye, is now employed, as Mary's, in weeping over its sins, in beholding God in his works, in reading his word, or in looking

for objects of mercy and opportunities for his service.

The *ear*, that was once open to Satan's call, is now open to the voice of Christ's house, and to his discipline. It saith, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." It waits for his words as the rain, and relishes them more than the appointed food, "more than the honey and the honey-comb."

The *head*, that was full of worldly designs, is now filled with other matters, and set on the study of God's will, and the man employs his head not so much about his gain as about his duty. The thoughts and cares that fill his head are, principally, how he may please God and flee sin.

His *heart*, that was filled with filthy lusts, is now become an altar of incense, where the fire of divine love is ever kept burning, and whence the daily sacrifices of prayer and praise, and the sweet incense of holy desires, ejaculations, and prayers, are continually ascending.

The *mouth* is become a well of life, his tongue as choice silver, and his lips feed many; now the salt of grace has seasoned his speech, has eaten out the corruption, Col. 4 : 6, and cleansed the mouth from its filthy communication, flattery, boasting, and backbiting, that once came like flashes that proceeded from the hell that was in the heart. The *throat*, that was once an open sepulchre, now sends forth the sweet breath of prayer and holy discourse, and the

man speaks in another tongue, even the language of Canaan, and is never so well as when talking of God and Christ, and the matters of another world. His mouth bringeth forth wisdom; his tongue is become the silver trumpet of his Maker's praise, his glory, and the best member that he hath.

Now here you will find the hypocrite sadly deficient. He speaks, it may be, like an angel, but he hath a covetous eye, or the gain of unrighteousness in his hand; or the hand is white, but his heart is full of rottenness, Matt. 23:27, full of unmortified cares, a very oven of lust, a shop of pride, the seat of malice. It may be, with Nebuchadnezzar's image, he hath a golden head, a great deal of knowledge; but he hath feet of clay, his affections are worldly, he minds earthly things, and his way and walk are sensual and carnal. The work is not thorough with him.

3. Throughout *the life and practice*, the new man takes a new course. His "conversation is in heaven." No sooner doth Christ call by effectual grace, but he straightway becomes "a follower of him." When God hath given the new heart, and written his law in his mind, he forthwith walks in his statutes, and keeps his judgments.

Though sin may dwell—truly a wearisome and unwelcome guest—in him, yet it hath "no more dominion over him." "He hath his fruit unto holiness," and though he makes many a blot, yet the

law of life and Jesus is what he looks at as his copy, and he hath an unfeigned respect to all God's commandments, making conscience of every sin and every duty. His very infirmities, which he cannot help though he would, are his soul's burden, and are like the dust in a man's eye, which though but little, yet is not a little troublesome. O man, dost thou read this and never turn in upon thy soul by self-examination? The sincere convert is not one man at church and another at home; he is not a saint on his knees, and a cheat in his shop; he will not tithe mint and cummin, and neglect mercy and judgment, and the weighty matters of the law; he doth not pretend to piety and neglect morality; but he turns from all his sins, and keeps all God's statutes, though not perfectly—except in desire and endeavor—yet sincerely; not allowing himself in the breach of any. Now he delights in the word and sets himself to prayer, and opens his hand and draws out his soul to the hungry. "He breaketh off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor," and hath "a good conscience, willing in all things to live honestly," and to keep without offence towards God and man.

Here, again, you find the unsoundness of many professors who consider themselves good Christians; they are partial in the law, and take up with the cheap and easy duties of religion, but go not through with the work. It may be you find them exact in



their words, punctual in their dealings, but then they do not exercise themselves unto godliness; and as for examining themselves and governing their hearts, to this they are strangers. You may see them duly at the church; but follow them to their families, and there you shall see little but the world minded; or if they have family duties, follow them to their closets, and there you shall find their souls are little looked after. It may be they seem otherwise religious, but bridle not their tongues, and so "all their religion is vain." It may be they come up to closet and family prayer; but follow them to their shops, and there you find them in the habit of lying, or some covert and fashionable way of deceit. Thus the hypocrite goes not throughout in the course of his obedience.

VI. The OBJECTS FROM WHICH we turn in conversion are, sin, Satan, the world, and our own righteousness.

1. We turn from *sin*. When a man is converted, he is for ever at enmity with sin; yea, with all sin, but most of all with his own sins, and especially with his bosom sin. Sin is now the object of his indignation. His sins swell his sorrows. It is sin that pierces him and wounds him; he feels it like a thorn in his side, like a prick in his eyes: he groans and struggles under it, and not formally, but feelingly cries out, "O wretched man!" He is not impatient of any burden so much as of his sin. If God

should give him his choice, he would choose any affliction so he might be rid of sin ; he feels it like the cutting gravel in his shoes, pricking and paining him as he goes.

Before conversion, he had light thoughts of sin ; he cherished it in his bosom, as Uriah his lamb ; he nourished it up, and it grew up together with him ; it did eat, as it were, of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him as a daughter. But when God opens his eyes by conversion, he throws it away with abhorrence, as a man would a loathsome toad, which in the dark he had hugged fast in his bosom, and thought it had been some pretty and harmless bird. When a man is savingly changed, he is deeply convinced not only of the danger but the defilement of sin ; and O, how earnest is he with God to be purified ! he loathes himself for his sins. He runs to Christ, and casts himself into the fountain set open for sin and for uncleanness. If he fall, he has no rest till he flees to the word, and washes in the infinite fountain, laboring to cleanse himself from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit.

The sound convert is heartily engaged against sin ; he struggles with it, he wars against it ; he is too often foiled, but he will never yield the cause, nor lay down the weapons, while he hath breath in his body ; he will make no peace ; he will give no quarter. He can forgive his other enemies ; he can pity

them, and pray for them ; but here he is implacable, here he is set upon extermination ; he hunteth as it were for the precious life ; his eye shall not pity, his hand shall not spare, though it be a right hand or a right eye. Be it a gainful sin, most delightful to his nature or the support of his esteem with worldly friends, yet he will rather throw his gain down the kennel, see his credit fail, or the flower of pleasure wither in his hand, than he will allow himself in any known way of sin. He will grant no indulgence, he will give no toleration ; he draws upon sin wherever he meets it, and frowns upon it with this unwelcome salute, "Have I found thee, O mine enemy?"

Reader, hath conscience been at work while thou hast been looking over these lines ? Hast thou pondered these things in thy heart ? Hast thou searched the book within, to see if these things be so ? If not, read it again, and make thy conscience speak, whether or not it be thus with thee.

Hast thou crucified thy flesh with its affections and lusts ; and not only confessed, but forsaken thy sins, all sin in thy fervent desires, and the ordinary practice of every deliberate and wilful sin in thy life ? If not, thou art yet unconverted. Doth not conscience fly in thy face as thou readest, and tell thee that thou livest in a way of lying for thy advantage ; that thou usest deceit in thy calling ; that there is some way of secret wantonness that

thou livest in? why then, do not deceive thyself; thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity.

Doth not thy unbridled tongue, thy indulgence of appetite, thy wicked company, thy neglect of prayer, of reading and hearing the word, now witness against thee, and say, "We are thy works, and we will follow thee;" or, if I have not hit thee right, doth not the monitor within tell thee, there is such or such a way that thou knowest to be evil, that yet for some carnal respect thou dost tolerate thyself in? If this be thy case, thou art to this day unregenerate, and must be changed or condemned.

2. We turn from *Satan*. - Conversion binds the strong man, spoils his armor, casts out his goods, turns men from the power of Satan unto God. Before, the devil could no sooner hold up his finger to the sinner to call him to his wicked company, sinful games, and filthy delights, but presently he followed, like an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks; as the bird that hasteth to the prey, and knoweth not that it is for his life. No sooner could Satan bid him lie, but presently he had it on his tongue. No sooner could Satan offer a wanton object, but he was stung with lust. If the devil says, "Away with these family duties," be sure they shall be rarely enough performed in his house. If the devil says, "Away with this strictness, this preciseness," he will keep far enough from

it: if he tells him, "There is no need of these closet-duties," he will go from day to day and scarcely perform them. But since he is converted he serves another Master, and takes quite another course: he goes and comes at Christ's bidding. Satan may sometimes catch his foot in a trap, but he will no longer be a willing captive; he watches against the snares and baits of Satan, and studies to be acquainted with his devices; he is very suspicious of his plots, and is very jealous in what comes across him, lest Satan should have some design upon him; he "wrestles against principalities and powers;" he entertains the messenger of Satan as men do the messenger of death; he keeps his eye upon his enemy, and watches in his duties, lest Satan should get an advantage.

3. We turn from *the world*. Before a man has true faith, he is overcome of the world; either he bows down to mammon, or idolizes his reputation, or is a "lover of pleasure more than a lover of God." Here is the root of man's misery by the fall; he is turned aside to the creature, and gives that esteem, confidence, and affection to the creature, that is due to God alone.

O miserable man, what a deformed monster hath sin made thee! God made thee "little lower than the angels;" sin, little better than the devils. The world, that was formed to serve thee, is come to rule thee—the deceitful harlot hath bewitched thee with

her enchantments, and made thee bow down and serve her.

But converting grace sets all in order again, and puts God on the throne, and the world at his footstool; Christ in the heart, and the world under the feet. So Paul, "I am crucified to the world, and the world to me." Before this change, all the cry was, "Who will show us any worldly good?" but now he prays, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me," and take the corn and wine whoso will. Before, his heart's delight and content were in the world; then the song was, "Soul, take thy ease, eat, drink, and be merry; thou hast much goods laid up for many years;" but now all this is withered, and there is no comeliness, that we should desire it; and he tunes up with the sweet Psalmist of Israel: "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance; the lines are fallen to me in a fair place, and I have a goodly heritage." He blesseth himself, and boasteth himself in God. Nothing else can give him content. He hath written vanity and vexation upon all his worldly enjoyments, and loss and dung upon all human excellencies. He hath life and immortality now in pursuit. He pants for grace and glory, and hath a crown incorruptible in view. His heart is set in him to seek the Lord. He first seeks the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof, and religion is no longer a matter by the by with him, but his main care.

Before, the world had the sway with him; he would do more for gain than godliness—more to please his friend, or his flesh, than the God that made him; and God must stand by till the world was first served. But now all must stand by; he hates father and mother, and life, and all, in comparison of Christ. Well, then, pause a little, and look within. Doth not this nearly concern thee? Thou pretendest for Christ, but does not the world sway thee? Dost thou not take more real delight and content in the world than in him? Dost thou not find thyself better at ease when the world goes to thy mind, and thou art compassed with carnal delights, than when retired to prayer and meditation in thy closet, or attending upon God's word and worship? No surer evidence of an unconverted state, than to have the things of the world uppermost in our aim, love, and estimation.

With the sound convert, Christ has the supremacy. How dear is his name to him! How precious is his favor! The name of Jesus is engraven on his heart. Gal. 4:19. Honor is but air, and laughter is but madness, and mammon is fallen like Dagon before the ark, with hands and head broken off on the threshold, when once Christ is savingly revealed. Here is the pearl of great price to the true convert; here is his treasure; here is his hope. This is his glory, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." O, it is sweeter to him to be able to say, Christ is mine,

than if he could say, the kingdom is mine, the Indies are mine.

4. We turn from *our own righteousness*. Before conversion, man seeks to cover himself with his own fig-leaves, and to make himself whole with his own duties. He is apt to trust in himself, and set up his own righteousness, and to reckon his counters for gold, and not submit to the righteousness of God. But conversion changes his mind; now he counts his own righteousness as filthy rags. He casts it off, as a man would the dirty tatters of a beggar. Now he is brought to poverty of spirit, complains of and condemns himself, and all his inventory is, "poor, and miserable, and wretched; and blind, and naked." He sees a world of iniquity in his holy things, and calls his once-idolized righteousness but filth and loss; and would not for a thousand worlds be found in it. Now he begins to set a high price upon Christ's righteousness: he sees the need of Christ in every duty, to justify his person, and sanctify his performances; he cannot live without him; he cannot pray without him. Christ must go with him, or else he cannot come into the presence of God; he leans upon Christ, and so bows himself in the house of his God; he sets himself down for a lost undone man without him; his life is hid in Christ, as the root of a tree spreads in the earth for stability and nutriment. Before, the news of Christ was a stale and tasteless thing; but now,



how sweet is Christ. Augustine could not relish his before so much admired Cicero, because he could not find in his writings the name of Christ. How emphatically cries he, "O most sweet, most loving, most kind, most dear, most precious, most desired, most lovely, most fair!" etc., *Meditat. c. 37*, all in a breath, when he speaks of and to Christ. In a word, the voice of the convert is with the martyr, "None but Christ."

VII. The OBJECT TO WHICH we turn in conversion is, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; whom the true convert takes as his all-sufficient and eternal blessedness. A man is never truly sanctified till his very heart be in truth set upon God above all things, as his portion and chief good. These are the natural breathings of a believer's heart: "Thou art my portion." "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." "My expectation is from him; he only is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence; in God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God."

Would you put it to an issue whether you be converted or not? Now let thy soul and all that is within thee attend.

Hast thou taken God for thy happiness? Where doth the content of thy heart lie? Whence doth thy choicest comfort come in? Come, then, and with Abraham lift up thine eyes eastward, and westward, and northward, and southward, and cast about

thee, what is it that thou wouldst have in heaven or on earth to make thee happy? If God should give thee thy choice, as he did to Solomon, or should say to thee, as Ahasuerus to Esther, "What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and it shall be granted thee?" what wouldst thou ask? Go into the gardens of pleasure, and gather all the fragrant flowers thence: would these content thee? Go to the treasures of mammon; suppose thou mightest lade thyself as thou wouldst from hence. Go to the towers, to the trophies of honor; what thinkest thou of being a man of renown, and having a name like the name of the great men of the earth? Would any of these, all these suffice thee, and make thee count thyself happy? If so, then certainly thou art carnal and unconverted. If not, go farther; wade into the divine excellences, the store of his mercies, the hiding of his power, the depths unfathomable of his all-sufficiency. Doth this suit thee best and please thee most? Dost thou say, "It is good to be here"—"Here will I pitch, here will I live and die?" Wilt thou let all the world go rather than this? Then it is well between God and thee: happy art thou, O man—happy art thou that ever thou wast born. If God can make thee happy, thou must be happy; for thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God. Dost thou say to Christ as he to us, "Thy Father shall be my Father, and thy God my God?" Here is the turning point; an un-

sound professor never takes up his rest in God, but converting grace does the work, and so cures the fatal misery of the fall, by turning the heart from its idol to the living God. Now says the soul, "Lord, whither shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Here he centres, here he settles. It is the entrance of heaven to him; he sees his interest in God. When he discovers this, he saith, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." And he is even ready to breathe out Simeon's song, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;" and saith with Jacob, when his old heart revived at the welcome tidings, "It is enough." When he sees he hath a God in covenant to go to, "this is all his salvation and all his desire."

Is this thy case; hast thou experienced this? Then, "blessed art thou of the Lord;" God hath been at work with thee; he hath laid hold on thy heart by the power of converting grace, or else thou couldst never have done this.

More particularly, in conversion,

1. We turn to *Christ*, the only Mediator between God and man. 1 Tim. 2:5. His work is to bring us to God. 1 Pet. 3:18. He is the way to the Father, John 14:6, the only plank on which we may escape, the only door by which we may enter. John 10:9. Conversion brings over the soul to Christ to accept him as the only means

of life, as the only way, the only name given under heaven. He looks not for salvation in any other but him ; he throws himself on Christ alone.

“Here,” saith the convinced sinner, “I will venture ; and if I perish, I perish ; if I die, I will die here. But, Lord, suffer me not to perish under the eye of thy mercy. Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee.” Ruth 1 : 16. Here I will throw myself ; if thou slay me, I will not go from thy door.

Thus the poor soul doth venture on Christ and resolvedly adhere to him. Before conversion, the man made light of Christ, minded his farm, friends, merchandise, more than Christ ; now, Christ is to him as his necessary food, his daily bread, the life of his heart, the staff of his life. His great desire is, that Christ may be magnified in him. His heart once said, as they to the spouse, “What is thy beloved more than another ?” Cant. 5 : 9. He found more sweetness in his merry company, wicked games, earthly delights, than in Christ. He took religion for a fancy, and the talk of great enjoyments for an idle dream ; but now “to him to live is Christ.” He sets light by all that he accounted precious, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.

All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert : he loves not only the wages, but the work of Christ ; not only the benefits, but the burden of Christ ; he is willing not only to tread out the corn, but to

draw under the yoke; he takes up the commands of Christ, yea, the cross of Christ.

The unsound closeth by halves with Christ: he is all for the salvation of Christ, but he is not for sanctification; he is for the privileges, but appropriates not the person of Christ; he divides the offices and benefits of Christ. This is an error in the foundation. Whoso loveth life, let him beware here; it is an undoing mistake, of which you have been often warned, and yet none is more common. - Jesus is a sweet name; but men "love not the Lord Jesus in sincerity." They will not have him as God offers, "to be a Prince and a Saviour." They divide what God has joined, the king and the priest: yea, they will not accept the salvation of Christ as he intends it; they divide it here. Every man's vote is for salvation from suffering; but they desire not to be saved from sinning; they would have their lives saved, but withal would have their lusts. Yea, many divide here again; they would be content to have some of their sins destroyed, but they cannot leave the lap of Delilah, or divorce the beloved Herodias: they cannot be cruel to the right eye or right hand: the Lord must pardon them in this thing. O be carefully scrupulous here: your soul depends upon it. The sound convert takes a whole Christ, and takes him for all intents and purposes, without exceptions, without limitations, without reserve. He is willing to have Christ upon any terms;

he is willing to have the dominion of Christ, as well as deliverance by Christ; he saith, with Paul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Any thing, Lord. He sends the blank to Christ, to set down his own conditions.

2. We turn to *the laws, ordinances, and ways of Christ*. The heart that was once set against these, and could not endure the strictness of these bonds, the severity of these ways, now falls in with them, and chooses them as its rule and guide for ever.

Four things, I observe, God doth work in every sound convert, with reference to the laws and ways of Christ; by which you may come to know your state, if you will be faithful to your own souls; and, therefore, keep your eyes upon your hearts as you go along.

(1.) The judgment is brought to approve of them, and subscribe to them, as most righteous and most reasonable. The mind is brought to like the ways of God; and the corrupt prejudices that were once against them, as unreasonable and intolerable, are now removed. The understanding assents to them all, as holy, just, and good. Rom. 7:12. How is David taken up with the excellences of God's laws; how doth he expatiate on their praises, both from their inherent qualities and admirable effects! Psalm 19: 8, 9, 10, etc.

There is a two-fold judgment of the understanding. The absolute judgment is, when a man thinks

such a course best in the general, but not for him, or not under his present circumstances. Now, a godly man's judgment is for the ways of God, and that not only the absolute, but comparative judgment: he thinks them not only the best in general, but best for him: he looks upon the rules of religion not only as tolerable, but desirable; yea, more desirable than gold, fine gold; yea, much fine gold.

His judgment is fully determined that it is best to be holy, that it is best to be strict, that it is in itself the most eligible course, and that it is for him the wisest and most rational and desirable choice. Hear the godly man's judgment: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right; I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold; I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." Mark, he approves of all that God requires, and disallows all that he forbids. "Righteous, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments. Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous and very faithful. Thy word is true from the beginning, and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever." See how readily and fully he subscribes; he declares his assent and consent to it, and all and every thing therein contained.

(2.) The desire of the heart is to know the whole mind of Christ. He would not have one sin undiscovered, nor be ignorant of one duty required. It is the natural and earnest breathing of a sanctified

heart: "Lord, if there be any way of wickedness in me, do thou discover it. What I know not, teach thou me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more." The unsound convert is willingly ignorant, loves not to come to the light. He is willing to keep such or such a sin, and therefore is loath to know it to be a sin, and will not let in the light at that window. Now, the gracious heart is willing to know the whole latitude and compass of his Maker's law. He receives with all acceptance the word which convinceth him of any duty that he knew not, or minded not before, or which discovereth any sin that lay hid before.

(3.) The free and resolved choice of the will is for the ways of Christ, before all the pleasures of sin and prosperities of the world. His consent is not extorted by some extremity of anguish, nor is it only a sudden and hasty resolve, but he is deliberately purposed, and comes freely to the choice. True, the flesh will rebel, yet the prevailing part of his will is for Christ's laws and government; so that he takes them not up as his toil or burden, but his bliss. While the unsanctified goes in Christ's ways as in chains and fetters, he does it heartily, and counts Christ's laws his liberty. He delights in the beauties of holiness, and has this inseparable mark, "That he had rather, if he might have his choice, live a strict and holy life, than the most prosperous and flourishing mere worldly life." "There went



with Saul a band of men whose hearts God had touched." When God toucheth the hearts of his chosen, they presently follow Christ, and, though drawn, do freely run after him, and willingly devote themselves to the service of the Lord, seeking him with their whole desire. Fear hath its use; but this is not the main-spring of motion with a sanctified heart. Christ keeps not his subjects in by force, but is King of a willing people. They are, through his grace, freely devoted to his service; they serve out of choice, not as slaves, but as the son or spouse, from a spring of love and a loyal mind. In a word, the laws of Christ are the convert's love, delight, and continual study.

(4.) The bent of his course is directed to keep God's statutes. It is the daily care of his life to walk with God. He seeks great things, he hath noble designs, though he fall too short. He aims at nothing less than perfection: he desires it, he reaches after it; he would not rest in any degree of grace, till he were quite rid of sin, and perfected in holiness.

Here the hypocrite's rottenness may be discovered. He desires holiness, as one well said, only as a bridge to heaven, and inquires earnestly what is the least that will serve his turn; and if he can get but so much as may bring him to heaven, this is all he cares for. But the sound convert desires holiness for holiness' sake, and not merely for heaven's

sake. He would not be satisfied with so much as might save him from hell, but desires the highest degree: yet desires are not enough. What is thy way and thy course? Are the drift and scope of thy life altered? Is holiness thy pursuit, and religion thy business? If not, thou art short of sound conversion.

And is this which we have described, the conversion that is of absolute necessity to salvation? Then be informed, that strait is the gate and narrow the way that leadeth unto life—that there are few that find it—that there is need of a divine power savingly to convert a sinner to Jesus Christ.

Again, then be exhorted, O man, to turn in upon thine own self. What saith conscience? Doth it not begin to accuse? Doth it not pierce thee as thou goest? Is this thy judgment, and this thy choice, and this thy way, that we have described? If so, then it is well. But doth not thy heart condemn thee, and tell thee there is such a sin thou livest in against thy conscience? Doth it not tell thee there is such and such a secret way of wickedness that thou wishest to pursue; such or such a duty that thou makest no conscience of?

Doth not conscience carry thee to thy closet, and tell thee how seldom prayer and reading are performed there? Doth it not carry thee to thy family, and show thee the charge of God, and the souls

of thy children and servants, that are neglected there? Doth not conscience lead thee to thy shop, thy trade, and tell thee of some iniquity there? Doth it not carry thee to the dram-shop, or the resort of idleness, and blame thee for the loose company thou keepest there, the precious time thou misspendest there, for the talents which thou wastest there, for thy gaming, and thy drinking, etc.? Doth it not carry thee into thy secret chamber, and read there thy condemnation?

O conscience! do thy duty: in the name of the living God, I command thee, discharge thine office; lay hold upon this sinner, fall upon him, arrest him, apprehend him, undeceive him. What, wilt thou flatter and soothe him while he lives in his sins? Awake, O conscience! what meanest thou, O sleeper? What, hast thou never a reproof in thy mouth? What, shall this soul die in his careless neglect of God and of eternity, and thou altogether hold thy peace? What, shall he go on still in his trespasses, and yet have peace? Oh, rouse up thyself, and do thy work. Now let the preacher in thy bosom speak: cry aloud, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet: let not the blood of his soul be required at thy hands.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE NECESSITY OF CONVERSION.

IT may be you are ready to say, What meaneth this stir? and are apt to wonder why I follow you with such earnestness, still ringing the same lesson in your ears, that "you should repent, and be converted." But I must say to you, as Ruth to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee." Were it a matter of indifference—might you be saved as you are—I would gladly let you alone; but would you not have me solicitous for you, when I see you ready to perish? As the Lord liveth, before whom I am, I have not the least hope to see one of your faces in heaven, except you be converted. I utterly despair of your salvation, except you will be prevailed with to turn thoroughly, and give up yourself to God in holiness and newness of life. Hath God said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God," John 3 : 3; and yet do you wonder why your ministers so earnestly labor for you? Think it not strange that I am earnest with you to follow after holiness, and long to see the image of God upon you. Never did any, nor shall any, enter into heaven by any other way but this. The conversion described is not a high attainment of some advanced Christians, but every soul that is saved passeth this change.

It was a saying of the noble Roman, when he was hasting with corn to the city in the famine, and the mariners were loath to set sail in foul weather, "It is necessary for us to sail—it is not necessary for us to live." What is it that thou dost count necessary? Is thy bread necessary? Is thy breath necessary? Then thy conversion is much more necessary. Indeed, this is the one thing necessary. Thine estate is not necessary; thou mayest sell all for the pearl of great price, and yet be a gainer by the purchase. Thy life is not necessary; thou mayest part with it for Christ, to infinite advantage. Thy reputation is not necessary; thou mayest be reproached for the name of Christ, and yet be happy; yea, much more happy in reproach than in repute. But thy conversion is necessary; thy salvation depends upon it; and is it not needful, in so important a case, to look about thee? On this one point depends thy making or marring to all eternity.

But I shall more particularly show the necessity of conversion in five things; for without this,

I. **THY BEING** is in vain. Is it not a pity thou shouldst be good for nothing, an unprofitable burden of the earth, a wart or wen in the body of the universe? Thus thou art, whilst unconverted; for thou canst not answer the end of thy being. Is it not for the divine pleasure that thou art and wast created? Did not God make thee for himself? Art thou a man, and hast thou reason? Then, bethink

thyself why and whence thy being is. Behold God's workmanship in thy body, and ask thyself, to what end did God rear this fabric? Consider the noble faculties of thy heaven-born soul, To what end did God bestow these excellencies? Was it to no other end than that thou shouldst please thyself, and gratify thy senses? Did God send men into the world, only like the swallows, to gather a few sticks and mud, and build their nests, and rear up their young, and then away? The very heathen could see farther than this. Art thou so "fearfully and wonderfully made," and dost thou not yet think with thyself—surely, it was for some noble and exalted end?

O man! set thy reason a little in its seat. Is it not a pity such a goodly fabric should be raised in vain? Verily thou art in vain, except thou art for God: better thou hadst no being, than not be for him. Wouldst thou serve thy end? thou must repent and be converted: without this thou art to no purpose; yea, to bad purpose.

Thou art *to no purpose*. Man, unconverted, is like a choice instrument that hath every string broken or out of tune. The Spirit of the living God must repair and tune it by the grace of regeneration, and sweetly move it by the power of actuating grace, or else thy prayers will be but howlings, and all thy services will make no music in the ears of the Most Holy. All thy powers and faculties are so corrupt in thy natural state, that, except thou be

purged from dead works, thou canst not serve the living God. An unsanctified man cannot work the work of God.

1. He hath no skill in it ; he is altogether as unskilful in the work as in the word of righteousness. There are great mysteries in the practice as well as in the principles of godliness. Now the unregenerate know not "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." You may as well expect him that never learned the alphabet to read, or look for goodly music on the lute from one that never set his hand to an instrument, as that a natural man should do the Lord any pleasing service. He must first be taught of God, taught to pray, taught to profit, taught to go, or else he will be utterly at a loss.

2. He hath no strength for it. How weak is his heart ! he is presently tired. The Sabbath, what a weariness is it ! He is without strength, yea, dead in sin.

3. He hath no mind to it ; he desires not the knowledge of God's ways ; he doth not know them, and he doth not care to know them ; he knows not, neither will he understand.

4. He hath neither due instruments nor materials for it. A man may as well hew the marble without tools, or paint without colors or instruments, or build without materials, as perform any acceptable service without the graces of the Spirit, which are both the materials and instruments in the work. Almsgiving

is not a service of God, but of vain-glory, if it spring not from divine love. What is the prayer of the lips without grace in the heart, but the carcass without the life? What are all our confessions, unless they be exercises of godly sorrow and unfeigned repentance? What our petitions, unless animated with holy desires and faith in the divine attributes and promises? What our praises and thanksgivings, unless from the love of God, and a holy gratitude and sense of God's mercies in the heart? So that a man may as well expect that trees should speak, or look for motion from the dead, as look for any service, holy and acceptable to God, from the unconverted. When the tree is evil, how can the fruit be good?

Also, without conversion you live *to bad purpose*. The unconverted soul is a very cage of unclean birds, a sepulchre full of corruption and rottenness. O dreadful case! Dost thou not yet see a change to be needful? Would it not have grieved one to see the golden consecrated vessels of God's temple turned into quaffing bowls of drunkenness, and polluted with the idol's service? Was it such an abomination to the Jews, when Antiochus set up the picture of a swine at the entrance of the temple? How much more abominable, then, would it have been to have had the very temple itself turned into a stable or a sty; and to have had the "holy of holies" served like the house of Baal! This is the



very case of the unregenerate: all thy members are turned into instruments of unrighteousness, servants of Satan; and thy inmost heart into a receptacle of uncleanness. You may see what kind of guests are within, by what comes out; for, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," etc. This black troop discovers what a hell there is within.

O abuse insufferable! to see a heaven-born soul abased to such vileness; to see the glory of God's creation, the chief of the works of God, the lord of this lower world, eating husks with the prodigal! Was it such a lamentation to see those that did feed delicately sit desolate in the streets; and the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, esteemed as earthen pitchers; and those that were clothed in scarlet embrace dunghills? Lam. 4: 2, 5. And is it not much more fearful to see the only being that hath immortality in this lower world, and carries the stamp of God, become as a vessel wherein is no pleasure, and be put to the most sordid use? O indignity intolerable! Better thou wert dashed in a thousand pieces, than continue to be abased to so vile a service.

II. Not only man, but THE WHOLE VISIBLE CREATION, is in vain without this. God hath made all the visible creatures in heaven and earth for the service of man, and man only is the spokesman for

all the rest. Man is, in the world, like the tongue to the body, which speaks for all the members. The other creatures cannot praise their Maker, but by dumb signs and hints to man that he should speak for them. Man is, as it were, the high-priest of God's creation, to offer the sacrifice of praise for all his fellow-creatures. The Lord God expecteth a tribute of praise from all his works. Now, all the rest do bring in their tribute to man, and pay it by his hand. So then, if a man be false, and faithless, and selfish, God is wronged of all, and has no active glory from his works.

O dreadful thought! that God should build such a world as this, and lay out such infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness thereupon, and all in vain; and that man should be guilty, at last, of robbing and spoiling him of the glory of all! O think of this. While thou art unconverted, all the offices of the creatures are in vain to thee; thy meat nourishes thee in vain; the sun holds forth his light to thee in vain; the stars that serve thee in their courses by their powerful, though hidden influence, do it in vain; thy clothes warm thee in vain; thy beast carries thee in vain; in a word, the unwearied labor and continued travail of the whole creation, as to thee, are in vain. The service of all the creatures that drudge for thee, and yield forth their strength unto thee, that therewith thou shouldest serve their Maker, is all but lost labor. Hence, "the whole

creation groaneth," Rom. 8 : 22, under the abuse of men unsanctified, who pervert all things to the service of their lusts, quite contrary to the very end of their being.

III. Without this, THY RELIGION is vain ; all thy religious performances will be but lost ; for they can neither please God nor save thy soul, which are the very ends of religion. Be thy services ever so specious, yet God hath no pleasure in them. Is not that man's case dreadful whose sacrifices are as murders, and whose prayers are a breath of abomination ? Many, under convictions, think they will set upon mending, and that a few prayers and alms will set all right again ; but alas, sirs, while your hearts remain unsanctified your duties will not pass. How punctual was Jehu ! and yet all was rejected because his heart was not upright. How blameless was Paul ! and yet, being unconverted, all was but loss. Men think they do much in attending God's service, and are ready to set him down so much their debtor ; whereas their persons being unsanctified, their duties cannot be accepted.

O soul ! do not think, when thy sins pursue thee, that a little praying and reforming thy course will pacify God. Thou must begin with thine heart. If that be not renewed, thou canst no more please God than one who, having unspeakably offended thee, should bring thee the most loathsome thing to pacify thee ; or having fallen into the mire,

should think with his filthy embraces to reconcile thee.

It is a great misery to labor in the fire. The poets could not invent a worse hell for Sisyphus than to be ever toiling to get the stone up the hill, and then that it should presently roll down again and renew his labor. God threatens it as the greatest of temporal judgments, that they should build and not inhabit, plant and not gather, and that their labors should be eaten up by strangers. Is it so great a misery to lose our common labors, to sow in vain, and to build in vain? how much more to lose our pains in religion—to pray, and hear, and fast in vain! This is an undoing and eternal loss. Be not deceived; if thou goest on in thy sinful state, though thou shouldst spread forth thy hands, God will hide his eyes; though thou make many prayers, he will not hear. If a man without skill set about our work, and spoil it in the doing, though he take much pains, we give him but small thanks. God will be worshipped after the due order. If a servant do our work, but quite contrary to our order, he shall have rather stripes than praise. God's work must be done according to God's mind, or he will not be pleased; and this cannot be, except it be done with a holy heart.

IV. Without true conversion, THY HOPES are in vain. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish."  
"The Lord hath rejected thy confidences."

1. The hope of *comfort here* is vain. It is not only necessary to the safety, but comfort of your condition, that you be converted. Without this, you "shall not know peace." Without the "fear of God" you cannot have the "comfort of the Holy Ghost." God speaks peace only to his people and to his saints. If you have a false peace, continuing in your sins, it is not of God's speaking, and then you may guess the author. Sin is a real sickness, yea, the worst of sickness; it is a leprosy in the head, the plague of the heart; it is rottenness in the bones; it pierceth, it woundeth, it racketh, it tormenteth. A man may as well expect ease when his diseases are in their full strength, or his bones out of joint, as true comfort while in his sins.

O wretched man, that canst have no ease in this case but what comes from the deadliness of the disease! You shall hear the poor sick man saying, in his wildness, he is well, when you see death in his face: he would be up and about his business, when the very next step is likely to be to his grave. The unsanctified often see nothing amiss; they think themselves whole, and cry not for the physician; but this only shows the danger of their case.

Sin doth naturally breed distempers and disturbances in the soul. What a continual tempest is there in a discontented mind; what a corroding evil is inordinate care! What is passion but a very fever in the mind; what is lust but a fire in the bones;

what is pride but a deadly dropsy ; or covetousness, but an insatiable and insufferable thirst ; or malice and envy, but venom in the very heart ? Spiritual sloth is but a scurvy in the mind, and carnal security a mortal lethargy ; and how can that soul have true comfort which is under so many diseases ? But converting grace cures, and so eases the mind, and prepares the soul for a settled, standing, immortal peace. “Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.” They are the ways of wisdom that afford pleasure and peace. David had infinitely more pleasure in the word than in all the delights of his court. The conscience cannot be truly pacified till soundly purified. Cursed is that peace which is maintained in a way of sin. Two sorts of peace are more to be dreaded than all the troubles in the world ; peace with sin, and peace in sin.

2. Thy hopes of *salvation hereafter* are in vain ; yea, worse than in vain ; they are most injurious to God, most pernicious to thyself. There is death, desperation, and blasphemy in this hope.

(1.) There is death in it. Thy confidence shall be rooted out of thy tabernacles, God will up with it root and branch ; it shall bring thee to the king of terrors. Though thou mayest lean upon this house, it will not stand, but will prove like a ruinous building, which, when a man trusts to it, falls down about him.

(2.) There is desperation in it: "Where is the hope of the hypocrite when God takes away his soul?" Then there is an end for ever of his hope. Indeed, the hope of the righteous hath an end; but it is not a destructive, but a perfective end; his hope ends in fruition, others in frustration. The godly may say at death, "It is finished;" but the wicked, "It is perished," and in too sad earnest bemoan himself, as Job, in a mistake, "Where is now my hope? He hath destroyed me; I am gone, and my hope is removed like a tree." "The righteous hath hope in his death." When nature is dying, his hopes are living; when his body is languishing, his hopes are flourishing; his hope is a living hope, but others' a dying, yea, a damning, soul-undoing hope: "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish; and the hope of unjust men perisheth." It shall be cut off and prove like a "spider's web," which he spins out of his own bowels; but then comes death and destroys all, and so there is an eternal end of his confidence wherein he trusted; for "the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost." Wicked men are fixed in their carnal hope, and will not be beaten out of it; they hold it fast; they will not let it go; but death will knock off their fingers. Though we cannot undeceive them, death and judgment will. When death strikes his dart through thy liver, it will ruin thy soul and thy hopes together. The unsanctified

have hope only in this life, and therefore are "of all men most miserable." When death comes, it lets them out into the amazing gulf of endless desperation.

(3.) There is blasphemy in it. To hope we shall be saved, though continuing unconverted, is to hope that we shall prove God a liar. He hath told you, that, merciful and pitiful as he is, he will never save you notwithstanding, if you go on in ignorance, or a course of unrighteousness. In a word, he has told you that, whatever you be or do, nothing shall avail you to salvation unless you become new creatures. Now, to say God is merciful, and we hope that he will save us, without conversion, is in effect to say, "We hope that God will not do as he says." We must not set God's attributes at variance; God has resolved to glorify his mercy, but not to the prejudice of his truth, as the presumptuous sinner will find to his everlasting sorrow.

OBJECTION. But we hope in Jesus Christ; we put our whole trust in God; and therefore doubt not but we shall be saved.

ANSWER 1. This is not hope in Christ, but against Christ. To hope to see the kingdom of God without being born again; to hope to find eternal life in the broad way, is to hope Christ will prove a false prophet. David's plea is, "I hope in *thy word*." But this hope is against God's word. Show me a word of Christ for thy hope that he will save thee



in thine ignorance or profane neglect of his service, and I will never try to shake thy confidence.

2. God doth with abhorrence reject this hope. Those condemned in the prophet, went on in their sins; yet, saith the prophet, "will they lean upon the Lord." Micah 3: 11. God will not endure to be made a prop to men in their sins. The Lord rejected those presumptuous sinners that went on still in their trespasses and yet would stay themselves upon Israel's God, as a man would shake off the briars that cleave to his garment.

3. If thy hope be any thing worth, it will purify thee from thy sins, 1 John, 3: 3; but cursed is that hope which cherishes men in their sins.

OBJECTION. Would you have us despair?

ANSWER. You must despair of ever coming to heaven as you are, that is, while you remain unconverted. You must despair of ever seeing the face of God without holiness; but you must by no means despair of finding mercy upon your thorough repentance and conversion; neither may you despair of attaining to repentance and conversion, in the use of God's means.

V. Without conversion, ALL THAT CHRIST HATH DONE AND SUFFERED will be, as to you, in vain; that is, it will no way avail you to salvation. Many urge this as a sufficient ground for their hope, that Christ died for sinners; but I must tell you, Christ never died to save impenitent and unconverted sin-

ners, so continuing. A great divine was wont, in his private dealings with souls, to ask two questions: 1. What hath Christ done for you? 2. What hath Christ wrought in you? Without the application of the Spirit in regeneration, we have no saving interest in the benefits of redemption. I tell you from the Lord, that Christ himself cannot save you if you go on in this state.

1. It were *against his trust*. The Mediator is the servant of the Father, shows his commission from him, acts in his name, and pleads his command for his justification; and God has committed all things to him, intrusted his own glory and the salvation of the elect with him. Accordingly, Christ gives his Father an account of both parts of his trust before he leaves the world. Now Christ would quite cross his Father's glory, tarnish his greatest trust, if he should save men in their sins; for this were to overturn all his counsels, and to offer violence to all his attributes.

(1.) To overturn all his *counsels*; of which this is the order, that men should be brought through sanctification to salvation. He hath chosen them, that they should be holy. They are elected to pardon and life through sanctification. If thou canst repeal the law of God's immutable counsel, or corrupt him whom the Father hath sealed, to go directly against his commission, then, and not otherwise, mayst thou get to heaven in this condition.

To hope that Christ will save thee while unconverted, is to hope that Christ will falsify his trust. He never did, nor ever will save one soul but whom the Father hath given him in election, and drawn to him in effectual calling. Be assured, Christ will save none in a way contrary to his Father's will.

(2.) To save men in their sins would offer violence to all the *attributes* of God.

To his *justice*; for the righteousness of God's judgment lies in rendering to all according to their works. Now, should men sow to the flesh, and yet of the Spirit reap everlasting life, where were the glory of divine justice, since it would be given to the wicked according to the work of the righteous?

To his *holiness*. If God should not only save sinners, but save them in their sins, his most pure and strict holiness would be exceedingly defaced. The unsanctified are, in the eyes of God's holiness, exceedingly vile and hateful. It would be offering the extremest violence to the infinite purity of the divine nature to have such dwell with him. "They cannot stand in his judgment: they cannot abide his presence." If holy David would not endure such in his house, no, nor in his sight, can we think God will? Should he take men as they are, from the mire of their filthiness to the glory of heaven, the world would think that God was at no such great distance from sin, nor had any such dislike to it as we are told he hath; they would be ready to

conclude that God was altogether such a one as themselves, as some of old wickedly did, from the very forbearance of God.

To his *veracity*. For God hath declared from heaven, that "if any shall say he shall have peace, though he should go on in the imagination of his heart, his wrath shall smoke against that man;" that "they" only "that confess and forsake their sins shall find mercy;" that "they that shall enter into his hill must be of clean hands and a pure heart." Deut. 29 : 19, 20 ; Prov. 28 : 13 ; Psalms 24 : 3, 4. Where were God's truth, if, notwithstanding all this, he should bring men to salvation without conversion ? O desperate sinner, that darest to hope that Christ will make his Father a liar, and nullify his word to save thee !

To his *wisdom*. For this were to throw away the choicest of mercies on them that would not value them, nor were any way suited to them.

They would not value them. The unsanctified sinner puts but little price upon God's great salvation. He sets no more by Christ than the whole by the physician. He prizes not his balm, values not his cure, but tramples upon his blood. Now, would it stand with wisdom to force pardon and life upon those that would return no thanks for them ? Will the all-wise God, when he hath forbidden us to do it, throw his holy things to dogs, and his pearls to swine, that would, as it were, but turn again and

rend him? This would make mercy to be despised indeed. Wisdom requires that life be given in a way suitable to God's honor, and that God provide for the securing of his own glory as well as man's felicity. It would be dishonorable to God to bestow his choicest riches on them that have more pleasure in their sins than in heavenly delights. God would lose the praise and glory of his grace, if he should cast it away upon them that were not only unworthy, but unwilling:

Also, the mercies of God are no way suited to the unconverted. The divine wisdom is seen in suiting things to each other, the means to the end, the object to the faculty, the quality of the gift to the capacity of the receiver. Now, if Christ should bring the unregenerated sinner to heaven, he could take no more felicity there than a beast would, if you should bring him into a beautiful room, to the society of learned men; whereas the poor thing had much rather be grazing with his fellow-brutes. Alas, what could an unsanctified creature do in heaven? he could not be contented there, because nothing suits him. The place doth not suit him; he would be quite out of his element, a fish out of water. The company doth not suit him: what communion hath darkness with light; corruption with perfection; vileness and sin with glory and immortality? The employment doth not suit him; the anthems of heaven fit not his mouth, suit not his

ear. Canst thou charm thy beast with music ; or wilt thou bring him to thy organ and expect that he should make thee melody, or keep time with the tuneful choir ? Had he skill, he would have no will, and so could find no pleasure in it. Spread thy table with delicacies before a languishing patient, and it will be but an offence. Alas, if the poor man say of a Sabbath-day, "What a weariness is it!" how miserable would he think it to be engaged in an everlasting Sabbath !

To his *immutability*, or else to his omniscience or omnipotence ; for this is enacted in heaven, and enrolled in the decree of the court above, that none but the "pure in heart shall see God ;" this is laid up with him, and sealed among his treasures. Now, if Christ bring any to heaven unconverted, either he must get them in without his Father's knowledge, and then where is his omniscience ? or against his will, and then where were his omnipotence ? or he must change his will, and then where were his immutability ?

Sinner, wilt thou not give up thy vain hope of being saved in this condition ? Saith Bildad, "Shall the earth be forsaken for thee ; or the rocks be moved out of their place ?" May I not much more reason so with thee ? Shall the laws of heaven be reversed for thee ? Shall the everlasting foundations be overturned for thee ? Shall Christ put out the eye of his Father's omniscience, or shorten the

arm of his eternal power for thee? Shall divine justice be violated for thee; or the brightness of his holiness be blemished for thee? O the impossibility, absurdity, blasphemy, of such a confidence! To think Christ will ever save thee in this condition, is to make the Saviour become a sinner, and do more wrong to the infinite Majesty than all the wicked on earth or devils in hell ever did, or ever could do; and yet wilt thou not give up such a blasphemous hope?

2. To save men in their sins were against *the word* of Christ. We need not say, "Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring down Christ from above? Or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from beneath? The word is nigh us." Are you agreed that Christ shall end the controversy? Hear then his own words: "Except ye be converted, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." "You must be born again." "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me." "Repent or perish." One word, one would think, were enough from Christ; but how often and earnestly doth he reiterate it: "Verily, verily, except a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God." Yea, he doth not only assert but prove the necessity of the new birth, from the fleshliness and sinfulness of man from his first birth, by reason of which man is no more fit for heaven than the beast is for the chamber of the king. And wilt thou yet rest in thy

own presumptuous confidence, directly against Christ's words? He must go quite against the law of his kingdom, and rule of his judgment, to save thee in this state.

3. It would be against the *oath* of Christ. He hath lifted up his hand to heaven, he hath sworn that those who remain in unbelief and know not his ways—that is, are ignorant of them, or disobedient to them—shall not enter into his rest. And wilt thou not yet believe, O sinner, that he is in earnest? Canst thou hope he will be forsworn for thee? The covenant of grace is confirmed by an oath and sealed by blood; but all must be made void, and another way to heaven found out, if thou be saved, living and dying unsanctified. God is come to his last terms with man, and has condescended as far as in honor he could. Men cannot be saved while unconverted, except they could get another covenant made, and the whole frame of the Gospel, which was established for ever with such dreadful solemnities, quite altered. And must not they be distracted, to hope that they shall?

4. It would be against his *honor*. - God will so show his love to the sinner, as withal to show his hatred to sin; therefore, he that names the name of Jesus must "depart from iniquity and deny all ungodliness;" and he that hath hope of life by Christ must "purify himself as he is pure," otherwise Christ would be thought a favorer of sin. The



Lord Jesus would have all the world know, that though he pardons sin, he will not protect it. If holy David say, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity," Psa. 6 : 8, and shut the doors against them, Psa. 101 : 7; shall not such more expect it from Christ's holiness ?

5. It would be against his *offices*. "God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour." He would act against both, should he save men in their sins. It is the office of a king to be "a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well." "He is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil." Now, should Christ favor the ungodly, so continuing, and take those to reign with him that would not that he should reign over them, this would be quite against his office; he therefore reigns that he may "put his enemies under his feet." Now, should he lay them in his bosom, he would frustrate the end of his regal power; it belongs to Christ, as a King, to subdue the hearts and slay the lusts of his chosen. What king would take rebels in open hostility into his court? What were this but to betray life, kingdom, government, and all together? If Christ be a King, he must have honor, homage, subjection. Now, to save men while in their natural enmity, were to obscure his dignity, lose his authority, bring contempt on his government, and sell his dear-bought rights for naught.

Again, as Christ would not be a Prince, so neither a Saviour, if he should do this; for his salvation is spiritual. He is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins. Matt. 1 : 21. So that, should he save them in their sins, he would be neither Lord nor Jesus. To save men from the punishment, and not from the power of sin, were to do his work by halves, and be an imperfect Saviour. His office as the Deliverer, is "to turn away ungodliness from Jacob." "He is sent to bless men, in turning them from their iniquities." "To make an end of sin." So that he would destroy his own designs, and nullify his offices, to save men abiding in their unconverted state.

Arise, then! What meanest thou, O sleeper? Awake, O secure sinner, lest thou be consumed in thine iniquities: say, as the lepers, "If we sit here, we shall die." Verily, it is not more certain that thou art now out of hell, than that thou shalt speedily be in it, except thou repent and be converted: there is but this one door for thee to escape by. Arise then, O sluggard, and shake off thine excuses: how long wilt thou slumber, and fold thy hands to sleep? Wilt thou lie down in the midst of the sea, or sleep on the top of a mast? There is no remedy, but thou must either turn or burn. There is an unchangeable necessity of the change of thy condition, except thou hast resolved to abide the

worst of it, and try it out with the Almighty. If thou lovest thy life, O man, arise and come away. Methinks I see the Lord Jesus laying the merciful hands of a holy violence upon thee; methinks he acts like the angels to Lot: "Then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, lest thou be consumed. And, while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him without the city, and said, Escape for thy life, stay not in all the plain; escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed."

O how wilful will thy destruction be if thou shouldst yet harden thyself in thy sinful state! But none of you can say that you have not had fair warning. Yet methinks I cannot leave you so. It is not enough for me to have delivered my own soul. What, shall I go away without my errand? Will none of you arise and follow me? Have I been all this while speaking to the wind; have I been charming the deaf adder, or allaying the restless ocean with argument? Do I speak to the trees and rocks, or to men; to the tombs and monuments of the dead, or to the living? If you be men, and not senseless stocks, stop and consider whither you are going; if you have the reason and understanding of men, dare not to run into the flames, and fall into hell with your eyes open; but bethink yourselves, and set to the work of repentance. What, men, and yet run into the pit, when the very beasts will

not be forced in? What, endowed with reason, and yet trifle with death and hell, and the vengeance of the Almighty? Are men herein only distinguished from very brutes, that these, having no foresight, have no care to provide for the things to come; and will you, who are warned, not hasten your escape from eternal torments? O show yourselves men; and let reason prevail with you.

Is it a reasonable thing for you to contend against the Lord your Maker, or "to harden yourselves against his word," Job 9:4, as though the Strength of Israel would lie? Is it reasonable that an understanding creature should lose, yea, live quite against the very end of his being? Is it reasonable that the only being in this world that God hath made capable of knowing his will and bringing him glory, should yet live in ignorance of his Maker, and be unserviceable to his use, yea, should be engaged against him, and resist his Creator? "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth," and let the creatures without sense judge if this be reason, that man, whom God hath "nourished and brought up, should rebel against him?" Judge in your own selves. Is it a reasonable undertaking for briars and thorns to set themselves in battle against the devouring fire; or for the potsherd of the earth to strive with its Maker? You will say, "This is not reason;" or surely the eye of reason is quite put out. And, if this be not reason, then there is no reason that

you should continue as you are, but there is all the reason in the world that you should forthwith turn and repent.

What shall I say? I could spend myself in this argument. O that you would but hearken to me; that you would now set upon a new course! Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? Reader, wilt thou sit down and consider the fore-mentioned argument, and debate it, whether it be not best to turn? Come, and let us reason together: Is it good for thee to be here? Wilt thou sit till the tide come in upon thee? Is it good for thee to try whether God will be as good as his word, and to harden thyself in a conceit that all is well with thee while thou remainest unsanctified?

Alas, for such sinners! must they perish at last by hundreds? What course shall I use with them that I have not tried? "What shall I do for the daughter of my people?" O Lord God, help. Alas, shall I leave them thus? If they will not hear me, yet do thou hear me. O that they may yet live in thy sight! Lord, save them, or they perish. My heart would melt to see their houses on fire when they were fast asleep in their beds; and shall not my soul be moved within me to see them falling into endless perdition? Lord, have compassion, and save them out of the burning: put forth thy divine power, and the work will be done.

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE MARKS OF THE UNCONVERTED.

WHILE we keep aloof in generals there is little fruit to be expected ; it is the hand-fight that does execution. David is not awakened by the prophet's hovering at a distance in parabolical insinuations. He is forced to close with him, and tell him plainly, "Thou art the man." Few will, in words, deny the necessity of the new birth ; but they have a self-deluding confidence that the work is not now to do. And because they know themselves free from that gross hypocrisy which takes up religion merely for a color to deceive others, and for covering wicked designs, they are confident of their sincerity, and suspect not that more close hypocrisy, wherein the greatest danger lies, by which a man deceiveth his own soul. But man's deceitful heart is such a matchless cheat, and self-delusion so reigning and so fatal a disease, that I know not whether be the greater, the difficulty or the necessity of the undeceiving work that I am now upon. Alas for the unconverted ! they must be undeceived, or they will be undone. But how shall this be effected ?

Help, O all-searching Light, and let thy discerning eye discover the rotten foundation of the self-deceiver ; and lead me, O Lord God, as thou didst the prophet, into the chambers of imagery, and dig

through the wall of sinners' hearts, and discover the hidden abominations that are lurking out of sight in the dark. O send thy angel before me to open the sundry wards of their hearts, as thou didst before Peter, and make even the iron gates fly open of their own accord. And as Jonathan no sooner tasted the honey but his eyes were enlightened, so grant, O Lord, that when the poor deceived souls with whom I have to do shall cast their eyes upon these lines, their minds may be illuminated, and their consciences convinced and awakened, that they may see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and be converted, and thou mayest heal them.

This must be premised before we proceed, that it is most certain men may have a confident persuasion that their hearts and states are good, while yet they are unsound. Hear the Truth himself, who shows, in Laodicea's case, that men may be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and yet not know it; yea, they may be confident they are rich, and increased in grace. Rev. 3 : 17. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness." Prov. 30 : 12. Who better persuaded of his fate than Paul, while he yet remained unconverted? Rom. 7 : 9. So that they are miserably deceived who take a strong confidence for a sufficient evidence. They that have no better proof than barely a strong persuasion, that they are converted, are certainly as yet strangers to conversion.

But to come more close. As it was said to the adherents of Antichrist, so here; some of the unconverted carry their marks in their forehead more openly, and some in their hands more covertly. The apostle reckons up some upon whom he writes the sentence of death; as in these dreadful catalogues, which I beseech you to attend to with all diligence: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Eph. 5: 5, 6. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Rev. 21: 8. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10. Woe to them that have their name written in this catalogue. Such may know, as certainly as if God had told them from heaven, that they are unsanctified, and under an impossibility of being saved in this condition.



There are then these several classes that, past all dispute, are unconverted; they carry their marks in their foreheads.

1. *The unclean.* These are ever reckoned among the goats, and have their names, whoever is left out, in all the forementioned catalogues.

2. *The covetous.* These are ever branded for idolaters, and the doors of the kingdom are shut against them by name.

3. *Drunkards.* Not only such as drink away their reason, but withal, yea, above all, such as are too strong for strong drink. The Lord fills his mouth with woes against these, and declares them to have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. Isa. 5:11, 12, 22; Gal. 5:21.

4. *Liars.* The God that cannot lie has told them that there is no place for them in his kingdom, no entrance into his hill; but their portion is with the father of lies, whose children they are, in the lake of burnings. Rev. 21:8, 27.

5. *Swearers.* The end of these, without deep and speedy repentance, is swift destruction, and most certain and unavoidable condemnation. James 5:12.

6. *Railers and backbiters,* that love to take up a reproach against their neighbor, and revile him to his face, or else wound him secretly behind his back. Psalm 15:1, 3.

7. *Thieves, extortioners, oppressors,* that grind

the poor, or overreach their brethren when they have an opportunity: these must know that God "is the avenger of all such." Hear, O ye false and purloining and wasteful servants; hear, O ye deceitful tradesmen, hear your sentence! God will certainly shut his door against you, and turn your treasures of unrighteousness into the treasures of wrath, and make your ill-gotten silver and gold to torment you, like burning metal in your bowels.

8. *All that do ordinarily live in the profane neglect of God's worship*, that hear not his word, that call not on his name, that restrain prayer before God, that mind not their own nor their families' souls, but "live without God in the world."

9. *Those that are frequenters and lovers of vain company*. God hath declared, he will be the destroyer of all such, and that they shall never enter into the hill of his rest. Prov. 9:5, and 13:20.

10. *Scoffers at religion*, that make a scorn of precise walking, and mock at the messengers and diligent servants of the Lord, and at their holy profession, and make themselves merry with the weakness and failings of professors: "Hear, ye despisers," hear your dreadful doom! Prov. 19:29, and 3:34.

Sinner, consider diligently whether thou art not to be found in one of these ranks; for if this be thy case, thou art in the "gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity;" for all these do carry their marks in their foreheads, and are undoubtedly the sons of

death. And if so, the Lord pity our poor congregations. O how small a number will remain, when these ten sorts are left out. May God show you your danger, and constrain you to cry, "Lord, have mercy upon us!"

Sirs, what shift do you make to keep up your confidence of your good state, when God from heaven declares against you, and pronounces you in a state of damnation? I would reason with you as God with them, "How canst thou say, I am not polluted? See thy way in the valley; know what thou hast done." Man, is not thy conscience privy to thy tricks of deceit, to thy secret sins, to thy way of lying? Yea, are not thy friends, thy family, thy neighbors, witnesses to thy profane neglect of God's worship, to thy covetous practices, to thy envious and malicious carriage? May they not point at thee as thou goest, There goes a gaming prodigal; there goes a drunken Nabal, a companion of evil-doers; there goes a railer, or a scoffer, or a licentious person? Beloved, God hath written it as with a sun-beam, in the book by which you must be judged, that these are not the spots of his children, and that none such, except renewed by converting grace, shall ever escape the damnation of hell.

O that you would now be persuaded to "repent and turn from all your transgressions, or else iniquity will be your ruin." Alas, for poor hardened sinners. Must I leave you at last where you are?

However, you must know that you have been warned, and that I am clear of your blood; and whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, I will leave these Scriptures with them, which will prove either as thunderbolts to awaken them, or as searing-irons to harden them. "God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses." "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, etc. I will laugh at your calamity—when your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."

And now I imagine many will begin to bless themselves, and think all is well, because they cannot be reproach'd with these grosser evils; but I must tell you that there is another sort of unsanctified persons, that carry not their mark in their foreheads, but more secretly and covertly. These do frequently deceive themselves and others, and pass for good Christians, when they are all the while unsound at heart. Many pass undiscovered, till death and judgment bring all to light. Those self-deceivers seem to come even to heaven's gate with confidence of their admission, and yet are turned off at last. I beseech you deeply to lay to heart and firmly retain this awakening consideration, that *multitudes mis-*

*carry by the hand of some secret sin, that is not only hidden from others, but for want of observing their own hearts, even from themselves.* A man may be free from open pollutions, and yet die at last by the fatal hand of some unobserved iniquity; and there are these twelve hidden sins, through which souls go down by numbers into the chambers of eternal death: these you must search carefully for, and take them as black marks, wherever they be found, discovering a graceless and unconverted state; and as you love your lives, read carefully, with a holy jealousy of yourselves, lest you should be the persons concerned.

1. *Gross wilful ignorance.* O how many poor souls doth this sin kill in the dark, Hos. 4 : 6, while they think verily they have good hearts, and are in the ready way to heaven. This is the murderer that despatcheth thousands in a silent manner, when they suspect nothing, and see not the hand that destroys them. You shall find, whatever excuses you make for ignorance, that it is a soul-ruining evil. Isa. 27 : 11; 2 Thess. 1 : 8; 2 Cor. 4 : 3. Ah, would it not have grieved a man's heart to see that woful spectacle, when the poor Protestants were shut up in a barn, and a butcher came, with his inhuman hands warmed in human blood, and led them one by one, blindfold, to a block, where he slew them, one after another, by scores, in cool blood? But how much more should your hearts bleed to

think of the hundreds, in great congregations, that ignorance doth destroy in secret, and lead blindfold to the block. Beware that this be not your case. Make no plea for ignorance; if you spare that sin, know that it will not spare you; and would a man keep a murderer in his bosom?

2. *Secret reserves* in closing with Christ. To forsake all for Christ, to hate father and mother, yea, a man's own life for him, Luke 14 : 26, "This is a hard saying." Some will do much, but they will not have the religion that will save them: they never come to be entirely devoted to Christ, nor fully to resign to him: they must have the sweet sin; they mean to do themselves no harm; they have secret exceptions for life, liberty, or estate. Many take Christ thus, and never consider his self-denying terms, nor count the cost; and this error in the foundation mars all, and ruins them forever. Luke 14 : 28-33.

3. *Formality in religion.* Many rest in the outside of religion, and in the external performance of holy duties. And this oftentimes doth most effectually deceive men, and more certainly undo them than open profaneness; as it was in the Pharisee's case. They hear, they fast, they pray, they give alms, and therefore will not believe but their case is good. Whereas, resting in the work done, and coming short of the heart-work and the inward power and vitality of religion, they fall at last into

the burning, from the flattering hope and confident persuasion of their being in the ready way to heaven. O dreadful case, when a man's religion shall serve only to harden him, and effectually to delude and deceive his own soul!

4. The prevalence of *false ends in holy duties*. This was the bane of the Pharisees. O how many a poor soul is undone by this, and drops into hell before he discerns his mistake! He performs his "good duties," and so thinks all is well, but perceives not that he is actuated by carnal motives all the while. It is too true, that, even with the really sanctified, many carnal ends will oftentimes creep in; but they are the matter of their hatred and humiliation, and never come to be habitually prevalent with them, and bear the greatest sway. But when the main thing that doth ordinarily carry a man out to religious duties shall be some carnal end—as to satisfy his conscience, to get the reputation of being religious, "to be seen of men," to show his own gifts and parts, to avoid the reproach of being a profane and irreligious person, or the like—this discovers an unsound heart. O Christian, if you would avoid self-deceit, see that you mind not only your acts, but above all your ends.

5. *Trusting in their own righteousness*. This is a soul-ruining mischief. When men trust in their own righteousness they do indeed reject Christ's. Beloved, you had need be watchful on every hand;

for, not only your sins, but your duties may undo you. It may be you never thought of this; but so it is, that a man may as certainly miscarry by his seeming righteousness and supposed graces as by gross sins; and that is, when a man doth trust to these as his righteousness before God, for satisfying his justice, appeasing his wrath, procuring his favor, and obtaining his own pardon; for this is to put Christ out of office, and make a Saviour of our own duties and graces. Beware of this, O professors; you are much in duties, but this one fly will spoil all the ointment. When you have done most and best, be sure to go out of yourselves to Christ; reckon your own righteousness but filthy rags. Phil. 3:9; Isa. 64:6.

6. *A secret enmity against the strictness of religion.* Many moral persons, punctual in their formal devotions, have yet a bitter enmity against strictness and zeal, and hate the life and power of religion. They like not this forwardness, nor that men should make such a stir in religion; they condemn the strictness of religion as singularity, indiscretion, and intemperate zeal, and with them a lively preacher or lively Christian is but an enthusiast. These men love not holiness as holiness, for then they would love the height of holiness, and therefore are undoubtedly rotten at heart, whatever good opinion they have of themselves.

7. *The resting in a certain degree of religion.*



When they have so much as will save them, as they suppose, they look no farther, and so show themselves short of true grace, which will ever put men upon aspiring to perfection. Phil. 3:13; Prov. 4:18.

8. *The predominant love of the world.* This is the sure evidence of an unsanctified heart. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." But how close does this sin lurk oftentimes under the fair covert of forward profession. Yea, such a power of deceit is there in this sin, that many times, when every body else can see the man's worldliness and covetousness, he cannot see it himself, but hath so many colors, and excuses, and pretences, for his eagerness after the world, that he doth blind his own eyes, and perish in his self-deceit. How many professors are there with whom the world hath more of their hearts and affections than Christ; "who mind earthly things," and thereby are evidently after the flesh, and like to end in destruction. Yet ask these men, and they will tell you confidently they prize Christ above all; for they see not their own earthly-mindedness, for want of a strict observance of the workings of their own hearts. Did they but carefully search, they would quickly find that their greatest satisfaction is in the world, and that their greatest care and main endeavor are to get and secure the world, which are the certain signs of an unconverted sinner. May

the professing part of the world take earnest heed that they perish not by the hand of this sin unobserved. Men may be, and often are, kept off from Christ as effectually by the inordinate love of lawful comforts, as by the most unlawful courses.

9. *Reigning malice and envy* against those that disrespect them, and are injurious to them. O, how do many, that seem to be religious, remember injuries and carry grudges, rendering evil for evil, loving to take revenge, wishing evil to them that wrong them: directly against the rule of the Gospel, the pattern of Christ, and the nature of God. Doubtless, where this evil is kept boiling in the heart, and is not hated, resisted, and mortified, but doth habitually prevail, that person is in the very gall of bitterness, and in a state of death. Matt. 18: 32-35; 1 John, 3: 14, 15.

Reader, doth nothing of this touch thee? Art thou in none of the forementioned ranks? O search, and search again; take thy heart solemnly to task. Woe unto thee if, after thy profession, thou shouldst be found under the power of ignorance, lost in formality, drowned in earthly-mindedness, envenomed with malice, exalted in an opinion of thine own righteousness, leavened with hypocrisy and carnal ends in God's service, and imbittered against strictness; this would be a sad evidence that all thy religion were in vain. But I must proceed.

10. *Unmortified pride.* When men love the praise

of men more than the praise of God, and set their hearts upon men's esteem, applause, and approbation, it is most certain that they are yet in their sins, and strangers to true conversion. When men see not, nor complain, nor groan under the pride of their own hearts, it is a sign they are dead in sin. O, how secretly doth this sin live and reign in many hearts, and they know it not, but are very strangers to themselves. John 9 : 40.

11. *The prevailing love of pleasure.* This is a black mark. When men give the flesh the liberty that it craves, and pamper and please it, and do not deny and restrain it; when their great delight is in gratifying their appetites and pleasing their senses; whatever appearances they may have of religion, all is unsound. A flesh-pleasing life cannot be pleasing to God: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh," and are careful to keep it under, as their enemy. Gal. 5 : 24 ; 1 Cor. 9 : 25-27.

12. *Carnal security,* or a presumptuous confidence that their condition is already good. Many cry, peace and safety, when sudden destruction is coming upon them. This was that which kept the foolish virgins sleeping when they should have been working—upon their beds when they should have been at the markets. They perceived not their want of oil, till the bridegroom was come; and while they went to buy, the door was shut. And O, that these foolish virgins had no successors! Where is

the place, yea, where is the house almost, where these do not dwell? Men are willing to cherish in themselves, upon ever so slight grounds, a hope that their condition is good, and so look not out after a change, and by these means perish in their sins. Are you at peace? Show me upon what grounds your peace is maintained. Is it Scripture peace? Can you show the distinguishing marks of a sound believer? Can you evidence that you have something more than any hypocrite in the world ever had? If not, fear this peace more than any trouble; and know that a carnal peace doth commonly prove the most mortal enemy of the soul, and, whilst it smiles, and kisses, and speaks fairly, doth fatally smite, as it were, under the fifth rib.

By this time I think I hear my readers crying out, with the disciples, "Who then shall be saved?" Set out from among our congregations all those ten ranks of the profane on the one hand, and then besides take out all these twelve classes of self-deceiving hypocrites on the other hand, and tell me whether it be not a remnant that shall be saved. How few will be the sheep that shall be left, when all these shall be separated and set among the goats. For my part, of all my numerous hearers, I have no hope to see any of them in heaven that are to be found among these two-and-twenty classes that are here mentioned, except by sound conversion they are brought into another condition.

And now, conscience, do thy office: speak out, and speak home to him that heareth or readeth these lines. If thou find any of these marks upon him, thou must pronounce him utterly unclean. Take not a lie into thy mouth; speak not peace to him to whom God speaks no peace; let not sense bribe thee, or self-love or carnal prejudice blind thee. I summon thee from the court of heaven to come and give evidence. As thou wilt answer it at thy peril, give in a true report of the state and case of him that readeth this book. Conscience, wilt thou altogether hold thy peace at such a time as this? I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell the truth. Is the man converted, or is he not? Doth he allow himself in any way of wickedness, or doth he not? Doth he truly love, and please, and prize, and delight in God above all things, or not? Come, put it to an issue.

How long shall this soul live at uncertainties? O conscience, bring in thy verdict. Is this man a new man, or is he not? How dost thou find it? Hath there passed a thorough and mighty change upon him, or not? When was the time, where was the place, or what were the means by which this thorough change of the new birth was wrought in his soul? Speak, conscience; or if thou canst not tell the time and place, canst thou show Scripture evidence that the work is done? Hath the man ever been taken off from his false foundation, from

the false hopes and false peace wherein once he trusted? Hath he been deeply convinced of sin, and of his lost or undone condition, and brought out of himself, and off from his sins, to give up himself entirely to Jesus Christ; or dost thou not find him to this day under the power of ignorance, or in the mire of worldliness? Hast thou not found upon him the gains of unrighteousness? Dost thou not find him a stranger to prayer, a neglecter of the word, a lover of this present world? Dost thou not sometimes catch him in a lie? Dost thou not find his heart fermented with malice, or burning with lust, or going after his covetousness? Speak plainly to all the forementioned particulars. Canst thou acquit this man, this woman, from being in any of the two-and-twenty classes here described? If he be found with any of them, set him aside; his portion is not with the saints. He must be converted and made a new creature, or he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Beloved, be not your own betrayers; do not deceive your own hearts, nor set your hands to your own ruin by a wilful blinding of yourselves. Set up a tribunal in your own breasts: bring the word and conscience together. "To the law and to the testimony." Hear what the word concludes of your state. O follow the search till you find how the case stands. Mistake here, and you perish. And, such is the treachery of the heart, the subtlety of

the tempter, and the deceitfulness of sin, all conspiring to flatter and deceive the poor soul ; and withal so common and easy it is to mistake, that it is a thousand to one but you will be deceived, unless you be very careful, and thorough, and impartial in the inquiry into your spiritual condition. O therefore be diligent in your work ; go to the bottom ; search with candles ; weigh yourself in the balance ; come to the standard of the sanctuary ; bring your coin to the touchstone. Satan is master of deceit ; he can draw to the life ; he is perfect in the trade ; there is nothing but he can imitate. You cannot wish for any grace, but he can fit you with a counterfeit. Be jealous ; trust not even your own heart. Go to God to search you and try you, to examine you and prove your reins. If other helps suffice not to bring all to an issue, but you are still at a loss, open your case ingenuously to some godly and faithful minister, or Christian friend. Rest not till you have put the business of your eternal welfare out of doubt. "O Searcher of hearts, put thou this soul upon, and help him in his search."

## CHAPTER V.

## THE MISERIES OF THE UNCONVERTED.

So unspeakably dreadful is the case of every unconverted soul, that I have sometimes thought if I could but convince men that they are yet unregenerate, the work were more than half done.

But I find by sad experience that such a spirit of sloth and slumber possesses the unsanctified, that, though they be convinced that they are yet unconverted, they oftentimes carelessly sit still; and through the love of sensual pleasure, or the hurry of worldly business, or the noise and clamor of earthly cares and lusts and affections, the voice of conscience is drowned, and men go no farther than some cold wishes and general purposes of repenting and amending.

It is therefore of high necessity that I not only convince men that they are unconverted, but that I also endeavor to bring them to a sense of the fearful misery of this state.

But here I find myself aground at first setting off. What tongue can tell the heirs of hell sufficiently of their misery, unless it were Dives in that flame? Luke 16:24. Where is the ready writer whose pen can depict their misery who are without God in the world? This cannot fully be done, unless we know the infinite ocean of bliss which is in perfec-



tion in God, and from which a state of sin doth exclude men. "Who knoweth," saith Moses, "the power of thine anger?" And how shall I tell men that which I do not know? Yet so much we know, as one would think would shake the heart of that man that had the least degree of spiritual life and sense.

But this is yet the more perplexing difficulty, that I am to speak to them that are without spiritual sense. Alas, this is not the least part of man's misery, that he is dead, dead in trespasses and sins.

Could I bring paradise into view, or represent the kingdom of heaven to as much advantage as the tempter did the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory thereof, to our Saviour; or could I uncover the face of the deep and devouring gulf of Tophet in all its terrors, and open the gates of the infernal furnace; alas, he hath no eyes to see it. Could I paint the beauties of holiness or the glory of the Gospel; or could I expose to view the more than diabolical deformity and ugliness of sin: he can no more judge of the loveliness and beauty of the one, and the filthiness and hatefulness of the other, than a blind man of colors. He is alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him because of the blindness of his heart. He neither doth nor can know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned. His eyes cannot be savingly opened but by converting grace. He is a

child of darkness, and walks in darkness. Yea, the light in him is darkness.

Shall I ring his knell, or read his sentence, or sound in his ear the terrible trump of God's judgments, that one would think should make both his ears to tingle, and strike him into Belshazzar's fit, even to change his countenance, and to loose his joints, and make his knees smite one against another? Alas, he perceives me not; he hath no ears to hear. Or shall I call up the daughters of music, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb? Yet he will not be stirred. Shall I allure him with the joyful sound, and lovely song, and glad tidings of the Gospel; with the most sweet and inviting calls, comforts, and cordials of the divine promises so exceedingly great and precious? It will not affect him savingly, unless I could find him ears as well as tell him the news.

What then shall I do? Shall I uncover to him the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; or shall I open the box of spikenard, very precious, that filleth the whole house of the universe with its perfume, and hope that the savor of Christ's ointments and the smell of his garments will attract him? Alas, dead sinners are like the dumb idols: they have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see not; they have ears, but they hear not; noses have they, but they smell not; they have hands, but they handle not; feet have they,

but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat. They are destitute of spiritual sense and motion.

But let me try the sense that doth last leave us, and draw the sword of the word; yet, though I choose mine arrows out of God's quiver, and direct them to the heart, nevertheless he feeleth it not; for how should he, being past feeling? So that, though "the wrath of God abideth on him," and the mountainous weight of so many thousand sins, yet he goes up and down as light as if nothing ailed him. In a word, he carries a dead soul in a living body, and his flesh is but the walking coffin of a corrupt mind that is twice dead. Jude 12.

Which way then shall I come at the miserable objects that I have to deal with? Who shall make the heart of stone relent, or the lifeless carcass to feel and move? That God who is able of "stones to raise up children unto Abraham;" "that raiseth the dead," "and melteth the mountains," and "strikeeth water out of the flint;" that loves to work like himself, beyond the hopes and belief of man; that peopled his church with dry bones; he is able to do this. Therefore "I bow my knee to the most high God;" and as our Saviour prayed at the sepulchre of Lazarus, and the Shunamite ran to the man of God for her dead child, so doth your mourning minister carry you in the arms of prayer to that God in whom your help is found.

“O thou all-powerful Jehovah, who workest, and none can hinder thee! who hast the keys of death and hell! pity thou the dead souls that lie here entombed, and roll away the grave-stone, and say as to the dead body of Lazarus, Come forth. Lighten thou this darkness, O inaccessible Light, and let the day-spring from on high visit the dark regions of the dead, to whom I speak; for thou canst open the eye that death itself hath closed; thou that formedst the ear, canst restore the hearing: say thou to these ears, Ephphatha, and they shall be opened. Give thou eyes to see thine excellencies, a taste that may relish thy sweetness, a scent that may savor thy ointment, a feeling that may discern the privilege of thy favor, the burden of thy wrath, the intolerable weight of unpardoned sin; and give thy servant order to prophesy to dry bones, and let the effects of this prophecy be as of thy prophet when he prophesied the valley of dry bones into a living army exceeding great.” Ezek. 37: 1-10.

But I must proceed, as I am able, to unfold that misery which, I confess, no tongue can unfold, no heart can sufficiently comprehend.

Know therefore, that, while thou art unconverted,  
1. *The infinite God is engaged against thee.* It is no small part of thy misery that thou art “without God.” How doth Micah run crying after the Danites, “Ye have taken away my gods, and what

have I more?" O what a mourning then must thou lift up, that art without God, that canst lay no claim to him without daring usurpation! How piercing a moan is that of Saul in his last extremity, "The Philistines are upon me, and God is departed from me!" Sinners, but what will you do in the day of your visitation? Whither will you flee for help? Where will you leave your glory? What will you do when the Philistines are upon you; when the world shall take its eternal leave of you; when you must bid your friends, houses, and lands, farewell for evermore? What then, I say, will you do, that have not God to go to? Will you call on him? Will you cry to him for help? Alas, he will not own you. He will not take any notice of you; but will send you away with, "I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

They that know what it is to have a God to go to, a God to live upon—they know a little what a fearful misery it is to be without God. This made a holy man cry out, "Let me have God or nothing: let me know him and his will, and what will please him, and how I may come to enjoy him, or would I never had an understanding to know any thing!"

But thou art not only without God, but God is against thee. O if God would but stand neuter, though he did not own nor help the poor sinner, his case were not so deeply miserable; though God should give up the poor creature to the will of his

enemies, to do their worst with him; though he should deliver him over to the tormentors, that devils should tear and torture him to their utmost power and skill, yet this were not half so fearful. But God will set himself against the sinner; and, believe it, "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." There is no friend like him, no enemy like him. As much as heaven is above the earth, omnipotence above impotence, so much more terrible is it to fall into the hands of the living God, than into the paws of bears and lions, yea, furies or devils. God himself will be thy tormentor; thy destruction shall come from the presence of the Lord.

"If God be against thee, who shall be for thee? If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" "Thou, even thou, art to be feared; and who shall stand in thy sight when thou art angry?" Who or what shall deliver you out of his hands? Can mammon? "Riches profit not in the day of wrath." Can kings or warriors? No; "they shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

Sinner, I think this should go like a dagger to thy heart, to know that God is thine enemy. O whither wilt thou go; where wilt thou shelter thee?

There is no hope for thee, unless thou lay down thy weapons and sue out thy pardon, and get Christ to stand thy friend and make thy peace. If it were not for this, thou mightest go into some howling wilderness, and there pine in sorrow, and run mad for anguish of heart and horrible despair. But in Christ there is a possibility of mercy for thee, yea, a proffer of mercy to thee, that thou mayest have God more for thee than he is now against thee. But if thou wilt not forsake thy sins, nor turn thoroughly and to some purpose to God, by a sound conversion, the wrath of God abideth on thee, and he proclaimeth himself to be against thee, as in the prophet: "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, am against thee!"

(1.) His *face* is against thee. "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them." Woe unto them whom God shall set his face against. When he did but look on the host of the Egyptians, how terrible was the consequence! "I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord."

(2.) His *heart* is against thee. He hateth all the workers of iniquity. Man, doth not thy heart tremble to think of thy being an object of God's hatred? "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people: cast

them out of my sight." "My soul loathed them, and their souls also abhorred me."

(3.) His *hand* is against thee. All his *attributes* are against thee.

His *justice* is like a flaming sword unsheathed against thee: "If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine adversaries, and will reward them that hate me: I will make mine arrows drunk with blood." So exact is justice, that it will by no means clear the guilty. God will not discharge thee, he will not hold thee guiltless, but will require the whole debt in person of thee, unless thou canst make a Scripture claim to Christ and his satisfaction. When the enlightened sinner looks on justice, and sees the balance in which he must be weighed and the sword by which he must be executed, he feels an earthquake in his breast; but Satan keeps this out of sight, and persuades the soul, while he can, that the Lord is all made up of mercy, and so lulls it asleep in sin. Divine justice is exact; it must have satisfaction to the utmost farthing: it denounceth "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish to every soul that doeth evil." It "curseth every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them." The justice of God to the unpardoned sinner that hath a sense of his guilt, is more terrible than the sight of the creditor to the bankrupt debtor, of the judge and bench to the



robber, or of the irons and gibbet to the guilty murderer. When justice sits upon life and death, what dreadful work doth it make with the wretched sinner! "Bind him hand and foot; cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." This is the terrible sentence that justice pronounceth. Sinner, by this severe justice must thou be tried; and as God liveth, this killing sentence must thou hear, unless thou repent and be converted.

The *holiness* of God is against thee. He is not only angry with thee—so he may be with his children—but he hath a fixed, habitual displeasure against thee. God's nature is infinitely contrary to sin, and so he cannot delight in a sinner out of Christ.

O what misery is this, to be out of the favor, yea, under the hatred of God; that God, who can as easily lay aside his nature and cease to be God, as not be contrary to thee and detest thee, except thou be changed and renewed. O sinner, how darest thou think of the bright and radiant sun of purity, or the beauties, the glory of holiness in God? "The stars are not pure in his sight." "He humbles himself to behold things that are done in heaven." O those all-searching eyes of his! what do they spy in thee; and hast thou no interest in Christ neither, that he should plead for thee? I think he should

hear thee crying out, astonished, with the Bethshe-mites, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?"

The *power* of God is against thee. The glory of God's power is displayed in the wonderful confusion and destruction of them that obey not the Gospel. He will make his power known in them, how mightily he can torment them. For this end he raiseth them up, "that he might make his power known." O man, art thou able to contend with thy Maker?

Sinner, the power of God's anger is against thee, and power and anger together make fearful work; it were better thou hadst all the world in arms against thee than to have the power of God against thee. There is no escaping his hands, no breaking his prison. "The thunder of his power, who can understand?" Unhappy man that shall understand it by feeling it! "If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart and mighty in strength: who hath hardened himself against him, and prospered? which removeth the mountains, and they know it not; which overturneth them in his anger; which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not; and sealeth up the stars! Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou? If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him." Job 9:

3-6, 12, 13. And art thou a fit match for such an antagonist? "O consider this, ye that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." Submit to mercy; let not dust and stubble stand out against the Almighty; set not briers and thorns against him in battle, lest he go through them, and consume them together; but lay hold on his strength that you may "make peace with him." "Woe to him that striveth with his Maker!"

The *wisdom* of God is set to ruin thee. He hath ordained his arrows, and prepared instruments of death, and made all things ready. His counsels are against thee, to contrive thy destruction. He sees how thou wilt come down mightily in a moment; how thou wilt gnash thy teeth for anguish of heart, when thou seest thou art fallen irremediably into the pit of destruction.

The *truth* of God is sworn against thee. If he be true and faithful, thou must perish if thou goest on. Unless he be false to his word, thou must die, except thou repent. If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself; that is, he is faithful to his threatenings as well as to his promises, and will show his faithfulness in our confusion, if we believe not. God hath told thee as plain as it can be spoken, that "if he wash thee not, thou hast no part in him;" that "if thou livest after the flesh, thou shalt die;" that "except thou be converted, thou shalt in no wise enter into the king-

dom of heaven." Beloved, as the immutable faithfulness of God in his promise and oath affords believers strong consolation, so they are to unbelievers for strong consternation and confusion.

O sinner, tell me what dost thou think of all the threatenings of God's word that stand upon record against thee? Dost thou believe they are truth or not? If not, thou art a wretched infidel. But, if thou dost believe them, O heart of adamant that thou hast, that thou canst walk up and down in quiet, when the truth and faithfulness of God are engaged to destroy thee! The whole book of God doth testify against thee while thou remainest un-sanctified; it condemns thee in every leaf, and is to thee like Ezekiel's roll, written within and without with lamentation, and mourning, and woe. And all this shall surely come upon thee, except thou repent. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of this word shall never pass away."

Now, put all this together, and tell me if the case of the unconverted be not deplorably miserable. As we read of some persons that had bound themselves by an oath and a curse to kill Paul; so thou must know, O sinner, to thy terror, that all the attributes of the infinite God are bound by an oath to punish thee. O man, what wilt thou do; whither wilt thou flee? If God's omniscience can find thee, thou shalt not escape. If the true and faithful God will regard his oath, perish thou must, except thou

believe and repent. If the Almighty hath power to torment thee, thou must be perfectly miserable in soul and body to all eternity, unless it be prevented by speedy conversion.

2. *The whole creation of God is against thee.* "The whole creation," saith Paul, "groaneth and travaileth in pain." But what is it that the creation groaneth under? The fearful abuse it is subject to in serving the lusts of unsanctified men. And what is it that the creation groaneth for? For freedom and liberty from this abuse; for the "creature is not willingly made subject to this bondage." Rom. 8: 20, 21. If the irrational and inanimate creatures had speech and reason, they would cry out under it, as a bondage insufferable, to be abused by the ungodly, contrary to their natures and the ends that the great Creator made them for. It is a saying of an eminent divine, "The liquor that the drunkard drinketh, if it had reason, like a man, to know how shamefully it is abused, would groan in the barrel against him, it would groan in the cup against him, groan in his throat, in his stomach against him; it would fly in his face, if it could speak. And if God should open the mouths of his creatures, as he did the mouth of Balaam's ass, the proud man's garment on his back would groan against him. There is never a creature, if it had reason to know how it is abused till a man be converted, but would groan against him: the land would groan to bear him; the

air would groan to give him breath; their houses would groan to lodge them; their beds would groan to ease them, their food to nourish them, their clothes to cover them, and the creature would groan to give them any help and comfort, so long as they live in sin against God."

I think this should be a terror to an unconverted soul, to think he is a burden to the creation: "Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" If inanimate creatures could but speak, thy food would say, Lord, must I nourish such a wretch as this, and yield forth my strength for him to dishonor thee? The very air would say, Lord, must I give this man breath to speak against Heaven, and scorn thy people, and vent his pride and wrath, and filthy communication, and utter oaths and blasphemy against thee? His poor beast would say, Lord, must I carry him upon his wicked design? A wicked man! the earth groans under him, and hell groans for him, till death satisfies both. While the Lord of hosts is against thee, be sure the host of the Lord is against thee, and all the creatures, as it were, up in arms, till, upon a man's conversion, the controversy being settled between God and him, he makes a covenant of peace with the creature for him.

3. *The roaring lion, Satan, hath his full power upon thee.* Thou art led captive by him at his will. This is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. He is the ruler of the darkness of this

world, that is, of ignorant sinners who live in darkness. You pity the poor Indians that worship the devil for their god, but little think it is your own case. It is the common misery of all the unsanctified, that the devil is their god. Not that they intend to do him homage : they will be ready to defy him, and him that should say so of them ; but all this while they serve him, and live under his government. His servants ye are to whom ye obey. Rom. 6 : 16. O how many, then, will be found the real servants of the devil, that take themselves for no other than the children of God ! He can no sooner offer a sinful delight or opportunity for your unlawful advantage than you embrace it. If he suggest a lie, or prompt you to revenge, you readily obey. If he forbid you to read or pray, you hearken to him, and therefore his servants you are. Indeed, he stands behind the curtain, he acts in the dark, and sinners see not who setteth them at work, but all the while he leads them. Doubtless the liar intends not a service to Satan, but his own advantage ; yet it is he that stands unobserved and putteth the thing into his heart. Undoubtedly Judas, when he sold his Master for money, and the Chaldeans and Sabeans, when they plundered Job, intended not to do the devil a pleasure, but to satisfy their own covetous thirst ; yet it was he that actuated them in their wickedness. Men may be very slaves and common drudges for the

devil, and not know it: nay, they may please themselves in thoughts of liberty.

Art thou yet in ignorance, and not turned from darkness unto light? I fear thou art under the power of Satan. Dost thou live in the wilful practice of any known sin? Know that thou art of the devil. Dost thou live in strife, or envy, or malice? Verily he is thy father. O dreadful case! However Satan may provide his slaves with divers pleasures, yet it is but to draw them into endless perdition. The serpent comes with the fruit in his mouth, but, with Eve, thou seest not the deadly sting. He that is now thy tempter, will one day be thy tormentor. O that I could but give thee to see how bad a master thou servest, how merciless a tyrant thou gratifiest; all whose pleasure is to set thee on to make thy perdition and damnation sure, and to heat the furnace hotter and hotter in which thou must burn for millions and millions of ages!

4. *The guilt of all thy sins lies like a mountain upon thee.* Poor soul, thou feelest it not; but this is that which seals thy misery. While unconverted, none of thy sins are blotted out, they are all upon record against thee. Regeneration and remission are never separated; the unsanctified are unjustified and unpardoned. It is a fearful thing to be in debt, but above all, in God's debt; for there is no arrest so formidable as his, no prison so dreary as his. Look upon an enlightened sinner who feels the



weight of his own guilt: O how frightful are his looks, how fearful are his complaints! his comforts are turned into wormwood, and his moisture into drought, and his sleep is departed from his eyes. He is a terror to himself and all that are about him, and is ready to envy the very stones that lie in the street, because they are senseless and feel not his misery, and wisheth he had been a dog, rather than a man, because then death had put an end to his misery; whereas now it will be but the beginning of that which will know no ending.

However you may make light of it now, you will one day find the guilt of unpardoned sin to be a heavy burden. This is a mill-stone, that "whosoever falleth upon it shall be broken; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder." The guilt of our sins caused the agony and death of the blessed Saviour. And if it did this in the green tree, what will it do in the dry?

O think of thy case in time. Canst thou think of that threat without trembling, "Ye shall die in your sins?" O, better were it for thee to die in a jail, in a ditch, in a dungeon, than die in thy sins. If death, as it will take away all thy comforts, would take away thy sins too, it were some mitigation; but thy sins will follow thee when thy friends leave thee, and all worldly enjoyments shake hands with thee. Thy sins will not die with thee as a prisoner's other debts will; but they will go to judgment with thee,

there to be thy accusers; and they will go to hell with thee, there to be thy tormentors. O the work that these will make thee. O look over thy debts in time; how every one of God's commandments is ready to arrest thee, and take thee by the throat for the innumerable bonds it hath upon thee. What wilt thou do, then, when they shall all together come in against thee? Hold open the eyes of thy conscience to consider this, that thou mayest despair of thyself and be driven to Christ, and fly for refuge to "lay hold on the hope that is set before thee."

5. *Thy raging lusts do miserably enslave thee.* While unconverted, thou art a very servant to sin; it reigns over thee, and holds thee under its dominion, till thou art brought within the bonds of God's covenant. There is not such another tyrant as sin. O the vile and fearful work that it doth engage its servants in!

Would it not pierce thy heart to see a company of poor creatures drudging and toiling to carry together fagots and fuel for their own burning? This is the employment of sin's drudges. Even while they bless themselves in their unrighteous gains, while they sing in pleasure, they are but treasuring up vengeance for their eternal burning; they are but adding to the pile of Tophet, and flinging in oil to make the flame rage the fiercer. Who would serve such a master, whose work is drudgery, whose wages are death?

What a woful spectacle was the poor wretch possessed with the legion! Would it not have grieved thy heart to see him among the tombs cutting and wounding himself? This is thy case; such is thy work; every stroke is a thrust at thy heart. Conscience indeed is now asleep; but, when death and judgment shall bring thee to thy senses, then wilt thou feel the anguish in every wound. The *convinced* sinner is a sensible instance of the miserable bondage of sin: conscience flies upon him, and tells him the end of these things; and yet such a slave he is to his lusts, that on he goes, though he sees it will be his perdition: when the temptation comes, lust breaks the cords of all his vows and promises, and carries him headlong to his own destruction.

6. *The furnace of eternal vengeance is heated ready for thee.* Hell and destruction open their mouths upon thee; they gape for thee; they groan for thee, Isa. 5: 14; waiting as it were with a greedy eye, as thou standest on the brink. If the wrath of men be "as the roaring of a lion," "more heavy than the sand," what is the wrath of the infinite God? If the burning furnace heated in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery rage, when he commanded it to be made yet seven times hotter, was so fierce as to burn up even those that drew near to throw the three children in, how hot is that burning of the Almighty's fury! Surely this is seventy times seven more fierce. What thinkest thou, O man, of being a fagot in hell to all

eternity? "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee? saith the Lord of hosts." Canst thou abide the everlasting burnings? Canst thou dwell with consuming fire; when thou shalt be as glowing iron in hell, and thy whole body and soul shall be as perfectly possessed by God's burning vengeance as the sparkling iron with fire, when heated in the fiercest furnace? Some of the choicest servants of God, when under the hidings of his face, and dreading the effects of his displeasure, have bewailed their condition with bitter lamentations. How then wilt thou endure when God shall pour out all his vials, and set himself against thee, to torment thee; when he shall make thy conscience the tunnel by which he will be pouring his burning wrath into thy soul for ever, and when he shall fill all thy pores as full of torment as they are now full of sin; when immortality shall be thy misery, and to die the death of a brute, and be swallowed in the gulf of annihilation, shall be such a felicity as the whole eternity of wishes and an ocean of tears shall never purchase?

Now thou canst put off the evil day, and laugh and be merry, and forget "the terror of the Lord." But how wilt thou hold out, or hold up, when God will cast thee into a "bed of torments," and make thee to "lie down in sorrow;" when roarings and blasphemies shall be thy only music, and the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without

mixture into the cup of his indignation, shall be thy only drink; and when thou shalt draw in flames for thy breath: in a word, when the smoke of thy torment shall ascend for ever and ever, and thou shalt have no rest day nor night, no rest in thy conscience, no ease in thy bones; but thou shalt be an execration and astonishment, and a curse and a reproach, for evermore? Jer. 42:18.

O sinner, stop here, and consider. If thou art a man, and not a senseless block, consider. Bethink thyself where thou standest—upon the very brink of destruction. As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between thee and this. Thou knowest not, when thou liest down, but thou mayest be in hell before morning: thou knowest not, when thou risest, but thou mayest drop in before night. Darest thou make light of this? Wilt thou go on in such a dreadful condition, as if nothing ailed thee? If thou puttest it off, and sayest, “this doth not belong to thee,” look again over the foregoing chapter, and tell me the truth. Are none of those black marks found upon thee? Do not blind thine eyes; do not deceive thyself; see thy misery while thou mayest prevent it. Think what it is to be a vile outcast, a lost reprobate, a vessel of wrath, into which the Lord will be pouring out his tormenting fury while he hath a being.

Divine wrath is a fierce, devouring, everlasting, unquenchable fire, and this must be thy portion,

unless thou consider thy ways, and speedily turn to the Lord by a sound conversion. They that have had but a foretaste of this woe, O what amazing spectacles they have been! Whose heart would not melt to have heard Spira's outcries; to have seen Chaloner, that monument of justice, worn to skin and bone, blaspheming the God of heaven, cursing himself, and continually crying out, "O torture, torture, torture! O torture, torture!" as if the flames of wrath had already taken hold on him; to have heard Rogers crying out, "I have had a little pleasure, but now I must have hell for evermore;" wishing but for this mitigation, that God would let him lie burning for ever behind the back of that fire, on the hearth, and bringing in his sad conclusion still, at the end of whatever was spoken to him to afford him some hope, "I must to hell, I must to hell, I must to the furnace of hell, for millions and millions of ages?" O, if the fears and forethoughts of the wrath to come be so terrible, so intolerable, what must be the feeling of it?

Sinner, it is in vain to flatter you: this would be but to draw you into the unquenchable fire. Know ye from the living God, that here you must lie; with these burnings you must dwell till immortality die and immutability change, till eternity run out and omnipotence is no longer able to punish, except you be in good earnest renewed throughout by sanctifying grace.

7. *The law discharges all its threats and curses at thee.*

O how dreadfully doth it thunder. It flashes devouring fire in thy face. Its words are as drawn swords, and as the sharp arrows of the mighty. It demands satisfaction to the utmost, and cries, Justice, justice ! It speaks blood, and war, and wounds, and death, against thee. O man, away to thy strong hold ; away from thy sins ; haste to the sanctuary, the city of refuge—even the Lord Jesus Christ ; hide thee in him, or else thou art lost, without any hope of recovery.

8. *The Gospel itself* bindeth the sentence of eternal damnation upon thee. If thou continuest in thine impenitent and unconverted state, know that the Gospel denounceth a much sorer condemnation than ever would have been for the transgression only of the first covenant. Is it not a dreadful case to have the Gospel itself fill its mouth with threats ; to have “ the Lord roar from mount Zion against thee ?” Hear the terror of the Lord : “ He that believeth not, shall be damned.” “ Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.” “ This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.” “ He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.” “ If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ?” “ He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy : of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy that hath trodden under foot the Son of God ?”

And is this true indeed? Is this thy misery? Yea, it is as true as God is. Better open thine eyes and see it now, while thou mayest remedy it, than blind and harden thyself till, to thy eternal sorrow, thou shalt feel what thou wouldst not believe; and if it be true, what dost thou mean, to loiter and linger in such a case as this?

Alas for thee, poor man! how effectually hath sin undone thee, and deprived and despoiled thee even of thy reason to look after thine own everlasting good. O miserable wretch! what stupidity and senselessness have surprised thee. O let me knock up and awake this sleeper. Who dwells within the walls of this flesh? Is there ever a soul here, a rational, understanding soul; or art thou only a senseless lump?

Art thou a reasonable soul, and yet so far brutified as to forget that thou art immortal, and to think thyself to be as the beasts that perish? Having reason to understand the eternity of the future state, dost thou yet make light of being everlastingly miserable, which is to be so much below the brute, as it is worse to act against reason than to act without it? O unhappy soul, that wast the glory of man, the companion of angels, and the image of God; that wast God's representative in the world, and hadst the supremacy amongst the creatures, and the dominion over thy Maker's works; art thou now become a slave to sense? Art thou heaping together a little refined earth, so unsuitable to thy spir-



itual immortal nature? O why dost thou not bethink thee where thou shalt be for ever? Death is at hand; "the Judge is even at the door." Yet a little while, and "time shall be no longer." And wilt thou run the hazard of continuing in such a state, in which, if thou be overtaken, thou art irrecoverably miserable?

Come then, arise, and attend to thy nearest concerns. Tell me whither art thou going? What, wilt thou live in such a course, wherein every act is a step to perdition; and thou dost not know but the next night thou mayest make thy bed in hell? O, if thou hast a spark of reason, consider, and turn and hearken to thy true friend, who would show thee thy present misery, that thou mightest in time make thine escape, and be eternally happy.

Hear what the Lord saith: "Fear ye not me? saith the Lord: will ye not tremble at my presence?" O sinners, do you make light of "the wrath to come?" I am sure there is a time coming when you will not make light of it. Why, the very devils "believe and tremble." What, are you more hardened than they? Will you run upon the edge of the rock? Will you play at the hole of the asp? Will you put your hand upon the cockatrice's den? Will you dally with devouring wrath as if you were indifferent whether you escape or endure it? O madness of folly! like that of a madman that casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith, "Am not I in sport?"

There is no one so beside himself as the wilful sinner, that goeth on in his unconverted state without sense, as if nothing ailed him. The man that runs into the cannon's mouth, and sports with his blood, or lets out his life in a frolic, is sensible, sober, and serious, compared with him that goeth on still in his trespasses; for "he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty: he runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler." Is it wisdom to sport with the second death, or to venture into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone? What shall I say? I can find out no expression, no comparison, whereby to set forth the dreadful madness of the soul that will go on in sin.

Awake, awake! O sinner, arise and take thy flight. There is but one door that thou mayest flee by, and that is the strait door of conversion and the new birth. Unless thou turn unfeignedly from all thy sins, and come to Jesus Christ, and take him for the Lord thy righteousness, and walk in him in holiness and newness of life; as the Lord liveth, it is not more certain that thou art now out of hell, than that thou shalt without fail be in it but a few days or nights hence. O set thy heart to think of thy case. Doth not thy everlasting misery or welfare deserve a little consideration? Look again over the miseries of the unconverted. If the Lord hath not spoken by me, regard me not; but if it be the very word

of God that all this misery lies upon thee, what a case art thou in! Is it for one that hath his senses to live in such a condition, and not to make all possible haste to prevent his utter ruin? O man, who hath bewitched thee, Gal. 3:1, that in the matters of this present life thou shalt be wise enough to forecast thy business, foresee thy danger, and prevent thy ruin; but in matters of everlasting consequence shalt be slight and careless, as if they little concerned thee? Is it nothing to thee to have all the attributes of God engaged against thee? Canst thou live without his favor? Canst thou escape his hands, or endure his vengeance? Dost thou hear the creation groaning under thee, and hell groaning for thee, and yet think thy case good enough? Art thou under the power of corruption, in the dark, noisome prison, fettered with lusts, working out thy own damnation—and is not this worth a thought?

Wilt thou make light of all the terrors of the law, of all its curses and thunders, as if they were but the threatenings of a child? Dost thou laugh at hell and destruction, or canst thou drink the envenomed cup of the Almighty's fury, as if it were but a common potion?

Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Art thou such a leviathan as that the scales of thy pride should resist thy Maker? Wilt thou esteem his arrows as straw, and the instruments of death as rotten wood?

Art thou chief of all the children of pride, even that thou shouldst count his darts as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of his spear? Art thou made without fear, and contemnest thou his barbed arrows? Art thou like the horse that paweth in the valley and rejoiceth in his strength, who goeth out to meet the armed men? Dost thou mock at fear, and art thou not affrighted, neither turnest back from God's sword when his quiver rattleth against thee, the glittering spear and the shield? Well, if the threats and calls of the word will not awaken thee, I am sure death and judgment will. O what wilt thou do when the Lord cometh forth against thee, and in his fury falleth upon thee, and thou shalt feel what thou redest? If when Daniel's enemies were cast into the den of lions, both they and their wives and their children, the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces ere they came at the bottom of the den, Dan. 6 : 24, what shall become of thee when thou fallest into the hands of the living God?

O do not then contend with God. "Repent and be converted," so none of this shall come upon thee. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

## CHAPTER VI.

## DIRECTIONS TO THE UNCONVERTED.

BEFORE thou readeſt theſe directions, I adviſe thee, yea, I charge thee, before God and his holy angels, that thou reſolve to follow them, as far as conſcience ſhall be convinced of their agreeableneſs to God's word and thy ſtate; and call in his aſſiſtance and bleſſing that they may ſucceed. And as I have ſought the Lord and conſulted his oracles what advice to give thee, ſo muſt thou entertain it with that awe, reverence, and purpoſe of obedience, which the word of the living God requires.

Now, then, attend: "Set your heart unto all that I ſhall teſtify unto you this day; for it is not a vain thing—it is your life." This is the end of all that has been ſpoken hitherto, to bring you to ſet your heart upon turning to God. I would not trouble you, nor "torment you before the time," with the thoughts of your eternal miſery, but in order to your making your eſcape. Were you ſhut up under your preſent miſery without remedy, it were but mercy to let you alone, that you might take in that little poor comfort which you are capable of in this world; but you may yet be happy, if you do not wilfully reſuſe the means of your recovery. Behold, I hold open the door to you; ariſe, take your flight: I ſet the way of life before you; walk in it, and you ſhall

live, and not die. It grieves me that you should be your own murderers, and throw yourselves headlong, when God and man cry out to you, as Peter in another case to his Master, "Spare thyself."

The destruction of ungodly men is wilful. God that made them crieth out to them, as Paul to the distracted jailer when about to murder himself, "Do thyself no harm." The ministers of Christ forewarn them, and follow them, and would gladly have them back; but, alas, no expostulations or entreaties will prevail, but men will hurl themselves into perdition, while pity itself looketh on.

What shall I say? Would it not grieve a person of any humanity, if, in the time of a raging plague, he should have a remedy that would infallibly cure all the country and recover the most hopeless patients, and yet his friends and neighbors should die by hundreds about him, because they would not use it? Men and brethren, though you carry the certain symptoms of death in your faces, yet I have a receipt that will cure you all infallibly. Follow but these directions, and if you do not then win heaven, I will be content to lose it.

Hear then, O sinner, and as ever thou wouldst be converted and saved, embrace this following counsel.

**DIRECTION I.** Set it down with thyself as an undoubted truth, that it is impossible for thee ever to get to heaven in this thy unconverted state.

Can any other but Christ save thee? and he tells thee he will never do it except thou be regenerated and converted. Doth he not keep the keys of heaven; and canst thou go in without his leave? as thou must, if ever thou come thither in thy natural condition, without a sound and thorough conversion.

DIRECTION II. Labor to get a thorough sight and lively sense and feeling of thy sins.

Till men are weary and heaven laden, and pricked at the heart, and quite sick of sin, they will not come to Christ, in his way, for cure, nor to purpose inquire, "What shall we do?" They must set themselves down for dead men, before they will come unto Christ that they may have life. Labor, therefore, to set all thy sins in order before thee; never be afraid to look upon them, but let thy spirit make diligent search. Inquire into thine heart, and into thy life; enter into a thorough examination of thyself and all thy ways, that thou mayest make a full discovery; and call in the help of God's Spirit, in the sense of thine own inability hereunto, for it is his proper work to convince of sin. Spread all before thy conscience, till thy heart and eyes be set weeping. Leave not striving with God and thine own soul, till it cry out under the sense of thy sins, as the enlightened jailer, "What must I do to be saved?" To this purpose,

Meditate on the *number* of thy sins. David's

heart failed when he thought of this, and considered that he had more sins than the hairs of his head. This made him cry out for the multitude of God's tender mercies. Look backward; where was ever the place, what was ever the time, in which thou didst not sin? Look inward; what part or power canst thou find in soul or body but it is poisoned with sin; what duty dost thou ever perform, into which this poison is not shed? O how great is the sum of thy debts, who hast been all thy life running upon trust, and never didst or canst pay off one penny! Look over the sin of thy nature, and all its cursed brood, the sins of thy life. Call to mind thy omissions and commissions; the sins of thy thoughts, words, and actions; the sins of thy youth, and the sins of thy riper years. Be not like a desperate bankrupt, that is afraid to look over his books. Read the records of conscience carefully. These books must be opened sooner or later.

Meditate on the *aggravations* of thy sins, as they are the grand enemies of the God of thy life, and of the life of thy soul: in a word, they are the public enemies of all mankind. How do David, Ezra, Daniel, and the good Levites, aggravate their sins, from the consideration of their opposition to God and his good and righteous laws, and of the mercies and warnings against which they were committed! O the work that sin has made in the world! This is the enemy that has brought in death; that has



robbed and enslaved man; that has done the work of the devil, and digged hell. This is the enemy that has turned the world upside down, and sown dissensions between man and the creatures, betwixt man and man, yea, between man and himself, setting the animal part against the rational, the will against the judgment, lust against conscience; yea, worst of all, between God and man, making the sinner both hateful to God and the hater of God. O man, how canst thou make so light of sin? This is the traitor that thirsted for the blood of the Son of God, that sold him, that mocked him, that scourged him that spit in his face, that tore his hands, that pierced his side, that pressed his soul, that mangled his body, that never left him till he had bound him, condemned him, nailed him, crucified him, and put him to an open shame. This is that deadly poison, so powerful of operation that one drop of it, shed on the root of mankind, has corrupted, spoiled, poisoned, and ruined his whole race. This the bloody executioner that has killed the prophets, burnt the martyrs, murdered all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the kings and potentates; that has destroyed cities, swallowed empires, and devoured whole nations. Whatever weapon it was done by, it was sin that caused the execution. Dost thou yet think it but a small thing? If Adam and all his children could be dug out of their graves, and their bodies piled up to heaven, and an inquest were made what

matchless murderer were guilty of all this blood, it would be all found in sin. Study the nature of sin, till thy heart incline to fear and loathe it; and meditate on the aggravations of thy particular sins, how thou hast sinned against all God's warnings, against thy own prayers, against mercies, against corrections, against clearest light, against freest love, against thine own resolutions, against promises, vows, and covenants of better obedience. Charge thy heart home with these things till it blush for shame, and be brought out of all good opinion of itself.

Meditate on the *desert* of sin. It crieth to Heaven; it calls for vengeance. Its due wages are death and damnation; it brings the curse of God upon the soul and body. The least sinful word or thought lays thee under the infinite wrath of God. O what a load of wrath, what a weight of curses, what treasures of vengeance, have all the millions of thy sins deserved! O judge thyself, that the Lord may not judge thee.

Meditate on the *deformity and defilement* of sin. It is black as hell, the very image and likeness of the devil drawn upon the soul. 1 John, 3: 8, 10. It would affright thee to see thyself in the hateful deformity of thy nature. There is no mire so unclean, no plague or leprosy so noisome as sin, in which thou art plunged and rendered more displeasing to the pure and holy nature of the glorious God than the vilest object can be to thee. Couldst

thou take up a toad into thy bosom; couldst thou cherish it, and take delight in it? But thou art as contrary to the pure and perfect holiness of the divine nature, till thou art purified by the blood of Jesus and the power of renewing grace.

Above all other sins, consider these two.

1. The sin of thy *heart*. It is to little purpose to lop off the branches while the root of corruption remains untouched. In vain do men lave out the streams, when the fountain is running that fills up all again. Let the axe of thy repentance, with David's, go to the root of sin. Study how deep, how permanent is thy natural pollution, how universal it is, till thou dost cry out, with Paul, upon thy body of death. The heart is never soundly broken till thoroughly convinced of the heinousness of its original and deep-rooted depravity. Here fix thy thoughts; this is that which makes thee backward to all good, and prone to all evil; that sheds blindness, pride, prejudice, and unbelief into thy mind; enmity, inconstancy, and obstinacy into thy will; inordinate heats and colds into thy affections; insensibleness and unfaithfulness into thy conscience; slipperiness into thy memory; and, in a word, hath put every wheel of the soul out of order, and made it, from a habitation of holiness, to become a very hell of iniquity. This is what hath defiled and perverted all thy members, and turned them into weapons of unrighteousness, and servants of sin;

that hath filled the head with carnal and corrupt designs ; the hand with sinful practices ; the eyes with wandering and wantonness ; the tongue with deadly poison ; that hath opened the ears to tales, flattery, and filthy communication, and shut them against the instructions of life ; and hath rendered thy heart the cursed source of all deadly imaginations, so that it poureth out its wickedness without ceasing even as naturally as a fountain doth pour forth its waters, or the raging sea doth cast forth mire and dirt. And wilt thou yet be in love with thyself, and tell us any longer of thy good heart ? O never leave meditating on the desperate contagion, the original corruption of thy heart, till, with Ephraim, thou bemoan thyself ; and with the deepest shame and sorrow smite on thy breast, as the publican ; and, with Job, abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes.

2. *The particular evil* that thou art most addicted to : find out all its aggravations, set home upon thy heart all God's threats against it ; repentance drives before it the whole herd, but especially sticks the arrow in the beloved sin, and singles this out, above the rest, to run it down. O labor to make this sin odious to thy soul, and double thy guard and resolutions against it, because this doth most dishonor God and endanger thee.

DIRECTION III. Strive to affect thy heart with a deep sense of thy present misery.

Read over the foregoing chapter again and again, and get it out of the book into thy heart. Remember when thou liest down, that, for aught thou knowest, thou mayest awake in flames; and when thou risest up, that by the next night thou mayest make thy bed in hell. Is it nothing to thee to live in such a fearful case, to stand tottering on the brink of the bottomless pit; and to live at the mercy of every disease, that, if it but fall upon thee, will send thee forthwith into the burnings? Suppose thou sawest a condemned wretch hanging over Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace by nothing but a thread which was ready to break every moment, would not thy heart tremble for such a one? Thou art the man: this is thy very case, O man, woman, that readest this, if thou be yet unconverted. What if the thread of thy life should break—and thou knowest not but it may be the next night, yea, the next moment—where wouldst thou be then; whither wouldst thou drop? Verily, upon the breaking of this thread, thou fallest into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, where thou must lie while God hath a being, if thou die in thy present case. And doth not thy soul tremble as thou readest? Do not thy tears bedew the paper, and thy heart throb in thy bosom? Dost thou not yet begin to smite on thy breast, and bethink thyself what need thou hast of a change? O what is thy heart made of? Hast thou

not only lost all regard to God, but all love and pity to thyself?

O study thy misery till thy heart cry out for Christ as earnestly as ever a drowning man did for a boat, or the wounded for a surgeon. Men must come to see the danger and feel the smart of their deadly sores and sickness, or Christ will be to them a physician of no value. The manslayer hastens to the city of refuge, when pursued by the avenger of blood; but men must be even forced and driven out of themselves, or they will not come to Christ. It was distress and extremity that made the prodigal think of returning. While Laodicea thinks herself rich, increased in goods, in need of nothing, there is little hope. She must be deeply convinced of her wretchedness, blindness, poverty, and nakedness, before she will come to Christ for his gold, raiment, and eye-salve. Therefore hold the eyes of conscience open, amplify thy misery as much as possible, do not flee the sight of it for fear it should fill thee with terror. The sense of thy misery is but as it were the suppuration of the wound, which is necessary to the cure. Better now to fear the torments that abide thee, than to feel them hereafter.

DIRECTION IV. Settle it upon thy heart that thou must look out of thyself and away from thy own doings for help.

Never think thy praying, reading, hearing, con-

fessing, or amending, will do the cure ; these must be attended to, but thou art undone if thou rest in them ; thou art a lost man if thou hope to escape drowning on any other plank but Jesus Christ. Thou must unlearn thyself, and renounce thine own wisdom, thine own righteousness, thine own strength, and throw thyself wholly upon Christ, or thou canst not escape. While men trust in themselves, and establish their own righteousness, and have confidence in the flesh, they will not come savingly to Christ. Thou must know thy gain to be but loss, thy strength but weakness, thy righteousness rags and rottenness, before there will be an effectual closure between Christ and thee. Can the lifeless body shake off its grave-clothes, and loose the bands of death ? Then mayest thou recover thyself, who art dead in trespasses and sins, and under an impossibility of serving thy Maker acceptably in this condition. Therefore, when thou goest to pray or meditate, or to do any of the duties to which thou art here directed, go out of thyself, call in the help of the Spirit, as despairing to do any thing pleasing to God in thine own strength ; yet neglect not duty, put thyself in the way of the Spirit. While the eunuch was reading, then the Holy Ghost did send Philip to him. When the disciples were praying, when Cornelius and his friends were hearing, then the Holy Ghost fell upon them and filled them all.

DIRECTION V. Forthwith renounce all thy sins.

If thou yield thyself to the practice of any sin, thou art undone. In vain dost thou hope for life by Christ, except thou depart from iniquity. Forsake thy sins, or thou canst not find mercy. Thou canst not be married to Christ except divorced from sin. Give up the traitor, or you can have no peace with heaven. Thou must part with thy sins or with thy soul; spare but one sin and God will not spare thee. Thy sins must die, or thou must die for them. If thou allow of one sin, though but a little, a secret one, though thou mayest plead necessity, and have a hundred shifts and excuses for it, the life of thy soul must go for the life of that sin. And will it not be dearly bought?

O sinner, hear and consider: if thou wilt part with thy sins God will give thee his Christ. Is not this a fair exchange? I testify unto you this day, that if you perish, it is not because there was never a Saviour provided nor life tendered, but because, with the Jews, you prefer the murderer before the Saviour, sin before Christ, "and love darkness rather than light." Search thy heart therefore with candles, as the Jews did their houses for leaven before the passover. Labor to find out thy sins; enter into thy closet, and consider, What evil have I lived in; what duty have I neglected towards God; what sin have I lived in against my brother? And now strike the darts through the heart of thy sin, as Joab



did through Absalom's. Never stand looking upon thy sins, nor rolling the morsel under thy tongue, but cast it out as poison, with fear and detestation. Alas, what will thy sins do for thee, that thou shouldst hesitate to part with them? They will flatter thee, but they will undo thee and poison thee while they please thee, and arm the justice and wrath of the infinite God against thee. They will open hell for thee, and pile up fuel to burn thee. Behold the gibbet that they have prepared for thee. O serve them like Haman, and do upon them the execution they would else have done upon thee. Away with them, crucify them and let Christ only be Lord over thee.

**DIRECTION VI.** Make a solemn choice of God for thy portion and blessedness.

With all possible devotion and veneration avouch the Lord for thy God: set the world, with all its glory, and paint, and gallantry, with all its pleasures and promotions, on the one hand; and set God, with all his infinite excellences and perfections, on the other; and see that thou do deliberately make thy choice. Take up thy rest in God. Sit thee down under his shadow. Let his promises and perfections turn the scale against all the world. Settle it upon thy heart, that the Lord is an all-sufficient portion, that thou canst not be miserable whilst thou hast God to live upon. Take him for thy shield and exceeding great reward. God alone is more

than all the world; content thyself with him. Let others possess the preferments and glory of the world; place thou thy happiness in the favor of God, and in the light of his countenance.

Poor sinner, thou hast fallen off from God, and hast engaged his power and wrath against thee; yet know, that of his abundant grace he doth offer to be thy God again in Christ. What sayest thou; wilt thou have the Lord for thy God? Take this counsel, and thou shalt have him; come to him by Christ, renounce the idols of thy pleasures, gain, and reputation; let these be pulled from their throne, and set God's interest uppermost in thy heart. Take him as God, to be chief in thy affections and purposes; for he will not endure to have any set above him. In a word, thou must take him in all his personal relations and in all his essential perfections.

1. In all his personal relations. God the Father must be taken for thy Father. O come to him with the prodigal: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am not worthy to be called thy son;" but since, of thy wonderful mercy, thou art pleased to take me, that am of myself most vile, even a beast and no man before thee, to be a child, I solemnly take thee for my Father, commend myself to thy care, and trust to thy providence, and cast my burden on thee. I depend on thy provision, and submit to thy corrections, and trust under the

shadow of thy wings, and hide in thy chambers, and fly to thy name. I renounce all confidence in myself; I repose my confidence in thee; I declare my engagement with thee; I will be for thee, and not for another.

God the Son must be taken for thy Saviour, thy Redeemer, and thy righteousness. He must be accepted, as the only way to the Father, and the only means of life. O then put off the raiment of thy captivity, put on the wedding garment, and go and marry thyself to Christ. "Lord, I am thine, and all I have, my body, soul, and estate. I give my heart to thee; I will be thine undividedly, thine everlastingly. I will set thy name on all I have, and use it only as thy goods, during thy leave, resigning all to thee. I will have no king but thee to reign over me. Other lords have had dominion over me; but now I will make mention of thy name only, and do here take an oath of fealty to thee, promising to serve and fear thee above all competitors. I disavow mine own righteousness, and despair of ever being pardoned and saved for my own duties or graces, and lean solely on thy all-sufficient sacrifice and intercession for pardon, and life, and acceptance before God. I take thee for my only guide and instructor, resolving to be directed by thee, and to wait for thy counsel."

Lastly, God the Spirit must be taken for thy sanctifier, for thy advocate, thy counsellor, thy com-

forter, the teacher of thy ignorance, the pledge and earnest of thy inheritance. "Awake thou North wind, and come, thou South, and blow upon my garden." "Come, thou Spirit of the Most High; here is a temple for thee; here do thou rest for ever; dwell here; lo, I give possession to thee, full possession; I send thee the keys of my heart, that all may be thine. I give up the use of all to thee, that every faculty and every member may be thy instrument to work righteousness and do the will of my Father who is in heaven."

2. In all his essential perfections. Consider how the Lord hath revealed himself to you in his word. Will you take him as such a God? O, sinner, here is the most blessed news that ever came to the sons of men: "The Lord will be thy God," if thou wilt but close with him in his excellences. Wilt thou have the merciful, the gracious, the sin-pardoning God to be thy God? "O yes," saith the sinner, "I am undone else." But he farther tells thee, I am the holy and sin-hating God; if thou wilt be owned as one of my people, thou must be holy—holy in heart, holy in life; thou must put away all thy iniquities, be they ever so dear, ever so natural, ever so necessary to the maintaining of thy worldly interest. Unless thou wilt be at enmity with sin, I cannot be thy God. Cast out the leaven. "Put away the evil of thy doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well." Bring forth mine enemies, or there is

no peace to be had with me. What doth thine heart answer? "Lord, I desire to have thee as such a God; I desire to be holy as thou art holy, and to be made partaker of thy holiness. I love thee, not only for thy goodness and mercy, but for thy holiness and purity. I take thy holiness for my happiness: O be to me a fountain of holiness; set on me the stamp and impress of thy holiness: I will thankfully part with all my sins at thy command. My wilful sins I do forthwith forsake; and for mine infirmities that cleave unto me, though I would be rid of them, I will strive against them continually: I detest them, and will pray against them, and never let them have rest in my soul." Beloved, whoever of you will thus accept the Lord, he shall be your God.

Again, he tells you, "I am the all-sufficient God." Will you lay all at my feet, give up all to my disposal, and take me for your only portion? Will you own and honor my all-sufficiency? Will you take me as your happiness and treasure, your hope and bliss? I am a sun and a shield all in one; will you have me for your all? Now what dost thou say to this? Doth thy soul long for the onions and flesh-pots of Egypt? Art thou loath to change thy earthly happiness for a portion in God; and though thou wouldst be glad to have God and the world too, yet canst thou not think of having him, and nothing but him; but hadst rather take up with the

earth below, if God would but let thee keep it as long as thou wouldst? This is a fearful sign. But now, if thou art willing to sell all for the pearl of great price; if thine heart answer, "Lord, I desire no other portion but thee; take the corn, and the wine, and the oil who will, so I may have the light of thy countenance; I fix upon thee for my happiness; I gladly venture myself on thee, and trust myself with thee; I set my hope in thee; I take up my rest with thee; let me hear thee say, I am thy God, thy salvation, and I have enough, all I wish for; I will make no terms with thee but for thyself; let me but have thee sure; let me be able to make my claim and see my title to thyself; and for other things, I leave them to thee; give me more or less, any thing or nothing; I will be satisfied in my God." Take him thus, and he is thy own.

Again, he tells you, I am the sovereign Lord; if you will have me for your God you must give me the supremacy. You must not make me second to sin or any worldly interest. If you will be my people I must have the rule over you; you must not live at your own pleasure. Will you come under my yoke? Will you bow to my government? Will you submit to my discipline, to my word, to my rod? Sinner, what sayest thou to this? "Lord, I had rather be at thy command than live at my own will; I had rather have thy will to be done than mine; I approve of and con-

sent to thy laws, and account it my privilege to be under them. And though the flesh rebel, and often break its bounds, I have resolved to take no other Lord but thee. I willingly take the oath of thy supremacy, and acknowledge thee for my Sovereign, and resolve all my days to pay the tribute of worship, obedience, love, and service to thee, and to live to thee to the end of my life." This is a right acceptance of God.

To be short, he tells you, I am the true and faithful God. If you will have me for your God you must be content to trust me. Will you venture yourselves upon my word, and depend on my faithfulness, and take my bond for your security? Will you be content to follow me in poverty, and reproach, and affliction here; and to tarry till the next world for your preferment? Will you be content to labor and suffer, and to tarry for your returns till the resurrection of life just? My promise will not always be instantly fulfilled; will you have the patience to wait? Now, beloved, what say you to this? Will you have this God for your God? Will you be content to live by faith, and trust him for an unseen happiness, an unseen heaven, an unseen glory? Do your hearts answer, "Lord, we will venture ourselves upon thee; we commit ourselves to thee; we cast ourselves upon thee; we know whom we have trusted; we are willing to take thy word; we prefer thy promises before our own pos-

sessions, and the hopes of heaven before all the enjoyments of earth; we will do thy pleasure—what thou wilt here, so that we may have but thy faithful promise for heaven hereafter.” If you can in truth, and upon deliberation, thus accept of God, he will be yours. Thus there must be, in a right conversion to God, a closing with him suitable to his excellences. But when men close with his mercy, but yet love sin, hating holiness and purity; or will take him for their benefactor, but not for their sovereign; or for their patron, and not for their portion; this is no thorough and sound conversion.

DIRECTION VII. Accept of the Lord Jesus in all his offices, as thine.

Upon these terms Christ may be had. Sinner, thou hast undone thyself, and art plunged into the ditch of most deplorable misery, out of which thou art never able to escape; but Jesus Christ is able and ready to help thee, and he freely tenders himself to thee. Be thy sins ever so many, ever so great, or of ever so long continuance, yet thou shalt be most certainly pardoned and saved, if thou dost not wretchedly neglect the offer that in the name of God is here made to thee. The Lord Jesus calleth thee to look to him and be saved. “Come unto him, and he will in nowise cast thee out.” Yea, he beseecheth thee to be reconciled. He crieth in the streets; he knocketh at thy door; he



inviteth thee to accept of him, and live with him. If thou diest, it is because thou wouldst not come to him for life.

Now accept of an offered Christ, and thou art made for ever; now give thy consent to him, and the match is made; all the world cannot hinder it. Do not stand off because of thy unworthiness. I tell thee, nothing can undo thee but thine own unwillingness. Speak, man; art thou desirous of the honor? Wilt thou have Christ in all his relations to be thine, thy king, thy priest, thy prophet? Wilt thou have him and bear his cross? Take not Christ without consideration, but sit down first and count the cost. Wilt thou lay all at his feet? Wilt thou be content to run all hazards with him? Wilt thou take thy lot with him, fall where it will? Wilt thou "deny thyself, take up thy cross, and follow him?" Art thou deliberately, understandingly, freely determined to cleave to him in all times and conditions? If so, thou shalt never perish, but art passed from death unto life. Here lies the main point of thy salvation, that thou be found in thy covenant-closure with Jesus Christ; and therefore, if thou love thyself, see that thou be faithful to God and thy soul here.

DIRECTION VIII. Resign all thy powers and faculties, and thy whole interest to be his.

"They gave their own selves unto the Lord."  
"Present your bodies a living sacrifice." The Lord

seeks not yours, but you ; resign therefore thy body, with all its members, to him ; and thy soul, with all its powers, that he may be glorified in thy body and in thy spirit, which are his.

In a right closing with Christ all thy faculties are given up to him. Thy judgment says, "Lord, thou art worthy of all acceptation, chief of ten thousand : happy is the man that findeth thee. All the things that are to be desired are not to be compared with thee." Prov. 3 : 13-15. The understanding lays aside its corrupt reasonings and cavils, and its prejudices against Christ and his ways. It is now past questioning, and determines for Christ against all the world. It concludes it is "good to be here," and sees such a treasure in this field, such a value in this pearl, as is worth all. Matt. 13 : 44-46. "O here is the richest prize that ever man was offered ; here is the most sovereign remedy that ever mercy prepared ; he is worthy of my esteem, worthy of my choice, worthy of my love, worthy to be embraced, adored, admired, for evermore. Rev. 5 : 12. I approve of his articles : his terms are righteous and reasonable, full of equity and mercy." Again, the will resigns. It stands no longer wavering, but is peremptorily determined : "Lord, thy love hath overcome me, thou hast won me, and thou shalt have me. Come in, Lord ; to thee I freely open ; I consent to be saved in thine own way. Thou shalt have any thing—nay, have all, let me

have but thee." The memory gives up to Christ: "Lord, here is a storehouse for thee; out with this trash; lay in the treasure; let me be a repository of thy truth, thy promises, thy providences." The conscience comes in: "Lord, I will ever side with thee; I will be thy faithful registrar; I will warn when the sinner is tempted, and smite when thou art offended; I will witness for thee, and judge for thee, and guide into thy ways, and will never let sin have quiet in this soul." The affections also come in to Christ: "O," saith Love, "I am sick for thee." "O," saith Desire, "now I have what I sought for; here is the Desire of nations; here is bread for me, and balm for me: all that I want." Fear bows the knee with awe and veneration: "Welcome, Lord, to thee will I pay my homage; thy word and rod shall command my motions; thee will I reverence and adore; before thee will I fall down and worship." Grief likewise puts in: "Lord, thy displeasure and thy dishonor, thy people's calamities and my own iniquities, shall be what shall set me a weeping. I will mourn when thou art offended; I will weep when thy cause is wounded." Anger likewise comes in for Christ: "Lord, nothing so enrages me as my folly against thee, that I should be so besotted as to hearken to the flatteries of sin and the temptations of Satan against thee." Hatred, too, will side with Christ: "I protest mortal enmity to thine enemies, that I never will be a friend to thy

foes; I vow an eternal quarrel with every sin: I will give no quarter; I will make no peace." Thus let all thy powers yield to Jesus Christ.

Again, thou must give up thy whole interest to him: If there be any thing that thou keepest back from Christ, it will be thy undoing. Luke 14: 33. Unless thou wilt forsake all, in preparation and resolution of thy heart, thou canst not be his disciple. Thou must hate father and mother, yea, and thine own life also, in comparison with Him, and as far as it stands in competition with him. In a word, thou must give him thyself, and all that thou hast, without reservation, or else thou canst have no part in him.

**DIRECTION IX.** Make choice of the laws of Christ as the rule of thy words, thoughts, and actions.

This is the true convert's choice. But here remember these three rules: 1. You must choose them all, there is no getting to heaven by a partial obedience. None may think it enough to take up with the cheap and easy part of religion, and let alone the duties that are costly and self-denying, and oppose the interests of the flesh; you must take all or none. A sincere convert, though he makes most conscience of the greatest sins and weightiest duties, yet he makes true conscience of little sins and of all duties. 2. You must choose Christ's laws for all times, for prosperity and ad-

versity. A true convert is resolved in his course; he will stand to his choice, and will not set his back to the wind, and be of the religion of the times. "I have stuck to thy testimonies; I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end. Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever. I will have respect to thy statutes continually." 3. This must be done deliberately and understandingly. The disobedient son said, "I go, sir; but he went not." How fairly did they promise, "All that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee we will do it!" And it is likely they spake as they meant. But when it came to the trial it was found that there was not such a heart in them as to do what they had promised.

If you would be sincere in closing with the laws and the ways of Christ, study the meaning, and breadth, and extent of them. Remember that they are spiritual; they reach the very thoughts and inclinations of the heart; so that, if you will walk by this rule, your very thoughts and inward motions must be under government. Again, they are very strict and self-denying, quite contrary to your natural inclinations. . You must take the strait gate, the narrow way, and be content to have the flesh curbed from the liberty it desires. In a word, they are very large, for "thy commandments are exceeding broad."

Rest not in generals, for there is much deceit in

them, but bring down thine heart to the particular commands of Christ. Those Jews, in the prophet, seemed as well resolved as any in the world, and called God to witness that they meant as they said : but they rested in generals ; when God's command crosses their inclination, they will not obey. Art thou resolved, in the strength of Christ, to set upon the conscientious practice of every duty that thou findest to be required of thee, and to set against every sin that thou findest to be forbidden ? This is the way to be sound in God's statutes, that thou mayest never be ashamed.

Observe the special duties that thy heart is most against, and the special sins that it is most inclined to, and see whether it be truly resolved to perform the one and forego the other. What sayest thou to thy bosom sin, thy gainful sin ? What sayest thou to costly, hazardous, and flesh-displeasing duties ? If thou haltest here, and dost not resolve, by the grace of God, to cross the flesh and be in earnest, thou art unsound.

**DIRECTION X.** Let all this be completed in a solemn covenant between God and thy soul.

Set apart some time, more than once, to be spent in secret before the Lord—in seeking earnestly his special assistance and gracious acceptance of thee—in searching thy heart, whether thou art sincerely willing to forsake all thy sins, and to resign thyself, body and soul, unto God and his service ; to serve

him in holiness and righteousness all the days of thy life.

Compose thy spirit into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance. Lay hold on the covenant of God, and rely on his promise of giving grace and strength, whereby thou mayest be enabled to perform thy promise. Trust not to thine own strength, to the strength of thine own resolutions ; but take hold on his strength.

Being thus prepared, on some convenient time set apart for the purpose, enter upon the work, and solemnly, as in the presence of the Lord, fall down on thy knees, and open thy heart to him in words like those of the covenant, or soliloquy, annexed to these directions.

**DIRECTION XI.** Take heed of delaying thy conversion, but make a speedy, an immediate surrender of thy heart to God.

“I made haste, and delayed not.” Remember and tremble at the sad instance of the foolish virgins, that came not till the “door of mercy was shut ;” and of a convinced Felix, who put off Paul to another season ; and we never find that he had such another season. O come in while it is called to-day, lest thou shouldst be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin ; lest the day of grace should be over, and the things which belong to thy peace should be “hidden from thine eyes.” Now mercy

is wooing thee; now Christ is waiting to be gracious to thee, and the Spirit of God is striving with thee; now ministers are calling; now conscience is stirring; now Christ is to be had, if accepted. O strike in with the offers of grace; now or never. If thou make light of this offer, God may swear in his wrath, thou shalt not taste of his supper.

**DIRECTION XII.** Attend conscientiously upon the word, as the means appointed for thy conversion.

Attend, I say, not customarily, but conscientiously; with this desire, design, hope, and expectation, that thou mayest be converted by it. To every sermon thou hearest come with this thought: "O I hope God will now come in; I hope this day may be the time, this may be the man by whom God will bring me home." When thou art coming to the privileges of God's house, lift up thy heart thus to God: "Lord, let this be the Sabbath, let this be the season wherein I may receive renewing grace. O let it be said that this day such a one was born unto thee."

*Objection.* Thou wilt say, I have been long a hearer of the word, and yet it hath not been effectual to my conversion. *Answer.* Yea; but thou hast not attended upon it in this manner, as a means of thy conversion, nor with this design, nor praying for and expecting the happy effect from it.

**DIRECTION XIII.** Strike in with the Spirit when he begins to work upon thy heart.



When he works convictions, O do not stifle them, but join in with him, and beg the Lord to give you saving conversion. "Quench not the Spirit;" do not reject him, do not resist him. Beware of stifling convictions with evil company or worldly business. When thou art in anguish on account of sin and fears about thy eternal state, beg of God that you may have peace only in thoroughly renouncing all sin, loathing it in thy inmost soul, and giving thy whole heart, without reserve, to Christ. Say to him, "Strike home, Lord; leave not the work in the midst. O go to the bottom of my corruption, and let out the life-blood of my sins." Thus yield up thyself to the working of the Spirit, and hoist thy sails to his gusts.

DIRECTION XIV. Set upon the constant and diligent use of serious and fervent prayer.

He that neglects prayer is a profane and unsanctified sinner. He that is not constant in prayer is but a hypocrite, unless the omission be contrary to his ordinary course, under the force of some instant temptation. This is one of the first things conversion appears in, that it sets men a praying. Therefore set to this duty; let not one day pass over thee wherein thou hast not, morning and evening, set apart some time for solemn prayer in secret. Call thy family also together daily and duly to worship God with thee. Woe be unto thee, if thou be found among the families that call not upon God's name.

But cold and lifeless devotions will not reach half way to heaven. Be fervent and importunate. Importunity will carry it; but without violence the kingdom of heaven will not be taken. Thou must strive to enter, and wrestle with tears and supplications, as Jacob, if thou wouldst gain the blessing. Thou art undone for ever without grace, and therefore thou must set to it, and resolve to take no denial. That man who is fixed in this resolution says, "Well, I must have grace, or I will never give over till I have grace; I will never cease earnestly pleading, and striving with God and my own heart, till he doth renew me by the power of his grace."

DIRECTION XV. Forsake thy evil company, and forbear the occasions of sin.

Thou wilt never be turned from sin till thou wilt decline and forego the temptations of sin. I never expect thy conversion from sin, unless thou art brought to some self-denial, so as to flee the occasions. If thou wilt be nibbling at the bait, and playing on the brink, and tampering with the snare, thy soul will surely be taken. Where God doth expose men, in his providence, unavoidably to temptation, and the occasions are such as we cannot remove, we may expect special assistance in the use of his means; but when we tempt God by running into danger, he will not engage to support us when we are tempted. And, of all temptations, one of

the most fatal and pernicious is evil companions. O what hopeful beginnings have these often stifled! O the souls, the estates, the families, the towns, that these have ruined! How many poor sinners have been enlightened and convinced, and been just ready to escape the snare of the devil, and have even escaped it; and yet wicked company has pulled them back at last, and made them seven-fold more the children of hell! In a word, I have no hopes of thee, except thou wilt shake off thy evil company. Thy life depends upon it: forsake this, or thou canst not live. Wilt thou be worse than the ass of Balaam, to run on when thou seest the Lord with a drawn sword in the way? Let this sentence be written in capitals upon thy conscience: "A COMPANION OF FOOLS SHALL BE DESTROYED." The Lord hath spoken it, and who shall reverse it?

And wilt thou run upon destruction, when God himself doth forewarn thee? If God doth ever change thy heart, it will appear in the change of thy company. O fear and flee the gulf by which so many thousand souls have been swallowed up in perdition. It will be hard for thee indeed to make thy escape. Thy companions will be mocking thee out of thy religion, and will study to fill thee with prejudices against strictness, as ridiculous and comfortless. They will be flattering thee and alluring thee; but remember the warnings of the Holy Ghost: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent

thou not. If they say, Come with us, cast in thy lot among us; walk thou not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path; avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For the way of the wicked is as darkness, they know not at what they stumble. They lie in wait for their own blood, they lurk privily for their own lives." My soul is moved within me to see how many of my hearers and readers are likely to perish; both they and their houses, by this wretched mischief, even the haunting of such places and company, whereby they are drawn into sin. Once more I admonish you, as Moses did Israel: "Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men." O fly them as you would those that had the plague-sores running in their foreheads. These are the devil's panders and decoys; and if thou dost not make thy escape they will draw thee into perdition, and will prove thy eternal ruin.

**DIRECTION XVI.** Set apart a day to humble thy soul in secret by fasting and prayer, to work a sense of thy sins and miseries upon thy heart. Read some faithful exposition of the decalogue, and write down the duties omitted and sins committed by thee against every commandment, and so make a catalogue of thy sins, and with shame and sorrow spread them before the Lord; and if thy heart be truly willing, join thyself to the Lord in a solemn covenant, like that hereto annexed.

## A SHORT SOLILOQUY.

What meanest thou, O my soul, to go on thus ; art thou in league with hell ; hast thou made a covenant with death ; art thou in love with thy misery ? “ Is it good for thee to be here ? ” Alas, what shall I do ; shall I go on in my sinful ways ? Then certain damnation will be my end. And shall I be so besotted as to go and sell my soul to the flames for a little ale and a little ease ; for a little pleasure, or gain, or satisfaction to my flesh ? Shall I linger any longer in this wretched state ? No ; if I tarry here I die. What then ? Is there no help, no hope ? None, except I turn. But is there any remedy for such woful misery ; any mercy, after such provoking iniquity ? Yes, as sure as God’s oath is true, I shall have pardon and mercy yet, if immediately, and unfeignedly, and unreservedly, I turn by Christ to him.

I thank thee upon the bended knees of my soul, O most merciful Jehovah, that thy patience hath waited for me hitherto ; for, hadst thou taken me away in this state, I had perished for ever. And now I adore thy grace, and accept the offers of thy mercy ; I renounce all my sins, and resolve by thy grace to set myself against them, and to follow thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

Who am I, Lord, that I should make any claim unto thee, or have any part or portion in thee ?

Yet, since thou holdest forth the golden sceptre, I am bold to come and touch. To despair, would be to disparage thy mercy; and to stand off when thou biddest me come, would be at once to ruin myself and rebel against thee, under the pretence of humility. Therefore I bow my soul to thee, and with all possible thankfulness accept thee as mine, and give up myself to thee as thine. Thou shalt be Sovereign over me, "my King and my God:" thou shalt be on the throne, and all my powers shall bow to thee; they shall come and worship before thy feet. Thou shalt be my portion, O Lord, and I will rest in thee.

Thou callest for my heart. O that it were any way fit for thine acceptance. I am unworthy, O Lord, everlastingly unworthy to be thine; but since thou wilt have it so, I freely give up my heart to thee: take it; it is thine: O that it were better. But, Lord, I put it into thine hand, who alone canst mend it: mould it after thine own heart; make it as thou wouldst have it, holy, humble, heavenly, soft, tender, flexible; and write thy law upon it.

"Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly;" enter in triumphantly: take me up to thee for ever: I give up myself to thee; I come to thee as the only way to the Father, as the only Mediator, the means ordained to bring me to God. I have destroyed myself, but in thee is my help; "save, Lord, or I perish." I come to thee worthy to die and to be damned. Never

was the hire more due to the servant, never was penny more due to the laborer, than death and hell, my just wages, are due to me for my sins. But I flee to thy merits; I trust alone to the value and virtue of thy sacrifice, and the prevalence of thy intercession. I submit to thy teaching; I make choice of thy government. "Stand open, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in."

O thou Spirit of the Most High, the comforter and sanctifier of thy chosen, come in with all thy glorious train, all thy courtly attendants, thy fruits and graces; let me be thine habitation; I can give thee only what is thine own already; but here, with the poor widow, I cast my two mites, my soul and my body, into thy treasury, fully resigning them up to thee, to be sanctified by thee, to be servants to thee. They shall be thy patients; cure thou their malady. They shall be thy subjects; govern thou their motions. Too long have I served the world; too long have I hearkened to Satan; but now I renounce them all, and will be ruled by thy dictates and directions, and guided by thy counsel.

O blessed Trinity: O glorious Unity! I deliver up myself to thee: receive me; write thy name, O Lord, upon me, and upon all that I have, as thy property; set thy mark upon me, upon every member of my body, and on every faculty of my soul. I have chosen thy precepts; thy law will I keep in mine eye, and study to obey it. According to this

rule do I resolve, through thy grace, to walk ; after this law shall my whole man be governed ; and though I shall not perfectly keep one of thy commandments, yet I will allow myself in the breach of none. I know my flesh will hang back ; but I resolve, in the power of thy grace, to cleave to thee and thy holy ways, whatever it costs me. I am sure I cannot come off a loser by thee, and therefore I will be content with reproach, and difficulties, and hardships here ; and will “deny myself, and take up my cross, and follow thee.” Lord Jesus, thy yoke is easy, thy cross is welcome : as it is the way to thee, I lay aside all hopes of worldly happiness ; I will be content to tarry till I come to thee. Let me be poor, and low, and despised here, so I may but be admitted to live and reign with thee hereafter. Lord, thou hast my heart and hand to this agreement : be it as the laws of the Medes and Persians, never to be reversed. To this will I stand ; in this resolution, through grace, I will live and die ; “I have sworn,” and will perform it, that “I will keep thy righteous judgments ;” I have given my free consent ; I have made my everlasting choice : Lord Jesus, confirm the contract. Amen.



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE MOTIVES TO CONVERSION.

THOUGH what is already said of the "necessity of conversion," and of the "miseries of the unconverted," might be sufficient to induce any considerate mind to resolve upon a present turning unto God; yet, knowing what a piece of desperate obstinacy and untractableness the heart of man naturally is, I have thought it necessary to add, to the means of conversion and directions for a covenant closure with God and Christ, some MOTIVES to persuade you to be reconciled to God.

Lord, fail me not now, at my last attempts. If any soul hath read hitherto, and is yet untouched, now, Lord, fasten on him, and do thy work; now take him by the heart, overcome him, persuade him, till he say, Thou hast prevailed, for thou art stronger than I. Lord, didst not thou make me a fisher of men, and have I toiled all this while and caught nothing? Alas, that I should have spent my strength for naught! and now I am casting my last; Lord Jesus, stand thou upon the shore, and direct how and where I shall spread my net; and let me so enclose with arguments the souls I seek, that they may not be able to get out. Now, Lord, for a multitude of souls; now for a full draught. O

Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me this once, O God.

But I turn me unto you.

Men and brethren, heaven and earth call upon you; yea, hell itself preaches the doctrine of repentance unto you. The ministers of the churches labor for you. The angels of heaven wait for you, for your repenting and turning unto God. O sinner, why should devils laugh at thy destruction, and deride thy misery, and sport themselves with thy folly? This will be thy case, except thou turn. And were it not better thou shouldst be a joy to angels, than a laughing-stock and sport for devils? Verily, if thou wouldst but come in, the heavenly hosts would take up their anthems and sing, "Glory to God in the highest;" the morning stars would sing together, and all the sons of God shout for joy, and celebrate this new creation as they did the first. Thy repentance would, as it were, make a holiday in heaven, and the glorious spirits would rejoice, in that there is a new brother added to their society, another heir born to the Lord, and the lost son received safe and sound. The true penitent's tears are indeed the wine that maketh glad both God and man.

If it be little that men and angels would rejoice at thy conversion, know thou that God himself would "rejoice over thee, even with singing," and "rest in his love." Never did Jacob with such joy

weep over the neck of his Joseph, as thy heavenly Father would rejoice over thee upon thy coming to him. Look over the story of the Prodigal Son. Methinks I see how the aged father lays aside his state and forgetteth his years; behold, how he runneth! O the haste that mercy makes: the sinner makes not half that speed. Methinks I see how his bowels move, how his compassions yearn. How quick-sighted is love! Mercy spies him a great way off; forgets his riotous courses, unnatural rebellion, horrid unthankfulness—not a word of these—and receives him with open arms, clasps him about his neck, kisses him; calls for the fatted calf, the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the best cheer in heaven's store, the best attire in heaven's wardrobe. Yea, the joy cannot be held in his own breast. Others must be called to participate. The friends sympathize; but none knows the joy the father has in his new-born son, whom he hath received from the dead. Methinks I hear the music at a distance. O the melody of the heavenly choristers! I cannot learn the song, Rev. 14 : 3, but methinks I overhear the burden; at which all the harmonious choir with one consent strike sweetly in: "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." I need not farther explain the parable: God is the father: Christ is the provision; his righteousness the robe; his grace the ornaments; ministers, saints, and angels, the friends and ser-

vants ; and thou that readest, if thou wilt but unfeignedly repent and turn, the welcome prodigal, the happy instance of this grace, the blessed subject of this joy and love.

O rock ; O adamant ! What, not moved yet ; not yet resolved to turn forthwith and to close with mercy ? I will try thee yet once again. If one were sent to thee from the dead, wouldst thou be persuaded ? Why, hear the voice from the dead, from the damned, crying to thee that thou shouldst repent : “ I pray thee that thou wouldst send him to my father’s house ; for I have five brethren ; that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment : if one went to them from the dead, they will repent.” Hear, O man ; thy predecessors in impenitence preach to thee from the infernal flames, that thou shouldst repent. O look down into the bottomless pit ; seest thou how the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever ? What thinkest thou of those chains of darkness ? Canst thou be content to burn ? Seest thou how the worm gnaweth, how the fire rageth ? What sayest thou to that gulf of perdition ; wilt thou take up thine habitation there ? O lay thine ear to the door of hell : hearest thou the curses and blasphemies, the weepings and wailings, how they lament their follies and curse their day ? How do they roar and gnash their teeth ; how deep their groans ; how inconceivable their miseries ! If the shrieks of

Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, were so terrible, when the earth clave asunder, and opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and all that appertained to them, that all Israel fled at the cry of them, O how fearful would the cry be, if God should take off the covering from the mouth of hell, and let the cry of the damned ascend in all its terror among the children of men! And of all their moans and miseries this is the piercing, killing emphasis and burden, "For ever; for ever!"

As God liveth that made thy soul, thou art but a few hours distant from all this, except thou "repent and be converted."

O, I am even lost and swallowed up in the abundance of those arguments that I might suggest. If there be any point of wisdom in all the world, it is to repent and come in. If there be any thing righteous, any thing reasonable, this is it. If there be any thing that may be called madness and folly, and any thing that may be counted sottish, absurd, brutish, and unreasonable, it is this, "to go on in thine unconverted state." Let me beg of thee, as thou wouldst not willingly destroy thyself, sit down and weigh, besides what has been said, these following motives, and let conscience say if it be not most reasonable that thou shouldst "repent and turn."

1. *The God that made thee, most graciously invites thee.* His most sweet and merciful nature invites thee. O the kindness of God, his boundless

compassion, his tender mercies! As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways above our ways, and his thoughts above our thoughts. "He is full of compassion, and gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy." This is a great argument to persuade sinners to come in: "Turn unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil."

If God would not repent of the evil, it would be some discouragement to our repenting. If there were no hope of mercy, it would be no wonder that rebels should stand out; but never had subjects such a gracious prince, such pity, patience, and clemency to deal with, as you have. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" Micah 7: 18. O sinners, see what a God you have to deal with: if you will but turn, "he will turn again, and have compassion on you; he will subdue your iniquities, and cast all your sins into the depths of the sea." "Return unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will return unto you." Sinners do not fail in that they have too high thoughts of God's mercies, but in that, 1. They overlook his justice. 2. They promise themselves mercy out of God's way. His mercies are beyond all imagination; great mercies, manifold mercies, Neh. 9: 19, tender mercies, sure mercies, everlasting mercies; and all is thy own, if thou wilt but turn. Art thou willing

to come in? The Lord hath laid aside his terror and erected a throne of grace. He holds forth the golden sceptre: touch and live. Would a merciful man slay his enemy when prostrate at his feet, acknowledging his wrong, begging pardon, and offering to enter with him into a covenant of peace? Much less will the merciful God. Study his name. Exodus 34: 7. "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Also read experience, Neh. 9: 17.

His soul-encouraging calls and promises invite thee. Ah, what an earnest suitor is mercy to thee; how lovingly, how instantly, it calleth after thee; how earnestly it wooeth thee! "Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever; only acknowledge thine iniquity. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; return, and I will heal thy backslidings. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return unto me, saith the Lord." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that he turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All the transgressions

that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live. Repent, and turn you from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye."

O melting, gracious words: the voice of God, and not of a man! This is not the manner of men, for the offended sovereign to sue to the offending traitorous rebel. O how doth mercy follow thee, and plead with thee! Is not thy heart broken yet? O that "to-day you would hear his voice."

2. *The doors of heaven are thrown open to thee,* the everlasting gates are set wide for thee, and an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven is administered to thee.

Christ now addresses thee, and calls upon thee to arise and take possession of this good land. View the glory of the other world, as set forth in the map of the Gospel; get thee up into the Pisgah of the promises, and lift up thine eyes northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, and that goodly mountain; behold the Paradise of God, watered with the streams of glory. Arise and walk through the land, in the length of it, and in



the breadth of it; for the land which thou seest, the Lord will give it to thee for ever, if thou wilt but return. Let me say to thee, as Paul to Agrippa, "Believest thou the prophets?" If thou believest indeed, do but view what glorious things are spoken of the city of God, and know that all this is here tendered in the name of God to thee. As verily as God is true, it shall be for ever thine, if thou wilt but thoroughly turn.

Behold the city of pure transparent gold, whose foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones, whose gates are pearls, whose light is glory, whose temple is God. Believest thou this? If thou dost, art thou not beside thyself, that wilt not take possession when the gates are thrown open to thee, and thou art bid to enter? O ye sons of folly, will ye embrace the dunghill and refuse the kingdom? Behold, the Lord takes you up into the mountain, shows you the kingdom of heaven and all the glory thereof, and tells you, All this will I give you, if you will but return unto me; if you will submit to mercy, accept my Son, and serve me in righteousness and holiness. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe!" Will you seek and serve the world, and neglect eternal glory? What, not enter into Paradise when the flaming sword, which was once set to keep you out, is now used to drive you in? But you will say I am uncharitable, to think you infidels and unbelievers. What, then, shall I

think of you? Either you are desperate unbelievers, that do not credit it; or beside yourselves, that you know and believe the excellence and eternity of this glory, and yet do so fearfully neglect it.

Do but attend to what is offered you: a blessed kingdom, a "kingdom of glory," a "kingdom of righteousness," a "kingdom of peace," and an "everlasting kingdom." Here thou shalt dwell, here thou shalt reign for ever, and the Lord shall seat thee on a throne of glory, and with his own hand shall set the royal diadem upon thine head, and give thee a crown—not of thorns, for there shall be no sinning nor suffering there; not of gold, for this shall be viler than the dirt in that day; but a "crown of life," a "crown of righteousness," a "crown of glory," yea, "thou shalt put on glory as a robe," and shalt "shine like the sun in the firmament, in the glory of thy Father." Look now upon thy worthless flesh. This flesh, which is mere dust and ashes, shall be brighter than the stars. In short, thou shalt be made like unto the "angels of God," and "behold his face in righteousness." Look in now and tell me, Dost thou yet believe? if not, conscience must pronounce thee an infidel; for it is the very "word of God" that I speak.

But if thou sayest thou believest, let me next know thy resolution. Wilt thou embrace this for thy happiness? Wilt thou forego thy sinful gains, thy forbidden pleasures? Wilt thou trample on the

world's esteem, and stop thy ears to its flatteries, and wrest thee out of its embraces? Wilt thou be content to take up with reproach and poverty, if they lie in the way to heaven, and follow the Lord with humble self-denial, in a mortified and flesh-displeasing life? If so, all is thine, and that for ever.

And is not the offer a fair one? Is it not just that he should be damned that will go on and perish; when all this may be had by taking it? Wilt thou take God at his word; wilt thou let go thy hold of the world, and rid thy hands of thy sins, and lay hold on eternal life? If not, let conscience tell thee whether thou art not beside thyself, that thou shouldst neglect so happy a choice, by which thou mightest be made happy for ever.

3. God will settle *unspeakable privileges at present* upon thee. Though the full of your blessedness shall be reserved till hereafter, yet God will give you no little things in hand. He will redeem you from your thralldom. He will pluck you from the paw of the lion. The serpent shall bruise thy heel, but thou shalt bruise his head. He shall deliver you from this present evil world. Prosperity shall not destroy you; adversity shall not separate him and you. He will redeem you from the power of the grave, and make the king of terrors a messenger of peace to you. He will take out the curse from the cross, and make affliction the refining-pot, the fan, the medicine, to blow off the chaff, purify the

metal, and cleanse the mind. He will save you from the arrest of the law, and turn the curse into a blessing to you. He hath the keys of hell and of death, and shutteth and no man openeth, and he will shut its mouth, as once he did the lions', that you shall not be hurt of the second death.

Besides, he will not only save you from misery, but install you into unspeakable prerogatives. He will bestow himself upon you; he will be a friend and a father unto you. He will be a sun and a shield to you. In a word, he will be a God to you. And what can be said more? What may you expect that a God should do for you, and be to you? *That he will be, that he will do.* She that marries a prince expects he should do for her like a prince, that she may live in suitable state, and have an answerable dowry: he that hath a king for his father or a friend, expects he should do for him like a king. Alas, the kings and monarchs of the earth, so much above you, are but like the painted butterflies amongst the rest of their kind, or the fair colored palmer-worm amongst the rest of the worms, if compared with God. As he infinitely exceeds the glory and power of his glittering dust, so he will, beyond all proportion, exceed in doing for his favorites whatever princes can do for theirs. He will "give you grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from you." He will take you for his sons and daughters, and make you heirs of his

promises, and establish his everlasting covenant with you. He will justify you from all that law, conscience, and Satan can charge upon you. He will give you free access into his presence, and accept your person, and receive your prayers. He will abide in you, and hold a constant and friendly communion with you. His ear shall be open, his door open, his store open, at all times to you. His blessing shall rest upon you, and he will make your enemies to serve you, and work out "all things for good unto you."

4. The terms of mercy are *brought as low as possible* to you. God has stooped as low to sinners as with honor he can. He will not be the author of sin, nor stain the glory of his holiness: and how could he come lower than he has, unless he should do this?

God does not impose any thing unreasonable or impossible, as a condition of life, upon you. Two things were necessary to be done, according to the tenor of the first covenant. 1. That we should fully satisfy the demands of justice for past offences. 2. That we should perform personally, perfectly, and perpetually, the whole law for the time to come. By our sins we render salvation through either of these ways impossible. But behold God's gracious provision in both. He does not insist upon satisfaction: he is content to take of the Surety, and he of his own providing too, what he might

have exacted from you. "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." He declares himself to have received a ransom; and that he expects nothing but that you should accept his Son, "who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" and he shall be righteousness and redemption to you, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness." If you come in Christ, and set your heart to please him, making this your chief concern, he will graciously accept you.

O consider the condescension of your God; let me say to you, as Naaman's servant to him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean!" If God had demanded some terrible, some severe and rigorous thing of you, to escape eternal damnation, would you not have done it? Suppose it had been to spend all your days in sorrow in some howling wilderness, or pine with famine, would you not have thankfully accepted eternal redemption, though these had been the conditions? Nay, farther, if God

had told you that you should burn in the fire for millions of ages, or be so long tormented in hell, would you not have accepted it? Alas, all these are not so much as one grain of sand in the glass of eternity. If your offended Creator should have holden you but one year upon the rack, and then bidden you come and forsake your sins, accept Christ, and serve him a few years in self-denial, or lie in this case for ever and ever; do you think you should have hesitated at the offer, and disputed the terms, and have been unresolved whether you were to accept of the proposal? O sinner, return and live; why shouldst thou die when life is to be had for taking, when mercy entreats thee to be saved? Couldst thou say, "Lord, I knew thee, that thou wast a hard man," even then thou wouldst have had no excuse; but when the God of heaven has stooped so low, and condescended so far, if still thou stand off, who shall plead for thee?

*Objection.* Notwithstanding all the advantages of the new covenant, I am unable to repent and believe, and so comply with its conditions.

*Answer.* These you may perform by God's grace enabling; but let the next consideration serve for a fuller answer.

5. *God doth offer all needed grace to enable you.* "I have stretched out mine hand, and no man regarded." What though you are plunged into the ditch of that misery from which you can never get

out? Christ offereth to help you out; he reacheth out his hand to you; and if you perish, it is for refusing his help. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man open to me, I will come in." What though you are poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked? Christ offereth a cure for your blindness, a covering for your nakedness, riches for your poverty; he tenders you his righteousness, his grace: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and anoint thy eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see." Do you say, The condition is impossible; for I have not wherewith to buy? You must know that this buying is "without money and without price." This buying is by begging and seeking with your whole heart. God commandeth thee to know him, and to fear him. Dost thou say, Yea, but my mind is blinded, and my heart is hardened from his fear? I answer, God doth offer to enlighten thy mind, and to teach thee his fear. So that now, if men live in ignorance and estrangement from the Lord, it is because they will not understand and desire the knowledge of his ways. "If thou criest after knowledge, if thou seekest her as silver, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God." Is not here a fair offer? "Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you." Though of yourselves you can do nothing,



yet you may do all through his Spirit enabling you, and he offers assistance to you. God bids you "wash and make you clean." You say you are unable, as much as the leopard to wash out his spots. Yea, but the Lord doth offer to cleanse you; so that if you are filthy still, it is through your own wilfulness; "I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged." "O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?" God invites you to be made clean, and entreats you to yield to him. O accept his offers, and let him do for you, and in you, what you cannot do for yourselves.

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## CONCLUSION.

And now, beloved, let me know your mind; what do you intend to do? Will you go on and die, or will you turn and lay hold on eternal life? How long will ye linger in Sodom? "How long will ye halt between two opinions?" Have you not yet resolved whether Christ or Barabbas, whether bliss or torment, whether this vain and wretched world, or the paradise of God, be the better choice? Is it a disputable case whether the Abana and Pharpar of Damascus be better than all the streams of Eden; or whether the vile pool of sin is to be preferred before the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding

out of the throne of God and of the Lamb? Can the world in good earnest do that for you which Christ can? Will it stand by you to eternity? Will pleasures, lands, titles, and treasures descend with you? If not, had you not need look after something that will? What mean you to stand wavering? Shall I leave you at last, like Agrippa, only almost persuaded? You are for ever lost if left here; as good be not at all, as not altogether a Christian. How long will you rest in idle wishes and fruitless purposes? When will you come to a fixed, firm, and full resolve? Do not you see how Satan cheats you by tempting you to delays? How long hath he drawn you on in the way of perdition?

Well, put me not off with a dilatory answer; tell me not of hereafter; I must have your immediate consent. If you be not now resolved, while the Lord is treating with you and inviting you, much less are you like to be hereafter, when these impressions are worn off, and you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Will you give me your hand? Will you set open the door and give the Lord Jesus the full and ready possession? Will you put your name unto his covenant? What do you resolve upon? If you still delay, my labor is lost, and all is likely to come to nothing. Come, cast in your lot; make your choice. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation: to-day,

if you will hear his voice." Why should not this be the day whence thou shouldst be able to date thy happiness? Why shouldst thou venture a day longer in this dangerous and dreadful condition? What if God should this night require thy soul? "O that thou mightest know in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace, before they be hid from thine eyes!" This is thy day, and it is but a day. Others have had their day, and have received their doom; and now art thou brought upon the stage of this world, here to act thy part for thy eternity. Remember, thou art now upon thy good behavior for everlasting; if thou make not a wise choice now, thou art undone for ever. What thy present choice is, such must be thine eternal condition.

And is it true indeed? Are life and death at thy choice? Why, then, what hinders but that thou shouldst be happy? Nothing doth or can hinder but thine own wilful neglect or refusal. It was the saying of the eunuch to Philip, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" So I may say to thee, See, here is Christ, here is mercy, pardon, life; what hinders but that thou shouldst be pardoned and saved? One of the martyrs, as he was praying at the stake, had his pardon set by him in a box, which indeed he rightly refused, because upon unworthy terms; but here the terms are most honorable and easy. O sinner, wilt thou perish

with thy pardon by thee? Do but forthwith give thy consent to Christ, to renounce thy sins, deny thyself, take up the yoke and the cross, and thou carriest the day: Christ is thine; pardon, peace, life, blessedness, are all thine. And is not this an offer worth embracing? Why shouldst thou hesitate or doubtfully dispute about the case? Is it not past controversy whether God be better than sin, and glory than vanity? Why shouldst thou forsake thy own mercy, and sin against thy own life? When wilt thou shake off thy sloth, and lay by thine excuses? "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, thou knowest not" where this night may lodge thee.

Now the Holy Spirit is striving with you—he will not always strive. Hast thou not felt thine heart warmed by the word, and been almost persuaded to leave off thy sins and come to Christ? Hast thou not felt some motions in thy mind, wherein thou hast been warned of thy danger, and told what thy careless course would end in? It may be thou art like young Samuel, who, when the Lord called once and again, knew not the voice of the Lord; but these motions are the offers, and callings, and strivings of the Spirit. O take advantage of the tide, and know the day of thy visitation.

Now the Lord Jesus stretcheth wide his arms to receive you; he beseecheth you by us. How movingly, how meltingly, how compassionately he call-

eth. The church is put into a sudden ecstasy at the sound of his voice, "the voice of my beloved." O wilt thou turn a deaf ear to his voice? Is it not the voice that breaketh the cedars, and maketh the mountains to skip like a calf; that shaketh the wilderness, and divideth the flames of fire? It is not Sinai's thunder, but a soft and still voice. It is not the voice of Mount Ebal, a voice of cursing and terror, but the voice of Mount Gerizim, the voice of blessing and glad tidings of good things. It is not the voice of the trumpet nor the noise of war, but a message of peace from the King of peace. I may say to thee, O sinner, as Martha to her sister, "The Master is come, and he calleth for thee." Now then, with Mary, arise quickly and come unto him. How sweet are his invitations! He crieth in the open concourse, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." How bountiful is he! He excludeth none. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled. Forsake the foolish and live." "Come unto me, take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls." "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." How doth he bemoan the obstinate refuser! "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" "Behold me, behold me: I

have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious people." O be persuaded now at last to throw yourselves into the arms of his love.

Behold, O ye sons of men, the Lord Jesus hath thrown open the prison, and now he cometh to you by his ministers, and beseecheth you to come out. If it were from a palace or paradise that Christ did call you, it were no wonder that you were unwilling; and yet how easily was Adam beguiled thence; but it is from your prison, from your chains, from the dungeon, from the darkness, that he calleth you, and yet will you not come? He calls you unto liberty, and yet will you not hearken? His yoke is easy, his laws are liberty, his service is freedom, and, whatever prejudice you may have against his ways, if God may be believed, you shall find them all pleasure and peace, and shall taste sweetness and joy unutterable, and take infinite delight and felicity in them.

Beloved, I am loath to leave you; I cannot tell how to give you over. I am now ready to close, but I would see a covenant made between Christ and you before I end. What, shall I leave you at last as I found you? Have you read hitherto, and not yet resolved to abandon all your sins and to close with Jesus Christ? Alas, what shall I say; what shall I do? Will you turn off all my importunity? Have I run in vain? Have I used so

many arguments, and spent so much time to persuade you, and must I sit down at last in disappointment? But it is a small matter that you turn me off; you put a slight upon the God that made you; you reject the compassion and beseechings of a Saviour, and will be found resisters of the Holy Ghost, if you will not now be prevailed upon to repent and be converted.

Well, though I have called you long, and you have refused, I shall yet this once more lift up my voice like a trumpet, and cry from the highest places of the city before I conclude, with the miserable exclamation, "All is over!" Once more I shall call after regardless sinners, that, if it be possible, I may awaken them: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Unless you be resolved to die, lend your ears to the last calls of mercy. Behold, in the name of God, I make open proclamation unto you: "Hearken unto me, O ye children; hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not."

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall

live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. 55: 1-3.

Ho, every one that is sick of any manner of disease or torment, or is possessed with an evil spirit, whether of pride, fury, lust, or covetousness, come ye to the Physician; bring your sick; lo, here is he that healeth all manner of sicknesses, and all manner of diseases, among the people. Matt. 4: 23, 24.

Ho, every one that is in distress, gather yourselves unto Christ, and he will become a Captain over you. He will be your protection from the arrests of the law; he will save you from the hand of justice. Behold, he is an open sanctuary to you; he is a known refuge. Away with your sins and come in unto him, lest the avenger of blood seize you, lest devouring wrath overtake you.

Ho, every blind and ignorant sinner, come and buy eye-salve, that thou mayest see. Away with thy excuses; thou art for ever lost if thou continue in this state. But accept of Christ for thy Prophet, and he will be a light unto thee. Cry unto him for knowledge, study his word, take pains about religion, humble thyself before God, and he will teach thee his way, and make thee wise unto salvation. But if thou wilt not follow him, but sit down because thou hast but one talent, he will condemn thee for a wicked and slothful servant. Matthew 25: 24-26.



Ho, every profane sinner, come in and live. Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on thee; be entreated. O return, come. Thou that hast filled thy mouth with oaths and execrations, all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven thee, if thou wilt but thoroughly turn unto Christ and come in. O unclean sinner, put away thy whoredoms out of thy sight, and thy adulteries from between thy breasts, and give up thyself unto Christ, as a vessel of holiness, alone for his use; and then, "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Luke 7:47; Isa. 1:18; 4:7.

Hear, O ye drunkards, how long will ye be drunken? Put away your wine. Though you have rolled in the filthiness of your sin, give up yourselves unto Christ, to live soberly, righteously, and godly; embrace his righteousness; accept his government; and though you have been vile, he will wash you. Rev. 1:5.

Hear, O ye loose companions, whose delight is in vain and wicked society, to sport away your-time in carnal mirth; come in at Wisdom's call, and choose her and her ways, and you shall live. Prov. 9:5, 6.

Hear, O ye scorers, hear the word of the Lord. Though you make a sport at godliness and the professors thereof, though you have made a scorn of Christ and of his ways, yet even to you doth he call, to gather you under the wings of his mercy.

In a word, though you should be found among the worst of that black roll, 1 Cor. 6 : 10, yet upon your thorough conversion you shall be "washed, you shall be justified, you shall be sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Ho, every formal professor, thou art but a lukewarm Christian, and retest in the form of godliness. Give over thy halting; be throughout a Christian, and be zealous and repent; and then, though thou hast been an offence to Christ, thou shalt be the joy of his heart. Rev. 3 : 16-20.

And now bear witness that mercy hath been offered you. "I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that you may live." I can but entreat and warn you; I cannot otherwise compel you to be happy; if I could, I would. What answer will you send me with to my Master? Let me speak to you as Abraham's servant to Nahor's family, "And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me." O for such a happy answer as Rebecca gave them: "And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebecca, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? and she said, I will go." O that I had but this from you. Why should I be your accuser, who agonize for your salvation? Why should the passionate pleadings of mercy be turned into horrid ag-

gravations of your obstinacy and additions to your misery? Judge in yourselves; do you not think their condemnation will be doubly dreadful, that shall still go on in their sins, after all endeavors to recall them? Doubtless "it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, yea, for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for you!" Matthew 11 : 22, 24.

Beloved, if you have any pity for your perishing souls, close with the present offers of mercy. If the God that made you have any authority with you, obey his command and come in. If you are not the despisers of grace, and would not shut the doors of mercy against yourselves, repent and be converted; let not heaven stand open for you in vain; let not the Lord Jesus open his stores, and bid you buy without money and without price in vain; let not his Spirit and his ministers strive with you in vain, and leave you now at last unpersuaded, lest the sentence of condemnation go forth against you.

FATHER OF SPIRITS, take the heart in hand that is too hard for my weakness. Do not thou end, though I have done. A word from thy effectual power will do the work. O thou, that hast the key of David, that openest and no man shutteth, open thou this heart, as thou didst Lydia's, and let the King of glory enter in, and make this soul thy captive. Let

not the tempter harden him in delays ; let him not stir from this place, nor take his eyes from these lines, till he resolve to forego his sins, and accept of life on thy self-denying terms. In thy name, O Lord God, did I go forth to these labors ; in thy name do I close them. Let not all the time they have cost be lost hours ; let not all the thoughts of the heart, and all the pains that have been about them, be but lost labor. Lord, put thy hand upon the heart of this reader, and send thy Spirit, as once thou didst Philip to join himself to the chariot of the eunuch while he was reading the word. And though I should never know it while I live, yet I beseech thee, O Lord God, let it be found at the last day that some souls are converted by these labors ; and let some be able to stand forth and say, that by these persuasions they were won unto thee. Amen, Amen. Let him that readeth say,  
*Amen.*

THE END.



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