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ALARM

TO

UNCONVERTED SINNERS,

IN A

SERIOUS TREATISE ;

SHEWING,

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| I. What Conversion is not, and correcting some mistakes about it. | IV. The marks of the unconverted. |
| II. What Conversion is, and wherein it consisteth. | V. The miseries of the unconverted. |
| III. The necessity of Conversion. | VI. Directions for conversion. |
| | VII. Motives to conversion. |

By that faithful servant of Jesus Christ,

MR. JOSEPH ALLEIN,

Minister of the Gospel at Taunton, in Somersetshire.

Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

JOHN iii. 3.



HANOVER, N. H.

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TO THE READER

THAT WOULD BE SAFE AND HAPPY. Case B

IF it were only possible thou mayest live hereafter, and be called to account in another world for what thou dost in this, it would be thy wisdom to take the safest course, and not to run the constant hazard of being dragged by death to judgment before thou art prepared to meet thy Judge. But *another life*, and a *judgment to come*, are more than possible: there is an high probability, yea, as great a certainty as can with reason be expected, that death will not put an end to thy being; that thou shalt live after the return of thy body to the earth; and that then thou shalt be tried, and sentenced to such an happiness or misery, as will be incomparably greater than any thing, nay, than all thou didst ever feel or see, hear of or imagine. These weighty truths are taught and established in some measure by the light of nature, but much more clearly and firmly by the oracles of God in the holy scriptures. Besides what they say of the different states of separated souls, they plainly teach, and strongly assert, that God hath appointed a time in which he will judge the whole world, by the Mediator Jesus Christ; that that great Mediator, who is God as well as man, will descend from heaven, attended by its glorious inhabitants, with triumphant acclamations to his royal throne; that a mighty voice will cite all that

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ever dwelt on earth, to make their personal appearance : that that awaking and commanding summons shall be presently heard and obeyed by the dead, and they, with the quick then remaining alive, shall all stand before the judgment seat : that after a thoroughly searching and impartial trial, which will reach men's several talents, trusts, and opportunities of getting and doing good, and their most secret actions, words and thoughts, every one shall receive an unalterable sentence of absolution or condemnation : and that then, such as are approved and absolved, shall inherit an heavenly kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world, be like the angels, their delightful companions, converse with their most amiable and loving Saviour, beholding and partaking of his glory, yea, resemble, see and enjoy God himself in completed holiness and everlasting bliss ; and those, on the other hand, that are reprobated and damned, shall never be admitted into the regions of light, nor yet be favoured with a glimpse thereof, but suffer with devils, in the blackness of darkness for ever, the perpetual gnawings of the worm that dieth not, and the extreme torments of unquenchable fire.

Seeing then these things cannot be denied, thou must be guilty of such woful abuses of reason as far exceed all the extravagances of them that want it ; thou must be most grossly foolish, most unnaturally cruel to thine own soul, to thy whole self ; if thou dost not earnestly desire to be one of those

unto whom the Lord shall say, *Come ye blessed*, and not, *Depart ye cursed*; if thou dost not readily welcome, and diligently use, any proper helps for the avoiding of the heaviest, endless misery, and for the attaining of the purest, vastest, everlasting happiness. And such helps are now offered thee in this little book, which hath a taking tincture of the excellent author's flaming love to God, and useful charity to the souls of men. And now it is in thine hand, let me tell thee, it cannot be refused the reading, or read without doing what it so plainly teacheth, and affectionately urgeth, but at thy greatest peril. If thou wilt not be at a small expense of time and pains to read it over, if after the neglect of so many means of instruction this also be rejected, how justly mayest thou be *destroyed for lack of knowledge*? how soon may the *things which belong unto thy peace be hid from thine eyes*? A continued wilful want of *understanding*, is large ground for fear, lest *he that made thee should not have mercy on thee, and he that formed thee should shew thee no favour*. If thou readest, but dost not practise what scripture and reason so pathetically plead for, the *increase of thy knowledge will increase thy sorrow*, because it will aggravate thy sin; for *to him that knows his Lord's will, how and why to do good, and doth it not, but the forbidden evil, to him 'tis heinous, inexcusable sin, for which he is liable to be beaten with many stripes, and in constant dreadful danger of severer punishment*.

I hope therefore thou wilt peruse so short a discourse, and art not unwilling to do it in such a manner, as to grow acquainted with, and be persuaded to thy great duty, and, which is inseparable from it, thy greatest advantage. And that thou mayest not fail thereof, is the design of the following directions.

1. Pray in the name of Christ, as thou art and shalt be enabled, for the more effectual assistances of the Holy Spirit. Such is the corruption of our nature, that it utterly disables us to make a saving use of outward means, without inward aids. Unless the Spirit, by his powerful operations, work thee into a serious teachable temper, set home the attempts of God's messengers, and give them an efficacy far beyond their own, the most concerning truths, and weightiest arguments can never be so represented and enforced, as to overcome thy sensual, worldly inclinations, rescue thee from the dominion of sin and satan, and bring thee back to God. Thou must therefore pray, and that with becoming apprehensions of the great God, due regard to the gracious Mediator, - deep shame and sorrow for the sins thou confessest, ardent desires of all the grace thou beggest, and faithful improvements of such measures as thou hast already received. And if thou thus askest, with fervent importunity, and persevering constancy, thou wilt undoubtedly find that *God bade thee not seek his face in vain*; as our Lord warrants us to argue, Luke xi. If a man will not deny a friend what he is

importunate for, and if a father will grant his son what he asks and wants, much more will thy heavenly Father give thee the Holy Spirit for all needful purposes, to produce all those effects in thee that are truly necessary for thine eternal salvation.

2. Consider seriously what thou readest, and work it on thy soul as far as thou art concerned therein. Medicines for the body will operate, though they are not thought of; but spiritual remedies for the mind require its co-operation with them: the clearest explications, fullest proofs, and strongest motives about matters of nearest and greatest concernment, will not do the soul any good, unless by thinking it apply them, and extract their virtue; nor will the Spirit heal its lamentable diseases, if his influences be not answered with suitable endeavours. Work then as he works in and with thee; take into most serious consideration whatever is apt to promote thy recovery; lay those things closest to heart, which are likeliest to cure the hardness thereof; inculcate and urge them, and withal cry mightily unto him, *who is able and no less willing to help thee*, till thou feelest his gentle force, and comest to a conquering resolution, that thou must and wilt do as thou art advised; till thou dost not only assent to the course proposed, as fit to be taken, but art steadily determined, that it is best for thee, that it is absolutely necessary, and must effectually be prosecuted; that by the grace of God thou wilt thoroughly change thy heart and life, and so

escape from the greatest evil, and make sure of the chiefest good.

3. When thou hast seriously considered and resolved, proceed presently to practice, with all thy might, and without the least delay. 'Tis commonly a work of some time to alter the temper of the soul, and change the course of the life ; and according to God's usual methods, the longer thou hast been accustomed to do evil, the more time and pains will be requisite to break the force of stubborn lusts, to weaken and subdue vicious habits, and to gain those of grace and goodness ; to travel back the way thou hast gone wrong, and to get out of it, into the path of life. 'Tis well then if there be days enough before thee to do the *one thing needful*. To be sure, thou art not certain of an hour to spare ; the loss of so small a part may prove the loss of all. Besides, if thou puttest off thy reformation, though but for a little while, 'tis a sign thou dost not really intend it at all : for thou purposest, against conviction, to add sin to sin at present ; and how can that consist with an hearty design of growing good afterward ? Delude not therefore thyself with such a desperate cheat, but imitate the royal Psalmist ; when thou hast *thought on thy ways, turn thy feet unto God's testimonies : make haste, and delay not to keep his commandments*.

4. Remember that conversion unto God is but the beginning of thy duty, that thou must afterwards obey him all the days of thy life, and that there is no other way to preserve an

interest in his favour, and a right to the great expressions thereof. They are the largest and last discoveries of divine grace, that *teach thee to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts; to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; and, so doing, to look for the blessed object of thy hope*: they plainly enough warn thee against *drawing back unto perdition*; they threaten a *final rejection, if thou deniest thy Saviour in words or works*; and they oft direct and command thee to *seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well doing*; to be *faithful unto death, whatever it cost thee, that thy Lord may give thee a crown of life*. These may seem hard sayings, but they contain nothing like a reasonable discouragement. There is misery more than enough in hell, to necessitate a prevention by any temporary labours, wants and sufferings; and an abundantly sufficient happiness in heaven, to encourage a *stedfast perseverance in the work of the Lord*, though it were more harsh and grievous than sinners imagine. And even at present, religion is not without a reward; yea, thou wilt find it, if thou triest as thou shouldst, a reward to itself: when the main difficulties at first are over, thy duty will grow daily easier; it will have many pleasures mixed with it, and become at length itself the greatest: it will not abridge thy appetites of any desirable gratifications, but give them a new delicious relish of the fountain from which they flow: instead of the girds and twinges of a bad conscience, and dread of an after-reckoning, it will settle

peace within, and fill thee with comfortable reflections and joyful hopes; and a loving, thankful, praising obedience, will, by degrees, become thy sweetest employment. 'Therein thou mayest *draw still nearer to God, delight thyself in him, and receive from him the desires of thine heart*: thou mayest walk always in the *light of his countenance*, and feed on *his loving kindness, which is better than life*.

In short, before thou ascendest to heaven, thou mayest be in a heaven on earth, and find, by happy experience, that the way to have all thou canst wish hereafter, is to be, and do, what is best for thyself here.

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**AN EARNEST INVITATION TO
SINNERS TO TURN TO GOD, IN
ORDER TO THEIR ETERNAL
SALVATION.**

DEARLY beloved, and longed for, I gladly acknowledge myself a debtor to you all, and am concerned, as I would be found a good steward to 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 bowels are especially turned towards his dying child. The numbers of the unconverted souls among you, call for my most earnest compassions, and hasty diligence to pluck them out of the burning, Jude 23. And therefore to these, first, I shall apply myself in these lines.

But whence shall I fetch my arguments, or how shall I choose my words? Lord, wherewith shall I woo them? wherewith shall I win them? Oh, that I could but tell! I would write unto them in tears, I would weep out every argument, I would empty my veins for ink, I would petition them on my knees; verily (were I able) I would. Oh, how thankful I would be, if they would be prevailed with to repent and turn!

How long have I travailed in birth with you? how frequently have I made suit to you? how often would I have gathered you? how instant have I been with you? This is that

12 *Invitation to Sinners to turn to God.*

I have prayed for, and studied for, for many years, that I might bring you to God; Oh, that I might but do it! Will you yet be entreated? Oh, what a happy man might you make me, if you would but hearken to me, and suffer me to carry you over to Jesus Christ!

“But, Lord, how insufficient am I for this work! I have been many a year wooing for thee, but the damsel would not go with me. Lord, what a task hast thou set me to do? Alas! wherewith shall I pierce the scales of Leviathan, or make the heart to feel that is hard as a stone; hard as a piece of the nether-millstone? Shall I go and lay my mouth to the grave, and look when 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 scales, and prick the heart of the sinner. I can but shoot at rovers, and draw the bow at a venture; do thou direct the arrow between the joints of the harness, and kill the sin, and save the soul of a sinner, that casts his eyes into these labours.”

But I must apply myself to you, to whom I am sent: yet I am at a great loss. Would to God I knew how to go to work with you! would I stick at the pains? God knoweth, you yourselves are my witnesses, how I have followed you in private, as well as in public,

and have brought the gospel to your doors, testifying to you the necessity of the new birth, and persuading you to look in time after a sound and thorough change. Beloved, I have not acted a part among you to serve my own advantage: our gospel is not yea and nay. Have you not heard the same truths from the pulpit, by public labours, by private letters, and by personal instruction? Brethren, I am of the same mind as ever, that holiness is the best choice, that there is no entering into heaven but by the straight passages of the second birth, that without holiness you shall never see God, Heb. xii. 14. Ah, my beloved! refresh my bowels in the Lord. *If there be any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy.* Now give yourselves unto the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 5. Now set yourselves to seek him. Now set up the Lord Jesus in your hearts, and set him up in your houses. Now come in and kiss the son. Psa. ii. 12, and embrace the tenders of mercy, touch his sceptre and live; why will you die? I beg not for myself, but fain I would have you happy: this is the prize I run for, and the mark I aim at. My soul's desire and prayer for you is, that you may be saved, Rom. x. i.

The famous Lycurgus having instituted most strict and wholesome laws for his people, told them he was necessitated to go a journey from them, and got them to bind themselves in an oath, that his laws should be observed till his return. This done, he went

14 *Invitation to Sinners to turn to God.*

into a voluntary banishment, and never returned more, that they might, by virtue of their oath, be engaged to the perpetual observance of his laws. Methinks I should be glad of the hard conditions which he endured (though I love you tenderly) so I might but hereby engage you thoroughly to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved, would you rejoice the heart of your minister? Why then, embrace the counsels of the Lord by me: forego your sins: set to prayer: up with the worship of God in your families: keep at a distance from the corruptions of the times. What greater joy to a minister, than to hear of souls born unto Christ by him, and that his children walk in the truth! 2 John 4.

Brethren, I beseech you, suffer friendly plainness and freedom with you in your deepest concernments. I am not playing the orator, to make a learned speech to you, nor dressing my dish with eloquence wherewith to please you. These lines are upon a weighty errand indeed, viz. To convince, and convert, and to save you. I am not baiting my hook with rhetoric, nor fishing for your applause, but for your souls. My work is not to please you, but to save you; nor is my business with your fancies, but your hearts. If I have not your hearts, I have nothing. If I were to please your ears, I would sing another song. If I were to preach myself, I would steer another course: I could then tell you a smoother tale: I would make you pillows, and speak you peace: for how can Ahab love his Mi-

caiah, that always prophecies evil concerning him? 1 Kings xxii. 8. But how much better are the wounds of a friend, than the fair speeches of the harlot, who flattereth with her lips, till the dart strike through the liver, and hunteth for the precious life? Prov. vii. 21, 22, 23, and vi. 26. If I were to quiet a crying infant, I might sing him to a pleasant mood, and rock him asleep: but when the child is fallen into the fire, the parent taketh another course; he will not go to still him with a song or 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 forever. No conversion, no salvation: I 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 rock, 1 Sam. xvii. 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 the rulers of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12. This day let the Lord smite the Philistine, and spoil the strong man of his armour, and give me to fetch off 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, 1 Sam. xvii. 49, but the heart of the unconverted sinner, and smite him to the ground, with Saul

in his so happy fall, Acts ix. 4. Thou hast sent me, as Abraham did Eliazer, to take a wife unto my master, thy Son, Gen. xxiv. 4. But my discouraged soul is ready to fear the woman will not be willing to follow me. O Lord God of my master, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and shew kindness to my master, and send thine angel before me, and prosper my way, that I may take a wife unto thy Son, Gen. xxiv. 12, that as thy servant rested not till he had brought Isaac and Rebekah together, so I may be successful to bring Christ and the souls of my people together before we part."

But I turn me unto you. Some of you do not know what I mean by conversion, and in vain shall I persuade you to that which you do not understand; and therefore for your sakes, I shall shew *what this conversion is*. Others do cherish secret hopes of mercy, though they continue as they be; and for them I must shew the *necessity of conversion*. Others are like to harden themselves with a vain conceit, that they are converted already; unto them I must shew the *marks of the unconverted*.—Others because they feel no harm fear none, and so sleep upon the top of the mast; to them I shall shew the *misery of the unconverted*. Others sit still, because they see not their way out; to them I shall shew the *means of conversion*. And finally, for the quickening of all, I shall close with the *motives to conversion*.

CHAP. I.

SHEWING THE NEGATIVE, WHAT CONVERSION IS NOT, AND CORRECTING SOME MISTAKES ABOUT IT.

LET the blind Samaritans worship they know not what, John iv. 22, let the heathen Athenians superscribe their altar unto the unknown God, Acts xvii. 23, let the guileful Papists commend the mother of destruction, Hos. iv. 6, for the mother of devotion: they that know man's constitution, and the nature of the reasonable soul's operation, cannot but know that the understanding having the empire in the soul, he that will go rationally to work must labour to let in the light here. *Ignorantis non est consensus.* And therefore, that you may not mistake me, I shall shew you what I mean by the conversion I persuade you to endeavour after.

It is storied, that when Jupiter let down the golden chaplets from heaven, all of them but one were stolen; whereupon (lest they should lose a relic of so great esteem) they made five others so like it, that if any were so wickedly minded as to steal that also, they should not be able to discern which was it. And truly, my beloved, the devil hath made many counterfeits of this conversion, and cheats one with this, and another with that: and such a craft and artifice he hath in this mystery of deceits, that (if it were possible) he would deceive the very elect. Now, that I may cure

the damnable mistakes of some, who think they are converted when they are not, as well as remove the troubles and fears of others, that think they are not converted, when they are; I shall shew you the nature of conversion, both negatively, or what it is not, and positively, what it is.

We will begin with the negative.

1. It is not the *taking on us the profession of Christianity*. Doubtless Christianity is more than a name. If we will hear Paul, it lies not in word but in power, 1 Cor. iv. 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 are better Christians than they of Sardis and Laodicea? These were all Christians by profession, and had a name to live, but because they had only a name, are condemned by Christ, and threatened to be spewed out, Rom. iii. 1. 16. Are there not many that name the name of the Lord Jesus, that yet depart not from iniquity? 2 Tim. ii. 19, and profess they know God, but in works deny him? Tit. i. 16. And will God receive these for true converts, because turned to the Christian religion? What! converts from sin, when yet they do live in sin? 'Tis a visible contradiction. Surely if the lamp of profession would have served the turn, the foolish virgins had never been shut out, Matt. xxv. 3. 12. We find not only professors, but preachers of Christ and wonder-workers, turned off, because evil workers, Matt. vii. 22, 23.

2. It is not the being *washed in the laver of regeneration*, or putting on the badge of Christ in baptism. Many take the press-money, and wear the livery of Christ, that yet never stand to their colours, nor follow their leader. Ananias and Saphira and 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 sacrament's working grace *ex opere operato*?) and so every infant shall be regenerated, not only *sacramento tenus*, sacramentally, but really and properly. Hence men do fancy, that being regenerated already, when baptized, they need no farther work.

But if this were so, then all that were baptized in their infancy must necessarily be saved; because the promise of pardon and salvation is made to conversion and regeneration.

Acts iii. 19. 1 Pet. iii. 4. Matt. xix. 28, our calling, sanctification (as to the beginnings of it) or conversion, (which are but the same things, under different conceptions and expressions) is but the middle link in the golden chain, fastened to election at the one end, and glorification at the other; Rom. viii. 30, 2 Thes. ii. 13, 1 Pet. i. 2. The silver cord may not be broken, nor the connection between sanctification and salvation, between grace and glory, impiously violated, Matt. v. 8. If we were indeed begotten again, it is to an

inheritance incorruptible, reserved in heaven for us, and the divine power is engaged to keep us for it, 1 Pet. i. 5. And if the very regenerate may perish at last in their sins, we will no more say, that he that is born of God his seed remaineth in him, and that he cannot sin, 1 John iii. 9, i. e. unto death, nor that it is impossible to deceive the very elect, Matt. xxiv. 24.

And indeed, were this true, then we need look no farther to see our names written in heaven, than only to search the register, and see whether we were baptized : then I would keep the certificate of my baptism, as my fairest evidence for heaven, and should come by assurance of my gracious state with a wet finger : then men should do well to carry but a certificate of their baptism, under the register's hand, when he died, (as the philosopher would be buried with the bishop's bond in his hand, which he had given him, for receiving his alms in another world) 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 turned to the Christian religion, or to be baptized in infancy, this will fly directly in the face of that scripture, Matt. vii. 14, as well as multitudes of others. For, *first*, we will then no more say, *Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way* ; for if all that were baptized, and of true religion, are saved, the door is become heavenly wide ; and we will henceforth say, *Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that*

leadeth unto life ; for if this be true, whole parishes, yea, whole countries and whole kingdoms, may go in abreast ; and we will no more teach that the righteous is 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 make it, that there is little more necessary than to be regenerated in our baptism, and cry God mercy, and be absolved by the minister at our end ; 'tis more ado than needs to put ourselves to such running, and seeking, and knocking, and fighting and wrestling, as the word requires as necessary to salvation. *Secondly*, If this be true, we will no more say, *Few there be that find it* ; yea, we will rather say, *Few there be that miss it* : we will no more say, that of the many that are called *but few are chosen*, Matt. xxii. 14, and that even of the professing *Israel but a remnant shall be saved*, Rom. xi. 5. If this doctrine be true, we will 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 called a brother, (that is, a Christian) and 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. v. 11, vi. 9, 10.

But the Arminian 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. That there is an infallible con-

nection between regeneration and salvation, as we have already shewn, and I itch to be farther evidencing, but that 'tis against designed brevity. 2. Then men must be born again, which carries a great deal of absurdity in its very face. And why may not men be twice born in nature as well as in grace? why not as great an absurdity to be twice regenerated as to be twice generated? 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 (when men come to years) they are evidently unsanctified, they must be renewed again by a thorough and powerful change, or else they cannot escape the damnation of hell.— Friends and brethren, *be not deceived; God is not mocked*, Gal. vi. 7. Whether it be your baptism, or whatever else that you pretend, I tell you from the living God, that if any of you be prayerless persons, John xv. 14, or unclean, or malicious, or covetous, or riotous, or a scoffer, or a lover of evil company, Prov. xiii. 20, in a word, if you are not holy, strict, and self-denying Christians, Heb. xii. 14, Matt. xvi. 24, you cannot be saved except

you be transformed by a farther work upon you, and renewed again by repentance.

Thus I have shewed, that it is not enough to evidence a man to be regenerate, that he hath been baptized, effectual grace not necessarily accompanying baptism, as some have vainly asserted. But I must answer one objection before I pass.

Obj. *The sacraments do certainly attain their ends, when men do not ponere obicem, or lay some obstructions, which infants do not.*

Sol. I answer, It is not the end of baptism to regenerate. 1. Because then there would be no reason why it should be confined only to the seed of believers; for both the law of God, and the nature of charity, requires us to use the means of conversion for all, as far as we can have opportunity. Were this true, no such charity as to catch the children of Turks and Heathens, and baptize them, and dispatch them to heaven out of hand; like the bloody wretches that made the poor Protestants (to save their lives) to swear they would come to mass, and that they would never depart from it, and then put them forthwith to death, saying, *They would hang them while in a good mind.* 2. Because it presupposeth regeneration, and therefore cannot be intended to confer it. In all the express instances in scripture, we find that baptism doth suppose their repenting, believing, receiving the Hely Ghost, Acts viii. 37, Acts ii. 38, and x. 47, Mark xvi. 16. And to imagine that baptism was instituted for an end of which not one of the first subjects was capable, (for

they were all adult persons, and supposed to have faith and repentance according as they professed, and their children were not baptized till after them, in their right) were no little absurdity. Were this doctrine true, baptism would make disciples; but we find it doth bespeak them such before hand, Matt. xxviii. 19. 3. Because baptism being but a seal of the covenant, cannot convey the benefits, but according to the tenor of the covenant, to which it is set.

Now the covenant is conditional, therefore the seal conveys conditionally. The covenant requires faith and repentance, as the condition of the grand benefits, pardon and life, Acts xvi. 31, and iii. 19. And what the covenant doth not convey, but upon these conditions, the seal cannot. So that baptism doth presuppose faith and repentance in the subject, without which it neither doth nor can convey the saving benefits; otherwise the seal should convey contrary to the tenor of the covenant to which it is affixed.

3. It lies not in a *moral righteousness*.— This exceeds not the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and therefore cannot bring us to the kingdom of God, Matt. v. 20. Paul, while unconverted, touching the righteousness which is in the law, was blameless, Phil. iii. 6. None could say, Black is thine eye. The self justiciary could say, *I am no extortioner, adulterer, unjust, &c.* Luke xviii. 11. 'Thou must have something more than all this to shew, or else (however thou mayest justify thyself) God will condemn thee. I

condemn not morality, but warn you not to rest here. Piety includes morality, as Christianity doth humanity, and grace reason; but we must not divide the tables.

4. It consists not in *external conformity to the rules of piety*. 'Tis too manifest, men may have a form of godliness without the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Men may pray long, Matt. xxiii. 14, and fast often, Luke xviii. 12, and hear gladly, Mark vi. 20, and be very forward in the service of God, though costly and expensive, Isa. i. 11, and yet be strangers to conversion. They must have more to plead for themselves, than that they keep their church, and give alms, and make use of prayer, to prove themselves sound converts. No outward service but an hypocrite may do it; even to the giving all his goods to the poor, and his members to the fire, 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

5. It lies not in the *chaining up of corruption, by education, human laws, or the force of incumbent affliction*. 'Tis too common and easy, to mistake education for grace; but if this were enough, who a better man than Josiah? While Jehoiada his uncle lived, he was very forward in God's service, and calls upon him to repair the house of the Lord, 2 Kings xi. 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 on to idolatry.

6. In short, it consists not in *illumination, or conviction*: in a *superficial change, or partial reformation*. . An apostate may be a man

enlightened, Heb. vi. 4, and a Felix tremble under convictions, Acts xxiv. 25, and a Herod amend many things, Mark vi. 20. 'Tis one thing to have sin alarmed only by convictions, and another to have it captivated and erucified 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 wore it away, Gen. iv. 13, 14. Others think, that because they have given off their riotous courses, and are broken off from evil company, or some particular lust, and 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, Luke xiii. 24, and are not far from it, Mark xii. 34, and arrive to the *almost* of Christianity, Acts xxvi. 28, 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 this lion asleep, but they are at their vomit again. Who more religious than the Jews, when God's hand was upon them? Psal. lxxviii. 34, 35, but no sooner was the affliction over, but they forgot God, and shewed their religion to be a fit, ver. 36, 37. Thou mayest have disgorged a troublesome sin, that will not sit in thy stomach, and

have escaped those gross pollutions of the world, and yet not have changed thy swinish nature all the while, 2 Pet. ii. 20, 22.

You may cast the lead out of the rude mass into the more comely proportion of a plant, and then into the shape of a beast, and thence into the form and features of a man; but all the while it is but lead still. So a man may pass through divers transmutations, from ignorance to knowledge, from profaneness to civility, thence to a form of religion; and all this while he is but carnal and unregenerate, while his nature remains unchanged. . .

Application. Hear then, O sinners, *hear* as you would *live*, so *come* and *hear*, Isa. lv. 3. Why would you so wilfully deceive yourselves, or build your hopes upon the sand? I know he shall find hard work of it, 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 to cut off a putrified member from his well-beloved friend; which of force he must do, but with an aching heart, a pitiful eye, a trembling hand. But understand me, brethren, I am only taking down the ruinous house, (which will otherwise speedily fall of itself, and bury you in the rubbish) that I may build fair, and strong, and firm for ever. The hope of the wicked shall perish, if God be true of his word, Prov. xi. 7. And wert not thou better, O sinner, to let the word convince thee now in time, and let go thy self-deluding hopes, than to have death too late to 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 forementioned, are yet in your sins. Let your consciences 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. Oh look about you, and bethink yourselves of turning speedily and soundly. Set to praying, and to reading, and studying your own hearts ; rest not, till God hath made thorough work with you ; for you must be other men, or else you are lost men.

But if these be short of conversion, what shall I say of the profane sinner ? It may be he will scarce cast his eyes, or lend his ears 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 be civilized, and not converted ? Where then shall the drunkard, and glutton appear ? May a man keep company with the wise virgins, and yet be shut out ? shall not a companion of fools much more be destroyed ? Prov. xiii. 20. May a man be true and just in his deal-

ing, 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 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 as without God in the world? and of you, O wretched sinners, with whom God is scarce 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 else you shall never see God. Oh that you would take the warnings of God! In his name I once more admonish you, *Turn you at my reproof*, Prov. i. 23, *forsake the foolish and live*, Prov. ix. 6. *Be sober, righteous, godly*, Tit. ii. 12. *Wash your hands, ye sinners; purify your hearts, ye double-minded*, James iv. 8. *Cease to do evil, learn to do well*, Isa. i. 16, 17. But if you will on, you must die, Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

CHAP. II.

SHEWING POSITIVELY WHAT CONVERSION IS.

I MAY not leave you with your eyes half open, as he that saw men as trees walking, Mark viii. 24. The word is profitable for doctrine, as well as reproof, 2 Tim. iii. 16.— 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 harbour 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.

1. The *author*, it is the *Spirit of God*; and therefore it is called the sanctification of the Spirit, 2 Thess. ii. 13, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5. Yet not excluding the other Persons in the Trinity: for the apostle teacheth us, to bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that he hath begotten us again, 1 Pet. i. 3, and Christ is said to give repentance to Israel, Acts v. 31, and is called the everlasting Father, Isa. ix. 6, and we his seed, and the children which God hath given him, Heb. iii. 13, Isa. liii. 10. O blessed birth! Seven cities contended for the birth of Homer: but the whole Trinity fathers the new creature. Yet is this work principally ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and so we are said to be born of the Spirit, John iii. 8.

So then it is a work above man's power.

We are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, John i. 13 — Never think thou canst convert thyself: if ever thou wouldst be savingly converted, thou must despair of doing it in thine own strength, Jer. xiii. 23. It is a resurrection from the dead, Rev. xx. 5, Eph. ii. 1, a new creation, Gal. vi. 15, Eph. ii. 10, a work of absolute omnipotency, Eph. i. 19. Are these out of the reach of human power? If thou hast no more than thou hadst by thy first birth, a good nature, a meek and chaste temper, &c. thou art a very stranger to true conversion. This is a supernatural work.

2. *The moving cause is internal, or external.*

The internal mover is only free grace: Not by works of righteousness which we have done; but of his own mercy he saved us—by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5. Of his own will begat he us, James i. 18. — We are chosen and called unto sanctification, not for it, Eph. i. 4.

God finds nothing in a man to turn his heart, but to turn his stomach; enough to provoke his loathing, nothing to provoke his love.— Look back upon thyself, O Christian: take thy verminous rags: look upon thyself in thy blood, Ezek. xvi. 6. Oh! reflect upon thy swinish nature, thy filthy swill, thy once beloved mire, 2 Pet. ii. 22. Canst thou think, without loathing, of thy trough and draught? Open thy sepulchre, Matt. xxiii. 27. Art thou not struck almost dead with the hellish damp? Behold thy putrid soul, thy loathsome

members. Oh stench insufferable, if thou dost but scent thy own putrefaction ! Psa. xiv.

3. Behold thy ghastly visage, thy crawling lusts, thy slime and corruption. Do not thine own clothes abhor thee ? Job ix. 31. How then should holiness and purity love thee ? Be astonished, O heavens, at this ; be moved, O earth ! Jer. ii. 12. Who but must needs cry, Grace ! grace ! Zech. iv. 7. Hear and blush, you children of the Most High ; O you unthankful generation ! that free grace is no more in your mouths, in your thoughts : no more adored, admired, commended by such as you. One would think you should be nothing but praising and admiring God, whatever you are. How can you make a shift to forget such grace, or to pass it over with a slight and seldom mention ? What but free grace should move God to love you, unless enmity could do it, or deformity could do it, unless vomit or rottenness could do it ? How affectionately doth Peter lift up his hands ? *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again,* 1 Pet. i. 3. How feelingly doth Paul magnify the free mercy of God ? *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,* Eph. ii. 4, 5.

The external mover is the merit and intercession of the blessed Jesus. He hath obtained gifts for the rebellious, Psa. lxxviii. 18, and through him it is that God worketh in us what is well-pleasing in his sight, Heb. xiii. 21.

Through him are all spiritual blessings bestowed upon us in heavenly things, Eph. i. 3. He interceded for the elect that believe not, John xvii. 20. Every convert is the fruit of his travail, Isa. liii. 11. Oh, never was infant born into the world with that difficulty that Christ endured for us! How emphatically he groaneth in his travail! All the pains that he suffered on his cross, they were our birth-pains, Acts ii. 24, the pulls and throws that Christ endured for us. He is made sanctification to us, 1 Cor. i. 30. He sanctified himself (that is, set apart himself as a sacrifice) that we may be sanctified, John xvii. 19. We are sanctified through the offering of his body once for all, Heb. x. 10.

'Tis nothing then without his own bowels, 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 pangs and prayers. Hence the natural affection of a believer to Christ. The foal doth not more naturally run after the dam, nor the suckling to the dugs, than a believer to Jesus Christ. And whither else shouldst thou go? If any in the world can shew that for thy heart that Christ can, let them carry it. Doth satan put in, doth the world court thee? Doth sin sue for thy heart? Why, were these crucified for thee? 1 Cor. i. 13. O Christian, love and serve the Lord whilst thou hast a being; do not even the Publicans love those that love them, and shew kindness to those that are kind to them? Matt. v. 46, 47.

3. The instrument is either *personal* or *real*.

The *personal* is the *ministry*: *I have begotten you to Christ through the gospel*, 1 Cor. iv. 15. Christ's ministers are they, that are sent to open men's eyes, and to turn them to God, Acts xxvi. 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 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? Isaiah xxxvii. 23. Those are the servants of the most high God, that shew unto you the way of salvation, Acts xvi. 17. And do you thus requite them, O foolish and unwise? Deut. xxxii. 6. O sons of ingratitude, against whom do you sport yourselves? Against whom make you a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue? Isa. lvii. 34. These are the instruments that God useth to convert and save you; and do you spit in the face of your physicians, and throw your pilots over-board?—*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

The instrument *real* is the *word*: *We were begotten by the word of truth*: This it is that enlightens the eyes, that converteth the soul, Psa. xix. 7, 8, that maketh wise to salvation, 2 Tim. iii. 15. This is the incorruptible seed, by which we are born again, 1 Pet. i. 23. If we are washed, 'tis by the word, Eph. v. 26; if we are sanctified, 'tis through the truth,

John xvii. 17. This generates faith, and regenerates us, Rom. x. 17, James i. 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 this you must be converted: no other ordinary means but this. You that have felt its renewing power, make much of it while you live; be forever thankful for it: tie it about your necks, write it upon your hands, lay it in your bosoms, Prov. vi. 21, 22. 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*, Psa. cxix. 93. You that are unconverted, read the word with diligence, flock to it where powerfully preached, fill the porches, as the multitude of the impotent, blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water, John v. 3. Pray for the coming of the Spirit in the word. Come off thy knees to the sermon; and come to thy knees from the sermon. The seed doth not prosper, because not watered by prayers and tears, nor covered by meditation.

4. The *final cause* is *man's salvation* and *God's glory*. We are chosen through sanctification to salvation, 2 Thess. ii. 13, called that we might be glorified, Rom. viii. 30, but especially, that God might be glorified, Isa. lx. 21, that we should shew forth his praises, 1 Pet. ii. 9, and be fruitful in good works, Col. i. 10. O Christian, do not forget the end of thy calling; let thy light shine, Matt.

v. 16, let thy lamp burn; let thy fruits be good, and many, and in season, Psa. i. 3, let all thy designs fall in with God's, that he may be magnified in thee, Phil. i. 20. Why should God repent that he hath made thee a Christian, as in the time of the old world, that he made them men? Gen. vi. 6. Why shouldst thou be an eye-sore in his orchard, Luke xiii. by thy unfruitfulness? or a son that causeth shame, as it were, a grief to thy father, and a bitterness to her that bare thee? Prov. xvii. 25, and x. 5. O let the womb bless thee that bare thee, Prov. xvii. 21. *He that begets a fool doth it to his sorrow; and the father of a fool hath no joy.*

5. The *subject* is the *elect sinner*, and that in all his parts and powers, members and mind. Whom God predestinates them only he calls, Rom. viii. 30. None are drawn to Christ by their calling, nor come to him by believing, but his sheep, those whom the Father hath given him, John vi. 37, 44. Effectual calling runs parallel with eternal election, 2 Pet. i. 10.

Thou beginnest at the wrong end, if thou disputest first about thine election. Prove thy conversion, and then never doubt of thine election; or canst thou not yet prove it? set upon a present and thorough turning. Whatever God's purposes be, (which are secret) I am sure his promises 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, Acts iii. 19. If you mortify the deeds of the body you shall live, Rom. viii. 13. Believe and be saved, Acts xvi. 31.* 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. 'Tis just (as one well said) that they that 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 be 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 subject. A carnal person may have some shreds of good morality, a little near the list; but he is never good throughout the whole cloth, the whole body of holiness and Christianity: feel him a little further near the ridge, and you shall see him to be but a deceitful piece. Conversion is no repairing of the old building, but it takes all down, and erects a new structure: it is not the putting in a patch, or sewing on a list of holiness; but, with the true convert, holiness is woven into all his powers, principles, and practice. The sincere Christian is quite a new fabrick, from the foundation to the top-stone, all fire-new. He is a new man, Eph.

iv. 24, a new creature. All things are become new, 2 Cor. v. 17. Conversion is a deep work, a heart work, Acts ii. 37, and vi. 14, it turns all upside down, and makes a man be 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 an universal change within. *First*, It turns the *balance of the judgment*, so that God and his glory do weigh down all carnal and worldly interest, Acts xx. 24, Phil. i. 20, Psa. lxxiii. 25. It opens the eye of the mind, and makes the scales of its native ignorance to fall off, and turns men from darkness to light, Acts xxvi. 18, Eph. v. 8, 1 Pet. ii. 9. The man that before saw no danger in his condition, now concludes himself lost, and forever undone, Acts ii. 37, except renewed by the power of grace. He that formerly thought there was little hurt in sin, now comes to see it to be the chief of evils; he sees the unreasonableness, the unrighteousness, the deformity and filthiness that is in sin; so that he is affrighted with it, loathes it, dreads it, flies it, and even abhors himself for it, Rom. vii. 15, Job xlii. 6, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. He that could see little sin in himself, and could find no matter for confession, (as it was said of that learned Ignoramus, Bellarmine, who, it seems, while he knew so much abroad, was a miserable stranger to himself, that when he was to be confessed by the priest, he could not remember any thing to confess, but was fain to run back to the sins

of his youth) I say, he that could not find matter for confession, unless it were some few gross and staring evils, now sin reviveth with him, Rom. vii. 9, he sees the rottenness of his heart, and desperate and deep pollution of his whole nature : he cries, *Unclean, unclean*, Lev. xiii. 45. *Lord, purge me with hyssop, wash me thoroughly, create in me a new heart*, Psa. li. 2, 7, 10. He sees himself altogether become filthy, Psa. xiv. 3, corrupt, both root and tree, Matt. vii. 17, 18.— He writes unclean upon all his parts, and powers, and performances, Isa. lxiv. 6, Rom. vii. 18. He discovers the nasty corners that he was never aware of, and sees the blasphemy and theft, and murder, and adultery that is in his heart, which before he was ignorant of. Heretofore he saw no form nor comeliness in Christ, nor beauty, that he should desire him ; but now he finds the hid treasure, and will sell all to buy this field. Christ is the pearl he seeks, sin the puddle he loathes.

Now, according to this new light, the man is of another mind, another judgment, than before he was. Now God is all with him, he hath none in heaven nor in earth, like him, Psa. lxxiii. 25. He prefers him truly before all the world : his favour is his life ; the light of his countenance is more than corn, or wine, and oil, (the good that formerly he enquired after, and set his heart upon, Psa. iv. 6, 7.) Now, let all the world be set on one side, and God alone on the other ; let the harlot put on her paint and gallantry, and present herself to the soul, (as when Satan would have tempt-

ed our Saviour with her) in all the glory of her kingdoms, yet the soul will not fall down and worship her, but will prefer a naked, yea, a crucified, persecuted Christ before her, Phil. iii. 8, 1 Cor. ii. 2. Not but that a hypocrite may come to yield a general assent to this, that God is the chief good; yea, the wiser heathens (some few of them) have at last stumbled upon this: but there is a difference between the absolute, and comparative judgment of the understanding. No hypocrite come so far, as to look upon God as the most desirable and suitable good to him, and thereupon to acquiesce in him. This was 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 forever,* Psa. lxxiii. 26, Lam. iii. 24.

Secondly, It turns the *bias of the will*, both as to *means* and *ends*. (1.) *The intention of the will is altered,* Ezek. xxxvi. 26, Jer. xxxi. 33, Isa. xxvi. 8, 9. 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, Phil. i. 20. He accounts himself more happy in this than in all that the earth could yield, that he may be serviceable to Christ, and bring him glory in his generation. This is the mark he aims at, that the name of Jesus may be great in the world, and that all the sheaves of his brethren may bow to this sheaf.

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

(2.) The *election* also is changed, so that he chooseth another way, *Psa. cxix. 13.* He pitched upon God as his blessedness; and upon Christ as the principal, and holiness as the subordinate means to bring him to God, *John xiv. 6, Rom. ii. 7.* He chooseth Jesus for his Lord, *Col. ii. 6.* He is not merely forced into Christ by the storm; nor doth he take Christ for bare necessity, as the man begged from the gallows, when he takes the wife, rather than the halter; but he comes off freely in the choice. This match is not made in a fright, as with the terrified conscience, or dying sinner, that will seemingly do any thing for Christ, but doth only take Christ rather than hell; but he deliberately resolves, that Christ is his best choice, *Phil. i. 23,* and would rather have him to choose, than all the good of this world, might he enjoy it while he would. Again, he takes holiness for his path; he doth not, out of mere necessity, submit to it, but he likes and loves it; *I have chosen the way of thy precepts, Psa. cxix. 473.* He takes God's testimonies, not as his bondage, but as his heritage, yea, his heritage forever, *ver. 111.* He counts them not his burden, but his bliss; not his cords, but his cordials, *1 John v. 3, Psa. cxix. 14, 16, 17.* He doth not only bear, but take up Christ's yoke: he takes not holiness as the stomach doth the loathed potion, (which it

will down with 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, Job xxiii. 12, Psa. cxix. 82, 131, 162, 174, and lxiii. 5.

Put thy conscience to it as thou goest, whether thou art the man? O happy man, if this be thy case! But see thou be thorough and impartial in the search.

Thirdly, It turns the *bent of the affections*, 2 Cor. vii. 11. 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*, 1 Tim. i. 4, this is his prize, Phil. iii. 8, here his eye is, here his heart is. 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, Phil. iii. 13, 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, most prosperous. While carnal, he said, Oh, if I were but in great esteem, and rolled in wealth, and swimm'd in pleasure, if my debts were paid, and I and mine provided for! then I were a happy man. But now the tune is changed: Oh, saith the convert, if I had but my corruptions subdued, if I had such measures 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, Psa. cxix. 14. He delights in the law of the Lord, wherein once he had little savour. 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 scraps of by-time (nothing too often) was enough for his soul.— Now he gives over caring for the asses, and sets his heart on the kingdom. Now all the cry is, *What shall I do to be saved?* Acts xvi. 30. His great solicitude is, how to secure his soul. Oh, how he would bless you if you could but put him out of doubt of this!

His *fears* are not so much of suffering, but of sinning, Heb. xi. 25, 26. Once he was afraid of nothing so much as the loss of his estate, or esteem, the pleasure of friends, the frowns of the great: nothing sounded so terrible to him as pain, or poverty, or disgrace. Now these are little to him in comparison of God's *dishonour* or *displeasure*. How warily doth he walk, lest he should tread on a snare! He feareth alway, he looks before and behind; he hath his eye upon his heart, and is often casting over his shoulder, lest he should be overtaken with sin, Psa. xxxix. 1, Prov. xxviii. 14, Eccl. ii. 14. It kills his heart to think of losing God's favour; this he dreads as his only undoing, Psa. li. 11, 12,

Psa. cxix. 7. No thought in the world doth pinch him, and pain him so much, as to think of parting with Christ.

His love runs a new course. My love was crucified, (said holy Ignatius) that is, my Christ. *This is my beloved*, saith the spouse, Cant. v. 16. How doth Augustine often pour his loves upon Christ? *O eternal blessedness, &c.*

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 the gladness of my heart. Let me love thee, O the 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, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. The view of his sins, the sight of a Christ crucified, that would scarce stir him before, now how much do they affect his heart!

His hatred boils, his anger burns against sin, Psa. cxix. 104. He hath no patience with himself; he calls himself fool, and beast, and thinks any name too good for himself, when his indignation is stirred up against sin, Psa. lxxiii. 22, Prov. xxx. 2. He could once swill in it with too much pleasure; now he loathes the thought of returning to it, as much as of licking up the filthiest vomit.

Commune then with thine own heart, and attend the common and general current of thine affections, whether it be towards God in Christ above all other concernments. Indeed, sudden and strong commotions of the affections and sensitive part are oftentimes found in hypocrites, especially where the natural constitution leads thereunto; and contrarywise, the sanctified themselves are many times without sensible stirrings of the affections, where the temper is more slow, dry, and dull. The great inquiry is, whether the judgment and will be standingly determined for God, above all other good, real or apparent; 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 utensils of Christ's living temple, Rom. vi. 16, 1 Cor. iii. 16. He that before made, as it were, a bawd or a barrel of his body, now possesseth his vessel in sanctification and honour, in temperance, chastity and sobriety, and dedicated to the Lord, 1 Thes. iv. 4, Gal. v. 22, 23, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

The *eye* that was once a wandering eye, a wanton eye, a haughty, a covetous eye, is now employed, as Mary, in weeping over her sins, Luke vii. 38, in beholding God in his works, Psa. viii. 3, in reading his word, Acts viii. 30, in looking up and down for objects of mercy, and opportunities for his service.

The *ear* that was once open to satan's call, and that (like a vitiated palate) did relish nothing so much as filthy, at least frothy talk, and the fool's laughter, is now bored to the door of Christ's house, and open to his discipline: it saith, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*: it cries with him, *Veniat verbum domini*, and waits for his word as the rain, and relisheth them more than the appointed food, Job xxiii. 12, than the honey and the honey-comb, Psal. xix. 10.

The *head*, that was the shop of worldly designs, is now filled with other matters, and set on the study of God's will, Psal. i. 2, and cxix. 97, and the man beats his head, not so much about his gain, but about his duty. The thoughts and cares that now fill his head are principally how he may please God and fly sin.

His *heart*, that was a sty of filthy lusts, is now become an altar of incense, where the fire of divine love is ever kept in, and whence the daily sacrifice of prayer and praises, and sweet incense of holy desires, ejaculations and anhelations are continually ascending. Psal. cviii. 1, cxix. 20, and cxxxix. 17, 18.

The *mouth* is become a well of life, his tongue as choice silver, and his lips feed many. Now the salt of grace hath seasoned his speech, and eaten out the corruption, Col. iv. 6, and cleansed the mouth from his filthy communication, flattery, boasting, railing, lying, swearing, backbiting, that once came like the flashes proceeding from the hell that was in the heart, James iii. 6, 7. The threat,

that was once an open sepulchre, Rom. iii. 13, now sends forth the sweet breath of prayer and holy discourse; and the man speaks another tongue, in 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 shall have the hypocrite halting. 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. xxiii. 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; you may trace him in his secret haunts, and his footsteps will be found in some by-paths of sin. The work is not throughout with him.

3. Throughout the *motions*, or the *life* and *practice*. The new man takes a new course, Eph. ii. 2, 3. His conversation is in heaven, Phil. iii. 20. No sooner doth Christ call by effectual grace, but he straightway becomes a follower of him, Matt. iv. 20. When God hath given the new heart, and writ his law in his mind, he forthwith walks in his statutes, and keeps his judgments, Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

Though sin may dwell (God knows a wearisome and unwelcome guest) in him, yet it hath no more dominion over him, Rom. vi. 7, 14. He hath his fruit unto holiness, Rom. vi. 22, and though he makes many a blot, yet the law and life of Jesus is that he eyes as his copy, Psa. cxix. 30, Heb. xii. 2, and hath an unfeigned respect to all God's commandments, Psa. cxix. 6. He makes conscience even of little sins and little duties, Psa. cxix. 113.—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 tythe the mint and cummin, and neglect mercy and judgment, and the weighty matters of the law; he doth not pretend piety, and neglect morality, Matt. xxiii. 14. But he turns from all his sins, and keeps all God's statutes, Ezek. xviii. 21, though not perfectly, (except in desire and endeavour) yet sincerely; not allowing himself in the breach of any, Rom. vii. 15. Now he delights in the word, and sets himself to prayer, and opens his hand, (if able) and draws out his soul to the hungry, Rom. vii. 22, Psa. cix. 4, Isa. lviii. 10. He breaketh off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor, Dan. iv. 27, and hath a good conscience, willing in all things to live honestly, Heb. xiii.

18, and to keep without offence towards God and men.

Here again you shall find the unsoundness of many professors, that take themselves for good Christians. They are partial in the law, Mal. ii. 9, and take up with the cheap and easy duties of religion, but they go not through with the work. They are as a cake not turned, half toasted and half raw. It may be you shall have them exact in their words, punctual in their dealings; but then they do not exercise themselves unto godliness; and for examining themselves, and governing their hearts, to this they are strangers. You may have 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 a road of 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 in vain, James i. 26. It may be they come up to closet and family prayer; but follow them to their shops, and there you shall find them in a trade of lying, or some covert and cleanly way of deceit. Thus the hypocrite goes not through-out in the course of his obedience.

And thus much for the subject of conversion.

6. The *terms* are either *from which* or *to which*.

1. The *terms from which* we turn in this motion of conversion, are *sin, satan, the world,* and *our own righteousness*.

First, Sin. When a man is converted, he is forever out with sin, yea, with all sin, Psa. cxix. 128, but most of all with his own sins, and especially with his bosom sin, Psa. xviii. 23. Sin is now the butt of his indignation, 2 Cor. vii. 11. He thirsts to bathe his hands in the blood of his sins. His sins set abroad his sorrows: it is sin that pierceth 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, Psa. xl. 12. 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 drunk 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, Isa. xxx. 22, 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 not only deeply convinced of the danger, but defilement of sin; and Oh, how earnest is he with God to be purified!—He loathes himself for his sins, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. He runs to Christ, and casts himself into

the fountain for sin and uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 1. If he fall, what a stir is there to get all clean again! He flies to the word, and washes, and rubs, and rinses, labouring to cleanse himself from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit: he abhors his once beloved sin, Psa. xviii. 23, as a cleanly nature doth the trough and mire, wherein he sees the swine delight.

The sound convert is heartily engaged against sin; he wrestles with it, he wars against it; he is too often foiled, but he never yields the cause, nor lays down the weapons, but he will up and to it again, while he hath breath in his body: he will never give quiet possession, he will make no peace, he will give no quarter; he falls upon it, and fires upon it, and is still disquieting of it with continual alarms. He can forgive his other enemies, he can pity them, and pray for them, Acts vii. 60, but here he is implacable, here he is set upon revenge; 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 a support to his esteem with carnal friends, yet he will rather throw his gain down the kennel, see his credit fall, or the flower of pleasure wither in his hand, than he will allow himself in any known way of sin, Luke xix. 8. He will grant no indulgence, he will give no toleration; but he draws upon sin wherever he meets it, and frowns upon it with this unwel-

come 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 thine 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 no 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 bond of iniquity.

Doth not thy unbridled tongue, thy brutish intemperance, thy wicked company, thy neglect of prayer, of hearing and reading 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 bird within tell them, there is such or such a way, that thou knowest to be evil, that yet for some carnal respect thou dost tolerate thyself in, and art willing to spare? If this be thy case, thou art to this day unregenerate, and must be changed or condemned.

Secondly, Satan. Conversion binds the strong man, spoils his armour, casts out his goods, turns men from the power of satan unto God, Acts xxvi. 18. Before, the devil could no sooner hold up his finger to the sinner, to call him to his wicked company, sinful games, 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 upon the top of his tongue, Acts v. 3. No sooner could satan offer a wanton object, but he was stung with lust. The devil could do more with him than God could: if the devil say, Away with these family duties, be sure they shall be rarely enough performed in his house: if the devil say, Away with this strictness, this preciseness, he will keep far enough from it: if he tells him, 'There's no need of these closet duties, he shall go from day to day, and scarce perform them. But now he is converted, he serves another master, and takes quite another course, 1 Pet. iv. 4. He goes and comes at Christ's beck, Col. iii. 24. 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 athwart him, lest satan should have some design upon him: he wrestles against principalities and powers, Eph. vi. he entertains the messenger of satan,

as men do the messenger of death : he keeps his eye upon his enemy, 1 Pet. v. 8, and watches in his duties, lest satan should put in his foot.

Thirdly, The World. Before a sound faith, a man 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, 2 Tim. iii. 4. Here is the root of man's misery by the fall ; he is turned aside to the creature, instead of God, and gives that esteem, confidence and affection to the creature, that is due to him alone, Rom. i. 25, Matt. x. 37, Prov. xviii. 11, Jer. xvii. 5.

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, John vi. 70, and viii. 44. A monster that hath his head and heart where his feet should be, and his feet kicking against heaven, and every thing out of place ; the world, that was formed to serve thee, is come to rule thee, and 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 in the throne, and the world at his footstool, Ps. lxxiii. 25, Christ in the heart, and the world under feet, Eph. iii. 17, Rev. xii. 1. So Paul, *I am crucified to the world, and the world to me*, Gal. vi. 14. Before this change, all the cry was, *Who will shew us any (worldly) good ?* But now he sings another tune, *Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and take*

the corn and wine whoso will, *Psa. iv. 6, 7.* Before, his heart's delight and content was in the world; then the song was, *Soul, take thine 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 he should desire it; and he tunes up, with the sweet Psalmist of Israel, The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, the lines are fallen to me in a fair place, I have a goodly heritage.* He blesseth himself, and boasts himself in God, *Psa. xxxiv. 2, Lam. iii. 24,* nothing else can give him content. He hath written vanity and vexation upon all his worldly enjoyments, *Eecl. i. 2,* and loss and dung upon all human excellencies, *Phil. iii. 7, 8.* He hath life and immortality now in chase, *Rom. ii. 7.* He trades for grace and glory, and hath a crown incorruptible in pursuit, *1 Cor. ix. 25.* His heart is set in him to seek the Lord, *1 Chron. xxii. 19,* and *2 Chron. xv. 15.* He first seeks the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof; and religion is no longer a matter by the by with him, but the main of his care, *Matt. vi. 33, Psa. xxvii. 4.* Now the gaudy idol is become *Nehushtan,* *2 Kings xviii. 4,* and he gets up and treads upon it, as *Diogenes* trampling upon *Plato's* hangings, saying, *Calco Platonis fastum.* Before, the world had the swaying interest with him; he would do more for gain than godliness, *1 Tim. vi. 6,* more to please his friend or his flesh, than to please the God that made him, and God must stand by till the world were first served; but

now all must stand by, he hates father or mother, and life, and all, in comparison of Christ, Luke i. 26.

Well then, pause a little, and look within : doth not this nearly concern thee ? Thou pretendest for Christ, but doth 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 encompassed 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 aims, love, and estimation, John ii. 15, James iv. 4.

With the sound convert, Christ hath the supremacy. How dear is this name to him ? How precious is its savour ? Cant. i. 3, Psa. liv. 8. The name of Jesus is engraven upon his heart, Gal. iv. 19, and lies as a bundle of myrrh between his breasts, Cant. i. 13, 14.— Honour 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, Matt. xiii. 44, 45. This is his glory, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, Gal. vi. 14, Cant. ii. 16. Oh ! 'tis sweeter to him to be able to say, Christ is mine, than if he could say, The kingdom is mine, the Indies are mine.

Fourthly, Your own Righteousness. Before conversion, man seeks to cover himself with his own fig leaves, Phil. iii. 16, and to lick himself whole with his own duties, Mic. vi. 6, 7. He is apt to trust in himself, Luke xvi. 15, and xviii. 9, and set up his own righteousness, and to reckon his counters for gold, and not submit to the righteousness of God, Rom. x. 3. But conversion changes his mind; now he casts away his filthy rags, and counts his own righteousness but a menstruous cloth; he casts it off, as a man would the verminous tatters of a nasty beggar, Isa. lxiv. 7. Now he is brought to poverty of spirit, Matt. v. 3, complains of, and condemns himself, Rom. vii. and all his inventory is, *Poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked*, Rev. iii. 17. He sees a world of iniquity in his holy things, and calls his once idolized righteousness but flesh, and loss, and dogs' meat, and would not for a thousand worlds be found in himself, Phil. iii. 4, 7, 8, 9. His finger is ever upon his sores, Psa. li. 3, his sins, his wants. Now he begins to set a high price upon Christ's righteousness; he sees the need of a Christ in every duty, to justify his person, and justify 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 the hand of Christ, and so he 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 life of a man in the heart; he is fixed in

Christ, as the roots of the tree spread in the earth, for stability and nutriment. Before, the news of a Christ was a stale and sapless thing; but now how sweet is a Christ! Augustine could not relish his before so much admired Cicero, because he could not find the name of Christ; how pathetically cries he, *Dulcissime, amantis. benignis. caris. &c. quando te videbo? quando satiabo de pulchritudine tua?* Medit. c. 37. *O most sweet, most loving, most kind, most dear, most precious, most desired, most lovely, most fair, &c.* all in a breath, when he speaks of, and to his Christ. In a word, the voice of the convert is with the martyr, *None but Christ, none but Christ.*

2. *The terms to which, are either ultimate or subordinate, and mediate.*

The *ultimate*, 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, Psa. cxix. 57. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord, Psa. xxxiv. 2. 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, Psa. lxii. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and xviii. 1, 2.*

Would you put it to an issue, whether you be converted or not? Now then, 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 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*, Esther. v. 3, what wouldst thou ask? Go into the gardens of pleasure, and gather all the fragrant flowers from thence; would these content thee? Go to the treasures of mammon; suppose thou mightst lade thyself as thou wouldst from hence: go to the towers, to the trophies of honour; 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 this, all this suffice thee, and make thee count thyself a happy man? If so, then certainly thou art carnal and unconverted. If not, go farther; wade into the divine excellencies, the store of his mercies, the hiding of his power, the deeps unfathomable of his all-sufficiency: doth this suit thee best, and please thee most? Dost thou say, *'Tis good to be here*, Matt. xvii. 4, here I will pitch, here I will live and die? Wilt thou let all the world go, rather than this? Then 'tis well between God and thee: happy art thou, O man! happy art thou, that ever thou wast born: if a God can make thee happy, thou must needs be happy;

for *thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God*, Deut. xxvi. 17. Dost thou say to Christ, as he to us, *Thy Father shall be my Father, and thy God my God?* John xx. 17. Here is the turning point. An unsound 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 idols, to the living God, 1 Thess. i. 9. Now says the soul, *Lord, whither should I go? thou hast the words of eternal life*, John vi. 68. Here he centres, here he settles: O! 'tis as the entrance of heaven to him, to see 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*, Psa. cxvi. 7, and it is even ready to breathe out Simeon's song, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace*, Luke ii. 29, and saith with Jacob, when his old heart revived at the welcome tidings, *It is enough*, Gen. xlv. 28, when he sees he hath a God in covenant to go to, *this is all his salvation, and all his desire*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Man, is this thy case? Hast thou experienced this? Why 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.

The *mediate* term of conversion is either *principal*, or *less principal*.

The *principal* is Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. ii. 5, his work is to bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii. 18. He is

the way to the Father, John xiv. 6, the only plank on which we may escape, the only door by which we may enter, John x. 9.— Conversion brings over the soul to Christ, to accept of him, Col. ii. 6, as the only means to life, as the only way, the only name given under heaven, Acts iv. 12. He looks not for salvation in any other but him, nor in any other with him; but throws himself on Christ alone, as one that should cast himself with spread arms upon the sea.

Here, (saith the convinced sinner) here 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 pitiful eyes of thy mercy. Entreat me not to leave thee, or to turn away from following after thee, Ruth i. 16. Here I will throw myself: If thou kick me, if thou kill me, Job xiii. 15, I will not go from thy door.

Thus the poor soul doth venture on Christ, and resolvedly adheres to him. Before conversion, the man made light of Christ, minded the farm, friends, merchandize, more than Christ, Matt. xxii. 5. Now Christ is to him as his necessary food, his daily bread, the life of his heart, the staff of his life, Phil. iii. 9. His great design is, that Christ may be magnified in him, Phil. i. 20. His heart once said, as they to the spouse, *What is thy beloved more than another?* Cant. v. 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, Phil. iii. 8.

All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert: he loves not only the wages, but the work of Christ, Rom. vii. 12, 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, and cross of Christ, Matt. xi. 28, and xvi. 24.

The unsound closeth by the halves with Christ: he is all for the salvation of Christ, but he is not for sanctification; he is for the privileges, but appreciates 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; 'tis an undoing mistake, of which you have been often warned, and yet none more common.—Jesus is a sweet name, but men love not the Lord Jesus in sincerity, Eph. vi. 24. They will not have him as God offers, *To be a Prince, and a Saviour*, Acts v. 31. They divide what God hath 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, they 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, 2 Kings v. 18. O! be infinitely tender here; your souls lie upon it. The sound convert takes a whole Christ, and takes him for all intents and purposes; without exceptions, without limitations, without reserves. He is willing to have Christ upon his terms, upon any terms. He is willing of the dominion of Christ, as well as deliverance by Christ; he saith with Paul, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* Acts ix. 6. Any thing, Lord. He sends the blank to Christ, to set down his own conditions, Acts ii. 37, and xvi. 30.

The *less principal*, is 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 love with them, and chuses them as its rule and guide forever, Psa. cxix. 111, 112.

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 estates, 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*, Psa. cxix. 112, 128, 137, 138. The mind is brought to love the ways of God; and the corrupt prejudices that were once against them, as unreasonable and intolerable, are now removed. The un-

derstanding assents to them all, as holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12. How is David taken up with these excellencies of God's laws? How doth he expatiate in their praises, both from their inherent qualities, and admirable effects? Psa. xix. 8, 9, 10, &c.

There is a twofold judgment of the understanding, *judicium absolutum, & comparatum*. The absolute judgment is, when a man thinks such a course best in the general, but not for him, or not under the present circumstances he is in; *pro hic, & nunc*. Now a godly man's judgment is for the way of God; and that not only the absolute, but comparative judgment; he thinks them not only 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, Psa. xix. 10.

His judgment is settledly determined, that 'tis best to be holy, that 'tis best to be strict, that it is in itself the most eligible course; and 'tis 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*, Psa. cxix. 127, 128. Mark, he did approve of all that God required, and disallowed of all that he forbade: *Righteous, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments. Thy testinonies that thou hast commanded, are righteous and very faithful. Thy word is true from the beginning,*

and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth forever, Psa. cxix. 86, 160, 162, 163. 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*, Psa. cxix. 124, 125, 169, and xxv. 4, 5. He would not have one sin undiscovered, nor be ignorant of one duty required. 'Tis 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 is willingly ignorant, 2 Pet. iii. 5, loves not to come to the light, John iii. 20.— He is willing to keep such or such a sin, and therefore is loth to know it to be a sin, and will not let in the light at that window. The gracious heart is willing to know the whole latitude and compass of his Maker's law, Ps. cxix. 18, 19, 27, 33, 64, 66, 68, 78, 108, 124. He receives with all acceptance the word that convinceth him of any duty that he knew not, or minded not before, or discovered any sin that lay hid before, Ps. cxix. 11.

(3.) *The free and resolved choice of the will is determined for the ways of Christ before all the pleasures of sin, and prosperities of the world*, Ps. cxix. 103, 127, 162. 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 off freely to the choice, Ps. xvii. 3, and cxix. 50. '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, 1 John v. 3, Ps. cxix. 60, 72. When the unsanctified goes in Christ's ways as in chains and fetters, he doth them naturally, Ps. xl. 8, Jer. xxxi. 33, and counts Christ's laws his liberty, Ps. cxix. 32, 45, James i. 25. *He is willing in the beauties of holiness*, Ps. cx. 3, and hath 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 life in the world. 1 Sam. x. 26. *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, Matt. iv. 22, and (though drawn) do freely run after him, Cant. i. 4, and willingly offer themselves to the service of the Lord, 2 Chron. vii. 16, seeking him with their whole desire, 2 Chron. xv. 15. 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 resolved for his service, and do it 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, Ps. cxix. 159, 163, 167, desire, ver. 5, 20, 40, delight, ver. 77, 92, 103, 111, 143, and continual study, ver. 99, 79, Ps. i. 2.

(4.) *The bent of his course is directed to keep God's statutes*, Ps. cxix. 4, 8, 167, 168.

'Tis 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 pitch of grace, till he were quite rid of sin, and had perfect holiness, Phil. iii. 11, 12, 13, 14.

Here the hypocrite's rottenness may be discovered. He desires holiness (as one well said) only as a bridge to heaven, and enquires earnestly, what is the least that will serve his turn; and if he can get but so much as may just bring him to heaven, this is all he cares for. But the sound convert desires holiness for holiness' sake, Ps. cxix. 97, Matt. v. 6, and not only for heaven's sake. He would not be satisfied with so much as might save him from hell, but desires the highest pitch: yet desires are not enough. What is thy way and thy course? Is the drift and scope of thy life altered? Is holiness thy trade, and religion thy business? Rom. viii. 4, Matt. xxv. 16, Phil. i. 20. If not, thou art short of sound conversion.

Application. And is this that we have described, the conversion that is of absolute necessity to salvation? Then be informed, 1. That straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life. 2. That there are but few that find it. 3. That there is need of a divine power, savingly to convert a sinner to Jesus Christ.

Again, then be exhorted, O man that readest, to turn in upon thine own self. What

saith conscience? Doth it not begin to bite? Doth it not *twitch* thee as thou goest? Is this thy judgment, and this thy choice, and this thy way, that we have described? If so, then 'tis 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 makest no bones of? 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 is performed there? Doth it not carry thee to thy family, and shew thee the charge of God, and the souls of thy children and servants that be neglected there? Doth not conscience lead thee to thy shop, thy trade, and tell thee of some mystery of iniquity there? Doth not it carry thee to the ale-shop, or to the sack-shop, and round thee in thine car for the loose company thou keepest there, the precious time thou mis-spended there, for the talents of God which thou throwest down this sink, for thy gaming and thy swilling, &c.? Doth it not carry thee into thy secret chamber, and read thee a curtain lecture?

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 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 this soul be required at thy hands.



CHAP. III.

OF 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 one lesson in your ears, *That you should repent and be converted*, Acts iii. 19. But I must say unto you, as Ruth to Naomi, *Entreat me not to leave you, nor to turn aside from following after you*, Ruth i. 16. Were it a matter of indifference, I would never keep so much ado: might you be saved as you be, 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 hopes to see one of your faces in heaven, except you be converted: I utterly despair of your salvation, except you be prevailed with to turn

thoroughly, and give up yourselves to God in holiness and newness of life. Hath God said, *Except you be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God?* John iii. 3. And yet do you wonder why your ministers do so plainly travail in birth with 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 an high pitch of some taller Christians; but every soul that is saved passeth this universal change.

It was a passage of the noble Roman, when he was hasting with corn to the city in the famine, and the mariners were loth to set sail in foul weather, *Necessarium est navigare, non est necessarium vivere*; our voyage is of more necessity than our lives. What is it that thou dost account necessary? Is thy bread necessary? Is thy breath necessary? Then thy conversion is much more necessary. Indeed this is the *unum necessarium*, 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, Matt. xiii. 46. Thy life is not necessary; thou mayest part with it for Christ, to infinite advantage. Thine esteem is not necessary; thou mayest be reproached for the name of Christ, and yet happy; yea, much more happy in reproach than in repute, 1 Pet. iv. 4, Matt. v. 10, 11. But thy conversion is necessary, thy damnation lies upon it: and is it not needful, in so important a case, to look

about thee? Upon this one point depends thy making or marring to all eternity.

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

I. *Thy being is in vain.* Is it not pity thou shouldst be good for nothing, an unprofitable burden on 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 thou art and wert created? Rev. iv. 11. Did he not make thee for himself? Prov. xvi. 4. Art thou a man, and hast thou reason? Why 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? To no other than that thou shouldst please thyself, and gratify thy senses? Did God send men, like the swallow, into the world, only to gather a few sticks and dirt, and build their nests, and breed up their young, and then away? The very heathens could see farther than this.—Art thou so fearfully and wonderfully made, Ps. cxxxix. 14, and dost thou not yet think with thyself, surely it was for some noble and raised end?

O man! set thy reason a little in the chair. Is it not 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 to 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*.

First, To no purpose. Man unconverted, is like a choice instrument that hath every string broke, or out of tune; the Spirit of the living God must repair and turn 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, Eph. ii. 10, Phil. ii. 13, Hosea vii. 14, Isa. i. 15. 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, Heb. ix. 14, Tit. i. 15.

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, Heb. v. 13. There are great mysteries, as well in the practices, as principles of godliness; now the unregenerate knows not the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xiii. 11, 1 Tim. iii. 16. You may as well expect him that never learned the alphabet, to read; or look for goodly music of 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, John vi. 45, taught to pray, Luke xi. 1, taught to profit, Isaiah xlvi. 17, taught to go, Hos. xi. 3, or else he will be utterly at a loss. (2.) He hath no *strength* for it. How weak is his heart? Ezek. xvi. 30, he is presently tired. The

sabbath, what a weariness is it, Mal. i. 13. He is without strength, Rom. v. 6, yea, stark dead in sin, Eph. ii. 5. (3) He hath no *mind* to it. He desires not the knowledge of God's ways, Job xxi. 14. He doth not know them, and he doth not care to know them, Ps. lxxxii. 5, 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 limn without colours or instrument, 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, unless dealt forth by the hand of 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 all along with holy desires, and faith in 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 the trees should speak, or look for logic from the brutes, or motion from the dead, as for any service, holy and acceptable to God, from the unconverted. When the tree is evil, how can the fruit be good? Matt. vii. 18.

Secondly, To bad purpose. The unconverted soul is a very cage of unclean birds, Rev. xviii. 2, a sepulchre full of corruption

and rottenness, Matt. xxiii. 27, a loathsome carcass, full of crawling worms, and sending forth a hellish and most noisome savour in the nostrils of God, Ps. xiv. 3. O dreadful case! dost thou not yet see a change to be needful? Would it not have grieved one to have seen the golden consecrated vessels of God's temple turned into quaffing bowls of drunkenness, and polluted with the idols' service? Dan. v. 2, 3. 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 the Holy of Holies served like the house of Baal, to have the image of God taken down, and be turned into a draught-house? 2 Kings x. 27. This is the very case of the unregenerate; all thy members are turned into instruments of unrighteousness, Rom. vi. 19, servants of sathan; and thy inmost powers into receptacles of uncleanness, Eph. ii. 2, Tit. i. 15. You may see the goodly guests within, by what comes out: *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, &c.* This black guard discovers what a hell there is within.

O abuse insufferable! to see a heaven-born soul abased to the filthiest drudgery; to see the glory of God's creation, the chief of the ways of God, the lord of the universe, a lapping with the prodigal at the trough, or licking up with greediness the most loathsome

vomit! Was it such a lamentation to see those that did feed delicately, to sit desolate in the streets; and the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, to be esteemed as earthen pitchers; and those that were clothed in scarlet to embrace dunghills? Lam. iv. 2 5.— And is it not much more fearful to see the only thing that hath immortality in this lower world, and carries the stamp of God, to become as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure? Jer. xxii. 28, (which is but a modest expression of the vessel men put to the most sordid use.) O indignity intolerable! better thou wert dashed in a thousand pieces, than continue to be abused to so filthy a service.

II. Not only man, but the *whole visible creation is in vain* without this. Beloved, 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 universe like the tongue in 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, Ps. cxlvii. and cxlviii. and cl. The Lord God expecteth a tribute of praise from all his works, Ps. ciii. 22. Now all the rest do bring in their tribute to man, and pay it in by his hand.— So then, if man be false and faithless, and selfish, God is wronged of all, and shall have no active glory from his works.

O dreadful thought to think of! 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 man should be guilty, at last, of robbing and spoiling him of the glory of all. Oh, think of this! while thou art unconverted, all the offices of the creatures to thee are in vain: 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 most powerful, tho' hidden influence, Judges v. 20, Hos. ii. 21, 22, do it in vain; thy clothes warm thee in vain; thy beast carries thee in vain: in a word, the unwearied labour, and continual travel of the whole creation (as to thee) is in vain. The service of all the creatures that drudge for thee, and yield forth their strength unto thee (that therewith thou shouldst serve their Maker) is all but lost labour. Hence the whole creation groaneth under the abuse of this unsanctified world, Rom. viii. 22, that pervert them to the service of their lusts, quite contrary to the very end of their being.

III. Without this, thy *religion is in vain*, James i. 26. All thy religious performances will be but lost; for they can neither please God, Rom. viii. 8, nor save thy soul, 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3, which are the very ends of religion. Be thy services never so specious, yet God hath no pleasure in them, Isa. i. 14, Mal. i. 10. Is not that man's case dreadful, whose sacrifices are as murder, and whose prayers are a breath of abomination? Isa. lxvi. 3, Prov. xxviii. 9. Many, under conviction,

think they will set upon mending, and that a few prayers and alms will save all 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, 2 Kings x. with Hos. i. 4. How blameless was Paul ? and yet being unconverted, all was but loss, Phil. iii. 6, 7. Men think they do much in attending God's service, and are ready to twit him with it, Isa. lviii. 3, Matt. vii. 22, and set him down so much their debtor, when (as their persons being unsanctified) their duties cannot be accepted.

O soul ! do not think, when thy sins pursue thee, 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 that having unspeakably offended thee, should bring thee his vomit in a dish to pacify thee ; or, having fallen into the mire, should think, with his loathed embraces, to reconcile thee.

It is a great misery to labour in the fire.—The poets could not invent a worse hell for Sisyphus, than to be getting the barrel still up the hill, and then that it should presently fall down again, and renew his labour. God threatens it, as the greatest of temporal judgments, that they should build, and not inhabit, plant, and not gather, and their labours should be eat up by strangers, Deut. xxviii. 30, 38, 39, 40. Is it so great a misery to lose our common labours, to sow in vain, and 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 thine hands, God will hide his eye; though thou make many prayers, he will not hear, Isa. i. 15. If a man without skill set about our work, and mar it in the doing, though he take much pains, we give him but small thanks. God will be worshipped after the due order, 1 Chron. xv. 43. 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, 2 Chron. xxv. 2.

IV. Without this, thy *hopes are in vain*, Job viii. 12, 13. *The Lord hath rejected thy confidences*, Jer. ii. 37.

First, Thy hopes of comfort here are in vain. 'Tis not only necessary to the safety, but comfort of your condition, that you be converted. Without this, you shall not know peace, Isa. lix. 8. Without the fear of God, you cannot have the comforts of the Holy Ghost, Acts ix. 31. God speaks peace only to his people, and to his saints, Ps. lxxxv. 8. If you have a false peace, continuing in your sins, 'tis not of God's speaking, and then you may guess the author. Sin is a real sickness, Isa. i. 5, yea, the worst of sickness; 'tis a leprosy in the head, Lev. xiii. 44, the plague in the heart, 1 Kings viii. 31. 'Tis brokenness in the bones, Ps. li. 8, it pierceth, it woundeth, it racketh, it tormenteth, 1 Tim. i. 10. A

man may as well expect ease, when his diseases are in their 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 have the poor sick man, saying in his lightness, he is well, when you see death in his face : he will needs up and about his business, when the very next step is like to be into the grave. The unsanctified often see nothing amiss ; they think themselves whole, and cry not out for the physician ; but this shews the danger of their case.

Sin doth naturally breed distempers and disturbances in the soul. What a continual tempest and commotion is there in a discontented mind ? What an eating 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 tympany ? 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, that 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 commandments, and nothing shall offend them, Ps. cxix. 165.* They are the ways of wisdom that afford pleasure and peace, *Prov. iii. 17.* David had infinitely more pleasure in the word, than in all the de-

light of his court, Ps. cxix. 103, 127. The conscience cannot be truly pacified, till soundly purified, Heb. x. 22. Cursed is that peace that is maintained in a way of sin, Deut. xxix. 19, 20. Two sorts of peace are more to be dreaded, than all the troubles in the world; peace with sin, and peace in sin.

*Secondly, 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, blasphemy in the bowels of 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, Job xviii. 14. Though thou mayest lean upon this house, it will not stand, Job viii. 15, but will prove like a ruinous building, which when a man trusts to, it falls down about his ears. (2.) There is desperation in it. Where is the hope of the hypocrite, when God takes away his soul? Job xxvii. 8. Then there is an end forever of his hope. Indeed, the hope of the righteous hath an end; but then 'tis not a destructive but a perfective end; his hope ends in fruition, others in frustration, Prov. x. 28. The godly must 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 now is my hope? He hath destroyed me, I am gone, and my hope is removed like a tree, Job xix. 10. The righteous hath hope in his death, Prov. xiv. 32, when nature is dying, his hopes are living; when his body is languishing, his**

hopes are flourishing; his hope is a living hope, 1 Pet. i. 3, to a lively 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,* Prov. xi. 7. *It shall be cut off, and prove like a spider's web,* Job viii. 14, which he spins out of his own bowels; but then comes death with the broom, and takes down 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,* Job xi. 20.—Wicked men are settled in their carnal hope, and will not be beaten out of it: they hold it fast, they will not let it go: yea, 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 let out thy soul, and thy hopes together. The unsanctified have hope only in this life, 1 Cor. xv. 19, 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 we shall prove God a liar. He hath told you, that so merciful and pitiful as he is, he will never save you notwithstanding, if you go on in ignorance, or a course of unrighteousness, Isa. xxvii. 11, 1 Cor. vi. 9. In a word, he hath told you, that whatever you be, or do, nothing shall avail you to salvation, without you be new creatures, Gal. vi. 15. Now, to say God is

merciful, and we hope he will save us nevertheless, is to say, in effect, we hope God will not do as he saith. We may not set God's attributes at variance : God is resolved to glorify mercy, but not with the prejudice of truth ; as the presumptuous sinner will find, to his everlasting sorrow.

Obj. Why, but we hope in Jesus Christ, we put our whole hope in God, and therefore doubt not but we shall be saved.

Ans. 1. This is not *to 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. 'Tis David's plea, *I hope in thy word*, Ps. cxix. 81, but this hope is against the word. Shew me a word of Christ for thy hope, that he will save thee in thine ignorance, or profane neglects of his service, and I will never go 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 text) *they will lean upon the Lord*, Micah iii. 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 they would stay themselves upon the God of Israel, Isa. xlviii. 1, 2, as a man would shake off the briars (as one said well) that cleave to his garment.

3. If thy hope be any thing worth, it will *purify thee from thy sins*, 1 John iii. 3, but

curst is that hope which doth cherish men in their sins.

Obj. Would you have us to despair?

Ans. You must despair of ever coming to heaven as you are, Acts ii. 37, that is, while you remain unconverted. You must despair ever to see the face of God, without holiness; but you must by no means despair of finding mercy, upon your thorough repentance and conversion; neither must you despair of attaining to repentance and conversion, in the use of God's means.

V. Without this, *all that Christ hath done and suffered will be (as to you) in vain*, John xiii. 8, Tit. ii. 14, that is, it will no way avail to your salvation. Many urge this as a sufficient ground for their hopes, that Christ died for sinners; but I must tell you Christ never died to save impenitent and unconverted sinners (so continuing,) 2 Tim. ii. 19. 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 can have no saving interest in the benefits of redemption. I tell you from the Lord, Christ himself cannot save you, if you go on in this estate.

First, It were against his *trust*. The Mediator is the Servant of the Father, Isa. xlii. 1, shews his commission from him, acts in his name, and pleads his command for his justification, John x. 18, 36, and vi. 38, 40. And God hath committed all things to him, entrusted his own glory, and the salvation of

the elect with him, Matt. xi. 27, John xvii. 2. Accordingly, Christ gives his Father an account of both parts of his trust, before he leaves the world, John xvii. 4, 6, 12. Now Christ should quite cross his Father's glory, 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.

1st, To overturn all his counsels: of which this is the order, that men should be brought through sanctification to salvation, 2 Thess. ii. 13. He hath chosen them, that they should be holy, Eph. i. 4. They are elected to pardon and life through sanctification, 1 Pet. i. 2. 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, mayest 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 will save one soul, but whom the Father hath given him in election, and drawn to him in effectual calling, John vi. 34, 37. Be assured, Christ will save none in a way contrary to his Father's will, John vi. 38.

2dly, To offer violence to all his attributes.
 (1.) *To his justice:* for the righteousness of God's judgment lies, in rendering to all according to their works, Rom. ii. 5, 6. Now, should men sow to the flesh, and yet of the Spirit reap everlasting life, Gal. vi. 7, 8, where were the glory of divine justice, since it should be given to the wicked according to

the work of the righteous? (2.) 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 is, in the eyes of God's holiness, worse than a swine, or viper, Matt. xxiii. 33, 2 Pet. ii. 22. Now, what cleanly nature could endure to have the filthy swine bed and board with him, in his parlour, or bed chamber? It would offer the extremest violence to the infinite purity of the divine nature, to have such to dwell with him. They cannot stand in his judgment, they cannot abide in his presence, Ps. i. 5, and v. 4, 5. If holy David would not endure such in his house, no, nor in his sight, Ps. ci. 3, 7, shall we think God will? Should he take men as they be from the trough to the table; from the harlot's lips, from the sty and draff, to the glory of heaven, the world would think God were at no such a distance from sin, nor had such dislike of it, as we are told he hath; they would conclude, God were altogether such a one as themselves, (as they wickedly did,) but from the very forbearance of God, Ps. l. 21. (3.) 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,* Deut. xxix. 19, 20. *That they (only) that confess and forsake their sins, shall find mercy,* Prov. xxviii. 13. *That they that shall enter into his hill, must be of clean hands, and a pure heart,* Ps. xxiv. 3, 4. Where were God's truth, if not-

withstanding all this, he should bring men to salvation without conversion? O desperate sinner, that darest to hope that Christ will put the lie upon his Father, and nullify his word, to save thee! (4.) 'To his *wisdom*: for this were to throw away the choicest mercies on them that would not value them, nor were any way suited to them. *First*, They would not value them. The unsanctified sinner puts but little price upon God's great salvation, Matt. xxii. 5. He sets no more by Christ, than the whole by the physician, Matt. ix. 12. He prizeth not his balm, values not his cure, tramples upon his blood, Heb. x. 29.—Now, would it stand with wisdom, to force pardon and life upon them that would give him 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? Matt. vii. 6. This would make mercy to be despised indeed.—Wisdom requires, that life be given in a way suitable to God's honour, and that God provide for the securing his own glory, as well as man's felicity. It would be dishonorable to God, to set his jewels on the snouts of swine, (continuing such) and to bestow his choicest riches on them, that have more pleasure in their swill, than the heavenly delights that he doth offer. God should lose the praise and glory of his grace, if he should cast it away on them that were not only unworthy, but unwilling. *Secondly*, They are no way suited to them. The divine wisdom is seen in suit-

ing things each to 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 unregenerate sinner to heaven, he could take no more felicity there than a beast, if you should bring him into a beautiful room, to the society of learned men, and a well furnished table; when as the poor thing had much rather be grazing with his fellow brutes. Alas! what should an un-sanctified creature do in heaven! he could take no content there, because nothing suits him. The place doth not suit him; he would be but *piscis in arido*, quite out of his element, as a swine in the parlour or a fish out of water. The company doth not suit him: what communion hath darkness with light? corruption with perfection? filth and rottenness 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 tune with the skilful choir? or hath he skill, he would have no will; and so could find no pleasure, no more than the nauseous stomach in the meat, on which it hath newly surfeited. Spread thy table with delicacies before a languishing patient, and it will be but a very offence. Alas! if the poor man think a sermon long, and say of a sabbath, *What a weariness is it?* Mal. i. 13, how miserable would he think it to be held to it to all eternity? (5.) To his *immutability*, or else to his *omniscien-*

cy, or *omnipotency*. For this is enacted in the conclave of heaven, and enrolled in the decrees of the court above, that none but *the pure in heart shall ever see God*, Matt. v. 8. This is laid up with him, and sealed among his treasures. Now, if Christ yet bring any to heaven unconverted, either he must get them in without his Father's knowledge, and then where is his omniscieny? or against his will, and then where were his omnipotency? or he must change his will, and then where were his immutability?

Sinner, wilt thou not yet give up thy vain hope of being saved in this condition? Saith Bildad, *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee, or the rocks moved out of their place?* Job xviii. 4. May not I, 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 omniscieny, or shorten the arm of his eternal power for thee? Shall divine justice be violated for thee? Or the brightness of the glory of his holiness be blemished for thee? Oh, the impossibility, absurdity, blasphemy, that is in such a confidence! To think Christ will ever save thee in this condition, is to make thy Saviour to become a sinner, and to do more wrong to the infinite Majesty than all the wicked on earth, or devils in hell ever did, or could; and yet wilt thou not give up such a blasphemous hope?

Secondly, Against his word. 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, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. Are you agreed that Christ shall end the controversy? Hear then his own words, *Except you be converted, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xviii. 3. *You must be born again*, John iii. 7. *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me*, John xiii. 8. *Repent, or perish*, Luke xiii. 8. 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*, John iii. 3, 5. Yea, he doth not only assert, but prove the necessity of the new birth, viz. from the fleshliness and filthiness of man's first birth, John iii. 6, by reason of which, man is no more fit for heaven, than the beast is for the chamber of the king's presence. And wilt thou yet believe thine 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 in this estate.

Thirdly, Against his oath. He hath lifted up his hand to heaven. He hath sworn, that those that remain in unbelief, and know not his ways, (that is, are ignorant of them, or disobedient to them) shall not enter into his rest, Ps. xcv. 11, Heb. iii. 18. 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, Heb. vi. 17,

and ix. 16, 18, 19, Matt. xxvi. 28, but all must be made void, and another way to heaven found out, if thou be saved living and dying un sanctified. God is come to his lowest and last terms with man, and hath condescended as far as with honour he could, hath set up his pillars with a *Ne plus ultra*. Men cannot be saved while unconverted, except they could get another covenant made, and the whole frame of the gospel (which was established forever with such dreadful solemnities) quite altered. And would not this be a distracted hope?

Fourthly, Against his honour. God will so shew his love to the sinner, as withal, to shew his hatred to sin. Therefore, he that names the name of Jesus must depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19, and deny all ungodliness: and he that hath hope of life by Christ, must purify himself as he is pure, 1 John iii. 3, Tit. ii. 12, otherwise Christ will be thought a favourer of sin. The Lord Jesus would have all the world to know, though he pardon sin, he will not protect it. If holy David shall say, *Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity*, Ps. vi. 8, and shall shut the doors against them, Ps. ci. 7, shall not such much more expect it from Christ's holiness? Would it be for his honour to have the dogs to the table, or to lodge the swine with his children, or to have Abraham's bosom to be a nest of vipers?

Fifthly, Against his offices. God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts v. 31. He should act against both, should

he save men in their sins. It is the office of a king,

Parcere subjectis, & debellare superbos.
To be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well, Rom. xiii. 3, 4. He is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that doth evil. Now, should Christ favour the ungodly, (so continuing) and take those to reign with him that would not that he should reign over them? Luke xix. 27.— This were quite against his office: he therefore reigns that he may put his enemies under his feet, 1 Cor. xv. 24. Now, should he lay them in his bosom, he should cross the end of his regal power. It belongs to Christ, as a king, to subdue the hearts, and slay the lusts of his chosen, Ps. xlv. 5, and cx. 8.— What king would take the 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 homage, honour, subjection, &c. Mal. i. 6.— 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 nought.

Again, as Christ should 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. i. 21, so that, should he save them in their sins, he should 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, Rom. xi. 26. He is sent to bless men, in turning them from their iniquities, Acts iii. 26, to make an end of sin, Dan. ix. 24. So that he should destroy his own designs, and nullify his offices, to save men abiding in their unconverted state.

Application. 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,* 2 Kings vii. 3, 4. 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 thine hands to sleep? Prov. vi. 10, 11. Wilt thou lie down in the midst of the sea, or sleep on the top of the mast? Prov. xxiii. 34. There is no remedy, but thou must either turn or burn: there is an unchangeable necessity of the change of thy condition, except thou art 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 an holy violence upon thee; methinks he carries it like the angels to Lot, Gen. xix. 15, 16, 17. *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 mountain, lest thou be consumed.

Oh, how wilful will thy destruction be, if thou shouldst yet harden thyself in thy sinful state ! But none of you can say but you have had fair warning. Yet methinks I cannot tell how to leave you so : it is not enough to 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 tumbling ocean with arguments ? Do I speak to the trees or rocks, or to men ? to the tombs and monuments of the dead, or to a living auditory ? If you be men, and not senseless stocks, stand still, 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 ! endued with reason, and yet dally with death and hell, and the vengeance of the Almighty ! Are men herein distinguished from the very brutes, that they have no foresight of, and care to provide for the things to come ? and will you not hasten your escape from eternal torment ? Oh, shew yourselves men, and let reason prevail with you. Is it a reasonable thing for you to contend against the Lord your Maker ? Isa. xlv. 9, or to harden yourselves against his word, Job ix. 4, as though the strength of Israel would lie ?—

1 Sam. xv. 29. Is it reasonable that an understanding creature should lose, yea, live quite against the very end of his being, and be as a broken pitcher, only fit for the dung-hill? Is it tolerable, that the only thing 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 spit his venom in the face of his Creator? *Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth,* and let the creatures without sense be judge if this be reason, That man, when God hath nourished and brought him up, should rebel against him? Isa. i. 2. Judge in your own selves: is it a reasonable undertaking for briars and thorns to set themselves in battle against the devouring fire? Isa. xxvii. 4, or for the potsherd of the earth to strive with his Maker? If you will say this is not reason, surely the eye of reason is quite put out: and if this be reason, then there is no reason that you should continue as you be, but 'tis all the reason in the world you should forthwith repent and turn.

What shall I say? I could spend myself in this argument. Oh that you would but hearken to me! that you would presently set upon a new course! Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? What! will no body be persuaded? Reader, shall I prevail with thee for one? Wilt thou sit down and consider the forementioned arguments, 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 still till the tide come in upon thee? Is it good for thee to try whether God will be so good as his word, and to harden thyself in a conceit that all is well with thee, while thou remainest unsanctified?

But I know you will not be persuaded, but the greatest part will be as they have been, and do as they have done. I know the drunkard will to his vomit again, and the deceiver will to his deceit again, and the lustful wanton to his dalliance again. Alas! that I must leave you where you were; in your ignorance or looseness, or in your lifeless formality and customary devotions! However, I will sit down and bemoan my fruitless labours, and spend some sighs over my perishing hearers.

O distracted sinners! What will their end be? *What will they do in the day of visitation? whither will they flee for help? where will they leave their glory?* Isa. x. 3. How powerfully hath sin bewitched them! how effectually hath the god of this world blinded them! how strong is their delusion! how uncircumcised their ears! how obdured their hearts! Satan hath them at his beck: but how long may I call, and can get no answer? I may dispute with them year after year, and they will give me the hearing, and that is all. They must and will have their sins, say what I will. Though I tell them there is death in the cup, yet they will take it up: though I tell them 'tis the broad way, and endeth in destruction, yet they will go on in it: I warn them, yet cannot win them. Sometimes I

think the mercies of God will melt them, and his winning invitations will overcome them; but I find them as they were: sometimes that the terror of the Lord will persuade them, yet neither will this do it. They will approve the word, like the sermon, commend the preacher; but they will yet live as they did: they will not deny me, yet they will not obey me. They will flock to the word of God, and sit before me as his people, and hear my words; but they will not do them. They value, and will plead for ministers, and I am to them as the lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice; yet I cannot get them to come under Christ's yoke. They love me, and will be ready to say, they will do any thing for me; but for my life I cannot persuade them to leave their sins, to forego their evil company, their intemperance, their unjust gain, &c. I cannot prevail with them to set up prayer in their families and closets, yet they will promise me, like the forward son, that said, *I go, sir; but went not*, Matt. xxi. 30. I cannot persuade them to learn the principles of religion, though else *they will die without knowledge*, Job xxxvi. 12. I tell them their misery, but they will not believe but 'tis well enough: if I tell them particularly, I fear for such reasons their state is bad, they will judge me censorious; or if they be at present a little awakened, they are quickly lulled asleep by satan again, and have lost the sense of all.

Alas for my poor hearers! must they perish at last by hundreds, when ministers would

so vain save them? What course shall I use with them that I have not tried? [What shall I do for the daughter of my people? Jer. ix. 7. O Lord God, help. Alas! shall I leave them thus? If they will not hear me, yet do thou hear me: Oh that they might yet live in thy sight! Lord, save them, or else they perish. My heart would melt to see their houses on fire about their ears, 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: but as for me, I cannot prevail.]



CHAP. IV.

SHEWING 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 propheet's hovering at a distance in parabolical insinuations: he is forced to close with him, and tell him home, *Thou art the man*. Few will, in words, deny the necessity of the new birth; but they have self-deluding confidence, that the work is not now to do: and because they know themselves free from that gross hypocrisy that doth take

up religion merely for a colour to deceive others, and for the covering of wicked designs, they are confident of their sincerity, and suspect not that more close hypocrisy (where the greatest danger lies) by which a man deceiveth his own soul, James i. 26. 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 displicency, or the necessity of the undeceiving work that I am now upon. Alas! for my unconverted hearers, they must be undeceived or undone. But how shall this be effected? *Hic labor, hoc opus est.*

[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. Oh send thine angel before me, to open the sundry wards of their hearts, as thou didst before Peter, and make even the iron gates to 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 mayst heal them.]

This must be premised before we proceed to the discovery, That it is most certain men may have a confident persuasion that their hearts and states be good, and yet be unsound. Hear the truth himself, who shews 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. iii. 17. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness,* Prov. xxx. 12. Who better persuaded of his case than Paul, while yet he remained unconverted? Rom. vii. 9. So that they are miserably deceived that 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 of the adherents of antichrist, so here; some of the unconverted carry their marks in their foreheads, 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 with all diligence, Eph. v. 5, 6. *For this you 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.* Rev. xxi. 8. *But the fearful and*

unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. 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. See Gal. v. 19, 20, 21. Wo to them that have their names written in these red rolls: such may know, as certainly as if God had told it them from heaven, that they are unsanctified, and under an impossibility of being saved in this condition.

There are then these several sorts, 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 be left out) in all the forementioned catalogues, Eph. v. 5, Rev. xxi. 8, 1 Cor. v. 9, 10.

2. *The covetous.* These are ever branded for idolaters, and the doors of the kingdom are shut against them by name, Eph. v. 5, Col. iii. 5, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

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. v. 11, 12, 22, Gal. v. 21.

4. *Liars.* The God that cannot lie hath 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, Psa. xv. 1, 2; Rev. xxi. 8, 27, John viii. 44, Prov. vi. 17.

5. *Swearers.* The end of these, without deep and speedy repentance, is swift destruction, and most certain and unavoidable condemnation, James v. 12, Zech. v. 1, 2, 3.

6. *Railers and backbiters,* that love to take up a reproach against their neighbours, and fling all the dirt they can in his face, or else wound him secretly behind his back, Ps. xv. 1, 3, 1 Cor. vi. 10, and v. 11.

7. *Thieves,* extortioners, oppressors, that grind the poor, over-reach their brethren, when they have them at an advantage: these must know that *God is the avenger of all such,* 1 Thess. iv. 6. Hear, O ye false, and purloining, and wasteful servants! hear, O ye deceitful tradesmen! hear your sentence:—God will certainly hold 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, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, James v. 2, 3.

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 family's souls, but live without God in the world, John viii. 47, and xv. 4, Psa. xiv. 4, and lxxix. 6, Eph. ii. 12, and iv. 18.

9. Those that are *frequenters and lovers of evil company*; God hath declared he will be the destruction of all such, and that they shall never enter into the hill of his rest, Prov. xiii. 20, Ps. xv. 4, Prov. ix. 6.

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. xix. 29, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, Prov. iii. 24.

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. Oh, how little a number would be left, when these ten sorts are left out? Alas, on how many doors, on how many faces must we write, Lord, have mercy upon us! Sirs, what shift do you make to keep up your confidence of your good estate, 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?* Jer. ii. 23. *See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done.* Man, is not thy conscience privy to thy tricks

of deceit, to thy chamber-pranks, to thy way of lying? Yea, are not thy friends, thy family, thy neighbours, witnesses to thy profane neglects of God's worship, to thy covetous practices, to thy envious and malicious carriage? May not they 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, a loose liver? Beloved, God hath written it, as with a sun-beam, in the book out of 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.

Oh, that such of you would now be persuaded to repent and turn from all your transgressions! or else iniquity will be your ruin, *Ezek. xviii. 30.* Alas for poor hardened sinners! must I leave you at last where you were? must I leave the tipler still at the ale-bench? must I leave the wanton still at his dalliance? must I leave the malicious still in his venom? and the drunkard still at his vomit? 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, either as thunder-bolts to awaken them, or as searing irons to harden them to a reprobate sense: *Ps. lxxviii. 21.* *God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.* *Prov. xxix. 1.* *He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall sud-*

denly be destroyed, and that without remedy. Prov. i. 24, &c. Because I have called, and ye refused: I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, &c. I will mock 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 spotted with the grosser evils above-mentioned. But I must further tell you, that there are another sort of un-sanctified persons, that carry not their marks in their foreheads, but more secretly and covertly in their hands. These do frequently deceive themselves and others, and pass for good Christians, when they are all the while unsound at bottom. 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, Matt. vii. 22. Brethren, beloved, I beseech you deeply to lay to heart, and firmly to retain this awakening consideration, That multitudes miscarry 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 be these twelve hidden sins, by which souls go down by numbers into the chambers of death: these you must search carefully for, and take them as black marks, (wherever they be found) discovering a graceless and unconvert-

ed estate. And as you love your lives, read carefully, with a holy jealousy of yourselves, lest you should be the persons concerned.

1. *Gross ignorance.* Ah, how many poor souls doth this sin kill in the dark, Hos. iv. 6, while they think verily they have good hearts, and are in the ready way to heaven! This is the murderer that dispatcheth thousands in a silent manner, when (poor hearts!) they suspect nothing, and see not the hand that mischieves them. You shall find, whatever excuses you have for ignorance, that it is a soul-undoing evil, Isa. xxvii. 21, 2 Thess. i. 8, 2 Cor. iv. 3. Ah! would it not have pitied a man's heart to have seen that woful spectacle, when the poor Protestants were shut up a multitude together, in a barn, and a butcher comes, with his inhuman hands warm in human blood, and leads them one by one, blindfold, to a block, where he slew them (poor innocents!) one after another, by the scores, in cold blood? But how much more should our hearts bleed, to think of the hundreds in great congregations, that ignorance doth butcher in secret, and lead them blindfold to the block? Beware this be none of your case; make no pleas for ignorance: if you spare that sin, know that it will not spare you. Will 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, and a man's own life for him; this is a hard saying, Luke xiv. 26. Some will do much, but they will not be of the reli-

gion that will undo them ; they never come to be entirely devoted to Christ, nor fully to resign to him ; they must have the sweet sins, they mean to do themselves no harm ; they have secret exceptions for life, liberty, or estate. Many take Christ thus hand over head, and never consider his self-denying terms, nor cast up the cost ; and this error in the foundation mars all, and secretly ruins them forever, Luke xiv. 28, Matt. xiii. 21.

3. *Formality in religion.* Many stick in the bark, and rest in the outside of religion, and in the external performances of holy duties, Matt. xxiii. 25, and this oft-times doth most effectually deceive men, and doth more certainly undo them than open looseness ; as it was in the Pharisee's case, Matt. xxiii. 31. 'They hear, they fast, they pray, they give alms ; and therefore will not believe but their case is good, Luke xviii. 11. Whereas resting in the work done, and coming short of the heart-work, and the inward power and vitals of religion, they fall at last into the burning, from the flattering hopes, and confident persuasions of their being in the ready way to heaven, Matt. vii. 22, 23. 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 prevalency of false ends in holy duties,* Matt. xxiii. 25. 'This was the bane of the Pharisees. Oh, how many a poor soul is undone by this, and drops into hell before he discerns his mistake ! He performs good duties, and so thinks all is well, and perceives

not that he is *actuated* by carnal motives all the while. It is too true, that even with the truly sanctified, many carnal ends will oft-times creep in, but they are the matter of his hatred and humiliation, and never come to be habitually prevalent with him, and to bear the greatest sway, Rom. xiv. 7. But now, 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 repute of being religious, to be seen of men, to shew his own gifts and parts, to avoid the reproach of a profane and irreligious person, or the like; this discovers an unsound heart, Hos. x. 1, Zech. vii. 5, 6. O Christians, if you would avoid self-deceit, see that you mind, not only your acts, but withal, yea, above all, your ends.

5. *Trusting in their own righteousness*, Luke xviii. 9. This is a soul undoing mischief, Rom. x. 3. When men do 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 the satisfying his justice, appeasing his wrath, procuring his favour, and obtaining of 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 profes-

sors ; 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 rags, Ps. cxliii. 2, Phil. iii. 8, Isa. lxiv. 6, Neh. xiii. 22.

6. *A secret enmity against the strictness of religion.* Many moral persons, punctual in their formal devotions, have yet a bitter enmity against preciseness, and hate the life and power of religion, Phil. iii. 6, compared with Acts ix. 4. They like not this forwardness, nor that men should keep 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 a heady fellow. Those 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 pitch of religion.* When they have so much as will save them (as they suppose) they look no further, and so shew themselves short of true grace, which will ever put men upon aspiring to further perfection, Phil. iii. 13, Prov. iv. 18.

8. *The predominant love of the world.*— This is the sure evidence of an unsanctified heart, Mark x. 37, 1 John ii. 15.

But how close doth this sin lurk oft times under a fair covert of forward profession?— Luke viii. 14. Yea, such a power of deceit is there in this sin, that many times, when ev-

ery body else can see the man's worldliness, and *covetousness*, he cannot see it himself; but hath so many colours, and excuses, and pretences for his eagerness on the world, that he doth blind his own eyes, and perish in his self-deceit. How many professors be here, 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? Rom. viii. 5, Phil. iii. 19. Yet ask these men, and they will tell you confidently, they prize Christ above all, God forbid else: and see not their own earthly mindedness, for want of a narrow observation of the working of their own hearts. Did they but carefully search, they would quickly find, that their greatest content is in the world, Luke xii. 19, and their greatest care, and main endeavour to get and secure the world; which is the certain discovery 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, Matt. xxii. 5, Luke xiv. 18, 19, 20, 24.

9. *Reigning malice and envy against those that disrespect them, or are injurious to them,* 1 John ii. 9, 11. Oh how do many that seem to be religious remember injuries, and carry grudges, and will return men as good as they bring; 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, Rom. xii. 14, 17, 1 Pet. ii. 21, 23, Neh. ix. 17. Doubtless, where this evil is kept boiling in the heart, and is not hated, resisted, mortified, but doth habitually prevail, that person is in the very gall of bitterness, and in a state of death, Matt. xviii. 34, 35, 1 John iii. 14, 15.

Reader, doth nothing of this touch thee? Art thou in none of the fore-mentioned ranks? Oh, search, and search again; take thy heart solemnly to task. Wo unto thee, if, after all 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, embittered against strictness: this would be a sad discovery 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 they are yet in their sins, and strangers to true conversion, John xii. 43, Gal. i. 10.—When men see not, nor complain, nor groan under the pride of their own hearts, it is a sign they are stark-dead in sin. Oh, how secretly doth this sin live and reign in many hearts, and they know it not, but are very strangers to themselves! John ix. 40.

11. *The prevailing love of pleasure*, 2 Tim. iii. 4. 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 bellies, and pleasing their senses: whatever appearance they may have of religion, all is unsound, Rom. xvi. 18, Tit. iii. 3. A flesh-pleasing life cannot be pleasing to God; *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh*, and are careful to cross it, and keep it under, as their enemy, Gal. v. 24, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26, 27.

12. *Carnal security, or a presumptuous and ungrounded confidence, that their condition is already good*, Rev. iii. 17. Many cry peace and safety, when sudden destruction is coming upon them, 1 Thess. v. 3. 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, Matt. xxv. 5, 10, Prov. x. 5. They perceived not their want of oil till the bridegroom was come; and while they went to buy, the door was shut. And Oh 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 never so slight grounds, a hope that their condition is good, and so look not out after a change, and by this means perish in their sins. Are you at peace? Shew me upon what grounds your peace is maintained? Is it a scripture peace? Can you shew 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 poor soul; and while it smiles and kisses, and speaks it fair, doth fatally smite it (as it were) under the fifth rib.

By this time methinks I hear my reader 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 sorts of close and self-deceiving hypocrites on the other hand, and tell me then, 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 sorts that are here mentioned, except by sound *conversion* they be brought into *another condition*.

Application. And now, conscience, do thine 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, Lev. xiii. 44. 'Take not up a lie into thy mouth: speak not peace to him, to whom God speaks no peace. Let not lust bribe thee, or self-love, or carnal prejudice blind thee. I *subpæna* thee from the court of heaven, to come and give in evidence: I require thee, in the name

of God, to go with me to the search of the suspected house. 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 us the truth, Matt. xxvi. 63. Is the man converted, or is he not? Doth he allow himself in any way of sin, or doth he not? Doth he truly love, and please, and prize, and delight in God above all other 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 was the means by which this thorough change of the new birth was wrought in his soul?—Speak, conscience. Or if thou canst not tell time and place, canst thou shew scripture evidence that the work is done? Hath the man been ever taken off from his false bottom, from the false hopes, and false peace, wherein once he trusted? Hath he been deeply convinced of sin, and of his lost and 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 profaneness? Hast thou not taken upon him the gains of unrighteousness? Dost not thou find him a stranger to prayer, a neglecter

of the word, a lover of this present world?—Dost not thou often catch him in a lie? Dost not thou find his heart fermented with malice, or burning with lust, or going after his covetousness? Speak plainly to all the fore-mentioned particulars: canst thou acquit this man, this woman, from being any of the two and twenty sorts 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 else he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Beloved, be not your own betrayors, 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, Isa. viii. 20.* Hear what the word concludes of your estates. Oh, follow the search, till you have found how the case stands: mistake here, and perish. And such is the treachery of the heart, the subtilty of the tempter, and the deceitfulness of sin, *Jer. xvii. 9, 2 Cor. xi. 3, Heb. iii. 13,* all conspire to flatter and deceive the poor soul; and withal, so common and easy it is to be mistaken, that 'tis a thousand to one but you will be deceived, unless you be very careful, and thorough, and impartial in the enquiry into your spiritual conditions. Oh therefore ply your work, go to the bottom, search as with candles, weigh you in the balance, come to the standard of the sanctuary, bring your coin to the touchstone. You have the archest cheats in the world to

deal with : a world of counterfeit coin is going ; happy is he that takes not counters for gold. Satan is master of deceits, 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 to a hair with a counterfeit. Trade warily, look on every piece you take, be jealous, trust not so much as your own hearts. Run to God, to search you, and try you ; to examine you and prove your reins, Ps. xxvi. 2, and cxxxix. 23, 24. If other helps suffice not to bring all to an issue, but you are still at a loss, open your cases faithfully to some godly and faithful minister, Mal. ii. 7. Rest not till you have put the business of your eternal welfare out of question, 2 Pet. i. 10. *O searcher of hearts, put thou this soul upon, and help him in the search.*

CHAP. V.

SHEWING THE MISERIES OF THE UNCONVERTED.

SO unspeakably dreadful is the case of every unconverted soul, that I have sometimes thought, if we could but convince men that they are yet unregenerate, the work were upon the matter done. But I sadly experience, that such a spirit of sloth and slumber

(Rom. xi. 8, Matt. xiii. 15) possesseth the unsanctified, that though they be convinced that they are yet unconverted, yet they oft times carelessly sit still; and what through the avocation of sensual pleasures, or hurry of worldly business, or noise and clamour of earthly cares, and lusts, and affections, Luke viii. 14, the voice of conscience is drowned, and men go no farther than some cold wishes, and general purposes of repenting and amending, Acts xxiv. 25.

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

But here I find myself aground at first putting forth. What tongue can tell the heirs of hell sufficiently of their misery, unless 'twere Dives in that flame? Luke xvi. 24. Where is the ready writer, whose pen can decypher their misery that are without God in the world? Eph. ii. 12. This cannot fully be done, unless we knew the infinite ocean of that bliss and perfection which is in that God, which a state of sin doth exclude men from. *Who knoweth (saith Moses) the power of thine anger?* Ps. xc. 11. 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 imposing difficulty, that I am to speak to them that are without sense. Alas, this is not the least part of man's

misery upon him, that he is dead, stark dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1.

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 gulph of Tophet in all its terrors, and open the gates of the infernal furnace; alas! he hath no eyes to see it, Matt. xiii. 14, 15. Could I paint out the beauties of holiness, or glory of the gospel, to the life; or could I bring above-board the more than diabolical deformity and ugliness of sin, he can no more judge of the loveliness and beauty of the one, nor the filthiness and hateful-ness of the other, than the blind man of colours. He is alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart, Eph. iv. 18. He neither doth, nor can know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. His eyes cannot be savingly opened, but by converting grace, Acts xxvi. 18. He is a child of darkness, and walks in darkness, 1 John i. 6, yea, the light in him is darkness, Matt. vi. 2, 3.

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 appal his countenance, and loose his joints, and make his knees smite one against another? yet, alas! he perceives me not, he hath no ears to hear.

Or shall I call up all the daughters of music, and sing the song of Moses, and of the Lamb? Yet he will not be stirred. Shall I allure him with the joyful sound, and the lovely song, and glad tidings of the gospel? with the most sweet and inviting calls, comforts, cordials of the divine promises, so exceeding great and precious? It will not affect him savingly, unless I could find him ears, Matt. xiii. 15, as well as tell him the news.

Shall I set before him the feast of fat things, the wine of wisdom, the bread of God, the tree of life, the hidden manna; he hath no appetite for them, no mind to them, 1 Cor. ii. 14, Matt. xxii. 5. Should I press the choicest grapes, the heavenly clusters of gospel privileges, and drink to him in the richest wine of God's own cellar, yea, of his own side; or set before him the delicious honey-comb of God's testimonies, Ps. xix. 10, alas! he hath no taste to discern them. Shall I invite the dead to arise, and eat the banquet of their funerals? no more can the dead in sin savour the holy food wherewith the Lord of life hath spread his table.

What then shall I do? Shall I burn the brimstone of hell at his nostrils? Or shall I open the box of spikenard, very precious, that filleth the whole house of this universe with its perfume, Mark xiv. 3, John xii. 8, and hope that the savour of Christ's ointment and the smell of his garments will attract him? Ps. xlv. 8. 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, Ps. cxv. 5, 6, 7. They are destitute of all spiritual sense and motion.

But let me try the sense that doth last leave us, and draw the sword of the word : yet lay at him while I will, yea, though I choose mine arrows out of God's quiver, and direct them to the heart, nevertheless he feelth it not ; for how should he, being past feeling ? Eph. iv. 19. 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, Rom. vii. 9. In a word, he carries a dead soul in a living body, and his flesh is but the walking coffin of a corrupted mind, that is twice dead, Jude 12, rotting in the slime and putrefaction of noisome lusts, Matt. xxiii. 27, 28.

Which way then shall I come at the miserable objects that I have to deal with ? Who shall make the heart of stone to relent, Zech. xi. 12, or the lifeless carcass to feel and move ? That God that is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham, Matt. iii. 9, that raiseth the dead, 2 Cor. i. 9, and melteth the mountains, Nah. i. 5, and strikes water out of the flints, Deut. viii. 15, that loves to work like himself, beyond the hopes and belief of man ; and peopleth his church with dry bones, and planteth his orchard with dry sticks ; he is able to do this. Therefore I bow my knee

to the most high God, Eph. iii. 14, and as our Saviour prayed at the sepulchre of Lazarus, John xi. 38, 41, and the Shunammite ran to the man of God, for her dead child, 2 Kings iv. 25, so doth your mourning minister kneel about your graves, and carry you in the arms of prayer to that God in whom your help is found.

[O thou all-powerful Jehovah, that workest, and none can let thee; that hast the keys of hell, and of death; pity thou the dead souls that lie here entombed, and roll away the grave-stone, and say, as to Lazarus, when already stinking, *Come forth.* Lighten thou this darkness, O inaccessible light, and let the day-spring from on high visit the darksome region of the dead, to whom I speak: for thou canst open the eyes 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 savour thine ointments, a feeling that may sense the privilege of thy favour, the burden of thy wrath, the intolerable weight of unpardoned sin; and give thy servants command to prophesy to the 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. xxxvii. 1, &c. *The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. He said unto me,*

Prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you; and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then said he unto me, Prophecy unto the wind, prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army.]

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,

I. *The infinite God is engaged against thee.*

It is no small part of thy misery, that thou art *without God*, Eph. ii. 12. How doth Micah run crying after the Danites, *You have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* Judges xviii. 23, 24. Oh, what a mourning

then must thou lift up, that art without God, that canst lay no claim to him, without daring usurpation ! 'Thou mayst say of God, as Sheba of David, *We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse,* 2 Sam. xx. 1. How pitiful and piercing a moan is that of Saul, in his extremity ? *The Philistines are upon me, and God is departed from me,* 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. Sinners, *But what will ye do in the day of your visitation ? whither will you flee for help ? where will you leave your glory ?* Isa. x. 3. 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, lands, farewell for evermore ? What will you do then, I say, that have never a God to go to ? Will you call on him ? Will you cry to him for help ? Alas ! he will not own you, Prov. i. 28, 29. He will not take any knowledge of you, but will send you packing with an *I never knew you,* Matt. vii. 23. 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 that holy man cry out, *Let me have a 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 had never had an understanding to know any thing, &c.*

But thou art not only without God, but God is *against thee,* Ezek. v. 8, 9, Nah. ii. 13.— Oh, if God would but stand a 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 all his enemies, to do the worst with him; though he should deliver him over to the torments, Matt. xviii. 34, 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, *'Tis a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, Heb. x. 31. There is no friend like him, no enemy like him. As much as heaven is above the earth, omnipotency above impotency, infinity above nullity; so much more horrible is it to fall into the hands of the living God, than into the paws of bears or lions, yea, furies or devils. God himself will be thy tormentor, thy destruction shall come from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thess. i. 9. [*Tophet is deep and large, and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it*, Isa. xxx. 33. 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 intreat for him? 1 Sam. ii. 25. Thou, even thou, art to be feared; and who shall stand in thy sight, when once thou art angry? Ps. lxxvi. 7. Who is that God, that shall deliver you out of his hands? Dan. iii. 15. Can Mammon? riches profit not in the day of wrath, Prov. xi. 4. Can kings or warriors? no, they shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on us, and hide us 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? [Rev. vi. 15, 16, 17.]

Sinner, methinks this should go like a dagger to thine heart, to know that God is thine enemy. Oh, whither wilt thou go? Where wilt thou shelter thee? There is no hope for thee, unless thou lay down thy weapon, 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 mayst have God to be more for thee, than he is now against thee. But if thou wilt not forsake thy sins, nor turn thoroughly, and to purpose, unto God, by a sound conversion, the wrath of God abideth on thee, and he proclaims himself to be against thee, as in the prophet, Ezek. v. 8, *Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, am against thee.*

1. His face is against thee, Ps. xxxiv. 16. *The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them.*—Wo unto them whom God shall set his face against. When he did but look upon the host of the Egyptians, how terrible was the consequence! Ezek. xiv. 8. *I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign, and proverb, and will cut him off from the midst of my people, and you shall know that I am the Lord.* 2. His heart is against thee: *He hateth all the workers of iniquity.*

Man, doth not thine heart tremble to think of thy being an object of God's hatred? Jer. xv. 1. *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people: cast them out of my sight, Zech. xi. 8. My soul loatheth them, and their souls also abhorred me.* 3. His hand is against thee, 1 Sam. xii. 14, 15. All his attributes are against thee:

First, *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, &c. Deut. xxxii. 41, 42.* So exact is justice, that it will by no means clear the guilty, Ex. xxxiv. 7. God will not discharge thee, he will not hold thee guiltless, Ex. xx. 7, 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 very strict; it must have satisfaction to the utmost farthing; it denounceth indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul that doth evil, Rom. ii. 8, 9. It curseth every one that continueth not in every thing that is written in the law to do it, Gal.

iii. 10. The justice of God to the unpardoned sinner, that hath a sense of his misery, is more terrible than the sight of the bailiff or creditor to the bankrupt debtor, or than the sight 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, Oh, what dreadful work doth it make with the wretched sinner! *Bind him hand and foot, cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,* Matt. xxii. 13. *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire,* Matt. xxv. 41. This is the terrible sentence that justice pronounceth. Why, sinner, by this severe justice must thou be tried; and, as God liveth, this killing sentence shalt thou hear, unless thou repent, and be converted.

Secondly, *The holiness of God is full of antipathy against thee,* Ps. v. 4, 5. He is not only angry with thee, (so he may be with his own children) but he hath a fixed, rooted, habitual displeasure against thee; he loathes thee, Zech. xi. 8, and what is done by thee, though for substance commanded by him, Isa. i. 44, Mal. i. 10. As if a man should give his servant never so good meat to dress; yet, if he should mingle filth or poison with it, he would not touch it. God's nature is infinitely contrary to sin, and so he cannot but hate a sinner out of Christ.

Oh, what a misery is this, to be out of the favour, yea, under the hatred of God! Eccl. v. 4, Hos. ix. 15. 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 by grace. O sinner, how darest thou to think of the bright and radiant sun of purity, upon the beauties, the glory of holiness that is in God! *The stars are not pure in his sight, Job xxv. 5. He humbleth himself to behold things that are done in heaven, Ps. cxiii. 6.* O those light and sparkling eyes of his! what do they espy in thee! And thou hast no interest in Christ neither, that he should plead for thee. Methinks I should hear thee crying out, astonished, with the Bethshemites, *Who shall stand before this holy Lord God? 1 Sam. vi. 20.*

Thirdly, *The power of God is mounted like a mighty cannon against thee.* The glory of God's power is to be displayed, in the wonderful confusion and destruction of them that obey not the gospel, 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. He will make his power known in them, Rom. ix. 22. How mightily he can torment them! For this end he raiseth them up, *that he might make his power known, Rom. ix. 17.* O man, art thou able to make thy party good with thy Maker? No more than a silly reed against the cedars of God, or a little cock-boat against the tumbling ocean, or the childrens bubbles against the blustering winds.

Sinner, the power of God's anger is against thee, Ps. xc. 11, and power and anger together make fearful work. 'Twere 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?" Job xxvi. 14. 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 seal-eth up the stars. Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What dost thou? If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him." Job ix. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 13. And art thou a fit match for such an antagonist? "Oh, consider this, you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you." Ps. l. 22. Submit to mercy. Let not dust and stubble stand it out against the Almighty. Set not briars 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,* Isa. xxvii. 4, 5. *Wo to him that striveth with his Maker,* Isa. xlv. 9.

Fourthly, *The wisdom of God is set to ruin thee.* He hath ordained his arrows, and prepared the instruments of death, and made all things ready, Ps. vii. 12, 13. His counsels are against thee, to contrive thy destruction, Jer. xviii. 11. He laughs in himself, to see how thou wilt be taken and ensnared in

the evil day, Ps. xxxvii. 13. *The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming.* He sees how thou wilt come down mightily in a moment; how thou wilt wring thine hands, and tear thine hair, and eat thy flesh, and gnash thy teeth for anguish and astonishment of heart, when thou seest thou art fallen remedilessly into the pit of destruction.

Fifthly, *The truth of God is sworn against thee*, Ps. xcv. 11. If he be true and faithful, thou must perish, if thou goest on, Luke xiii. 3. Unless he be false of his word, thou must die, except thou repent, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. *If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself*, 2 Tim. ii. 13, that is, he is faithful to his threatnings as well as promises, and will shew 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, John xiii. 8. That if thou livest after the flesh thou shalt die, Rom. viii. 13. That except thou be converted, thou shalt in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven, Matt. xviii. 3. And he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. Beloved, as the immutable faithfulness of God in his promise and oath, afford believers strong consolation, Heb. vi. 18, so they are to unbelievers, for strong consternation and confusion. O sinner, tell me, what shift dost thou make to think of all the threatnings of God's word, that stand upon record against thee? Dost thou believe their truth, or not? If not, thou art a wretched infidel, and not a Christian, and therefore give over the name

and hopes of a Christian. But if thou dost believe them, O heart of steel that thou hast, that canst walk up and down in quiet, when the truth and faithfulness of God is engaged to destroy thee! That if God Almighty can do it, thou shalt surely perish and be damned. Why, man, the whole book of God doth testify against thee, while thou remainest unsanctified: it condemns thee in every leaf, and is to thee, like Ezekiel's roll, written within and without, with lamentation, and mourning, and wo, Ezek. ii. 10. And all this shall surely come upon thee, and overtake thee, Deut. xxviii. 15, except thou repent. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of this word shall never pass away, Matt. v. 18.

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 in an oath, and in a curse, to kill Paul; so thou must know, O sinner, to thy terror, that all the attributes of the infinite God are bound in an oath to destroy thee, Heb. iii. 28. O man! what wilt thou do? Whither wilt thou fly? If God's omnisciciency can find thee, thou shalt not escape: if the true and faithful God will save his oath, perish thou must, except thou believe and repent: if the Almighty hath power to torment thee, thou shalt be perfectly miserable in soul and body to all eternity, unless it be prevented by thy speedy conversion.

II. *The whole creation of God is against thee.* The whole creation (saith Paul) groaneth and travaileth in pain, Rom. viii. 22. But

what is it that the creation groaneth under? Why, the fearful abuse that it is subject to, in serving the lusts of unsanctified men. And what is it that the creation groaneth for?— Why, for freedom and liberty from this abuse: for the creature is very unwillingly subject to this bondage, Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21. If the unreasonable and inanimate creatures had speech and reason, they would cry out under it, as 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 passage of an eminent divine, “The liquor that the drunkard drinketh, if it had reason as well as a man to know how shamefully it is abused and spoiled, it would groan in the barrels against him, it would groan in the cup against him, groan in his throat, in his belly, against him; it would fly in his face, if it could speak. And if God should open the mouths of the creatures, as he did the mouth of Balaam’s ass, the proud man’s garments on his back would groan against him. There is never a creature, but if it had reason to know how it is abused, till a man be converted, it would groan against him; the land would groan to bear him, the air would groan to give him breathing, 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.” Thus far he. Methinks this should be a terror to an unconverted soul, to think that he is

a burden to the creation, Luke xiii. 7. *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* If the poor inanimate creatures could but speak, they would say to the ungodly, as Moses to Israel, *Must we fetch you water out of the rock, ye rebels?* Num. xx. 10. "Thy food would say, Lord, must I nourish such a wretch as this, and yield forth my strength for him to dishonour thee withal? No, I will choke him rather, if thou wilt give me commission. The very air would say, Lord, must I give this man breath, to set his tongue against heaven, and scorn thy people, and vent his pride, and wrath, and filthy communication, and belch out oaths and blasphemy against thee? No, if thou but say the word, he shall be breathless for me. His poor beast would say, Lord, must I carry him upon his wicked designs? No, I will break his bones, I will end his days rather, if I may have but leave from thee." A wicked man, the earth groans under him, and hell groans for him, till death satisfies both, and unburdens the earth, and stops the mouth of hell with him. While the Lord of hosts is against thee, be sure the hosts of the Lord are against thee, and all the creatures (as it were) up in arms, till upon a man's conversion, the controversy being taken up between God and him, he makes a covenant of peace with the creatures for him, Job v. 22, 23, 24, Hos. ii. 18, 19, 20.

III. *The roaring lion hath his full power upon thee, 1 Pet. v. 8. Thou art fast in the paw of that lion, that is greedy to devour: In the snare of the devil, led captive by him*

at his will, 2 Tim. ii. 26, this is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii. 2. His drudges they are, and his lusts they do. He is the ruler of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi. 12, that is, of ignorant sinners that live in darkness. You pity the poor *Indians*, that worship the devil for their God, but little think that 'tis your own case. Why 'tis the common misery of all the un-sanctified, that the devil is their God. 2 Cor. iv. 4, not that they do intend to do him homage and worship; they will be ready to defy him, and him that should say so by them; but all this while they serve him, and come and go at his beck, and live under his government: *His servants ye are, to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey*, Rom. vi. 16. Oh, 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, but 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 lies behind the curtain, he acts in the dark, and sinners see not who setteth them on work; but all the while he leads them in a string. Doubtless the liar intends not a service to Satan, but his own advantage; yet 'tis he that stands in the corner unobserved, and putteth the thing into his heart, Acts v. 2, John viii. 44. Questionless, *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 'twas he that actuated them in their wickedness, *John* xiii. 27. *Job* i. 12, 15, 17. Men may be very slaves, and common drudges for the devil, and never know it; nay, they may please themselves in the thoughts of a happy liberty, *2 Peter* ii. 19.

Art thou yet in ignorance, and not turned from darkness to light? why, thou art under the power of Satan, *Acts* xxvi. 18. Dost thou live in the ordinary and wilful practice of any known sin? know that thou art of the devil, *1 John* iii. 8. Dost thou live in strife or envy, or malice? verily he is thy father, *John* viii. 40, 41. O dreadful case! however Satan may provide his slaves with divers pleasures, *Tit.* iii. 3, yet it is but to roll them into endless perdition. The serpent comes with the apple in his mouth, Oh, but (with *Eve*) thou seest not the deadly sting in his tail. He that is now the tempter, will be one day thy tormenter. Oh, that I could but give thee to see how black a master thou servest, how filthy a drudgery thou dost, how merciless a tyrant thou gratifiest! all whose pleasure is, to set thee on work to make thy perdition and damnation sure, and to heat the furnace hotter and hotter, in which thou must burn for millions of millions of ages.

IV. *The guilt of thy sins lies like a mountain upon thee.* Poor soul! thou feelest it not, but this is that which seals thy misery upon thee. While unconverted, none of thy sins are blotted out, *Acts* iii. 19, they

are all upon the score against thee : regeneration and remission are never separated ; the unsanctified are unquestionably unjustified and unpardoned, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 1 Peter, i, 2. Heb. ix. 14. Beloved, 'tis 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 horrible as his. Look upon an enlightened sinner, who feels the weight of his own guilt : Oh, how frightful are his looks, how fearful are his complaints ! his comforts are turned into wormwood, and his moisture into drought, and his sleep 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 wished he had been a dog, or a toad, or a serpent, 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.

How light soever you may make of it now, you will one day find the guilt of unpardoned sin to be a heavy burden. This is a millstone that whosoever falleth upon it, shall be broken ; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder, Matth. xxi. 44. What work did it make with our Saviour ? it pressed the very blood (to a wonder) out of his veins, and broke all his bones. And if it did thus in the green tree, what will it do in the dry ?

Oh ! think of thy case in time. Canst thou think of that threat without trembling,

Ye shall die in your sins? John viii. 24. Oh! better were it for thee to die in a gaol, die in a ditch, in a dungeon, than die in thy sins. If death, as it will take away all thy other 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, 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12, as a prisoner's other debts will; but they will to judgment with thee, there to be thine accusers: and they will to hell with thee, there to be thy tormenters. Better to have so many fiends and furies about thee, than thy sins to fall upon thee, and fasten in thee. Oh the work that these will make thee! Oh, look over thy debts in time! how much art thou in the books of every one of God's laws? how is every one of God's commandments ready to arrest thee, and take thee by the throat, for innumerable bonds it hath upon thee? what wilt thou do then, when they shall altogether lay in against thee? Hold open the eyes of conscience to consider this, that thou mayst despair of thyself, and be driven to Christ, and fly for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope that is set before thee. Heb. vi. 18.

V. *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, John viii. 34, 36. Tit. iii. 3. Rom. vi. 12, 14. Rom. vi. 16, 17. Now there's no such ty-

rant as sin : O the filthy and fearful work that it doth engage its servants in ! Would it not pierce a man's heart to see a company of poor creatures drudging and toiling, and all to carry together faggots and fuel for their own burning ? why, this is the employment of sin's drudges : even while they bless themselves in their unrighteous gains, while they swing and swill in pleasures, they are but treasuring up wrath and vengeance for their eternal burnings ; they are but laying in powder and bullets, and 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, and whose wages is death, Rom. vi. 23.

What a woful spectacle was that poor wretch possessed with the legion ? would it not have pitied thine heart to have seen him among the tombs, cutting and wounding of himself ? Mark v. 5. This is thy case, such is thy work, every stroke is a thrust at thine heart. 1 Tim. vi. 10. Conscience is now asleep : but when death and judgment shall bring thee to thy senses, then wilt thou feel the raging smart and anguish of every wound. The convinced sinner is a sensible instance of the miserable bondage of sin : conscience flies upon him, and tells him what the end of these things will be : and yet such a slave is he to his lust, that on he must though he see it will be his endless perdition : and when the temptation comes, lust gets the bit in his mouth, breaks all the

cords of his vows and promises, and carries him headlong to his own destruction.

VI. *The furnace of eternal vengeance is heated ready for thee, Isaiah xxx. 33.* Hell and destruction open their mouths upon thee, they gape for thee, they groan for thee, Isaiah v. 14. waiting (as it were) with a greedy eye, as thou standest upon the brink, when thou wilt drop in. If the wrath of man be *as the roaring of a lion*, Prov. xx. 2. *more heavy than sand*, Prov. xxvii. 3. 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 it to throw the three children in, Dan. iii. 19, 22. how hot is that burning oven of the Almighty's fury? Mal. iv. 1. Surely this is seventy times seven more fierce. What thinkest thou, O man, of being a faggot in hell to all eternity! *Can thine heart endure, or can thine hand be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee? saith the Lord of hosts, Ezek. xxii. 14.* Canst thou dwell with everlasting burnings? Canst thou abide the consuming fire? Isaiah xxxiii. 4. When thou shalt be as a glowing iron in hell, and thy whole body and soul shall be as perfectly possessed by God's burning vengeance, as the fiery sparkling iron when heated, or in the fiercest forge? 'Thou canst not bear God's whip, how then wilt thou endure his scorpion? thou art even crushed, and ready to wish thyself dead under the weight of his finger; how then wilt thou bear the weight of his loins?

The most patient man that ever was, did curse the day that ever he was born, Job. iii. 1. and even wish death to come and end his misery, Job. vii. 15, 16. when God did but let out one little drop of his wrath : 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 powers as full of torment, as they be now full of sin ? when immortality shall be thy misery ; and to die the death of a brute, and be swallowed into the gulph 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 canst laugh and be merry, and forget the terror of the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 11. but how wilt thou hold out, or hold up, when God will cast thee into a bed of torments, Rev. ii. 21. and make thee to lie down in sorrows ? Isai. l. 11. when roarings and blasphemy shall be thine only music ; and the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation, shall be thine only drink ? Rev. xiv. 10. when thou shalt draw in flames for thy breath, and the horrid stench of sulphur shall be thy only perfume ? in a word, when the smoke of thy torment shall ascend for ever and ever, and thou shalt have no rest night nor day ; no rest in thy conscience, no ease in thy bones, but thou shalt be an execration, and an astonishment, and

a curse, and a reproach for ever more ! Jer. xlii. 18.

O sinner ! stop here, and consider : if thou art a man, and not a senseless block, consider : bethink thyself where thou standest, why, upon the very brink of this furnace. As the Lord liveth, and thy soul liveth, there is but a step between thee and this, 1 Sam. xx. 3. Thou knowest not when thou liest down, but thou mayest be in before the morning ; thou knowest not when thou risest, but thou mayest drop in before the 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 these 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 cast-out, a damned reprobate, a vessel of wrath, into which the Lord will be pouring out his tormenting fury while he hath a being, Rom. ix. 22.

Divine wrath is a fierce, Deut. xxxii. 22. devouring, Isa. xxxiii. 14. everlasting, Math. xxv. 41. unquenchable fire, Math. iii. 12. and thy soul and body must be the fuel upon which it will be feeding for ever, unless thou consider thy ways, and speedily turn to the Lord by sound conversion. They that have been only singed by this fire, and had no more but the smell thereof passing upon them, Oh, what amazing spectacles have they been !

Whose heart would not have melted to have heard *Spira's* outcries? to have seen *Chaloner*, that monument of justice, worn to skin and bones, 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 took hold on him? To have heard *Rogers* crying out, *I have had a little pleasure, but now I must to hell forevermore*; wishing but for this mitigation, that God would but let him lie burning for ever behind the back of that fire (on the earth) and bringing in this sad conclusion still, at the end of whatsoever was spoken to him to afford him some hope, *I must to hell, I must to the furnace of hell, for millions of millions of ages?* Oh! if the fears and forethought of the wrath to come be so terrible, so intolerable, what is the feeling of it?

Sinner, 'tis but in vain to flatter you, this would be but to toll 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 Omnipotency is not longer able to torment, except you be in good earnest renewed throughout by sanctifying grace.

VII. *The law discharges all its threats and curses at thee, Gal. iii. 10. Rom. vii.* Oh how dreadfully doth it thunder! It spits fire and brimstone 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 the execration, and plagues, and deaths that this murdering piece is loaded with! (read Deut. xxviii. 15, 16. &c.) and thou art the mark at which this shot is levelled. O man ! away to the strong hold, Zech. ix. 12. Away from thy sins, haste to the sanctuary, to the city of refuge, Heb. xiii. 13. even the Lord Jesus Christ : hide thee in him, or else thou art lost, without any hope of recovery.

VIII. *The gospel itself bindeth the sentence of eternal damnation upon thee, Mark xvi. 16.* 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, and thunder, and damnation ? to have the Lord to roar from mount *Sion* against thee ? *Joel iii. 16.* Hear the terror of the Lord, *He that believeth not shall be damned. Except ye repent, ye shall all perish, Luke xiii. 3.* *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, John iii. 19.* *He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him, John iii. 36.* If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ? *Heb. ii. 2. 3.* *He that despised Moses' law,*

died without mercy: of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, that hath trampled under foot the Son of God? Heb. x. 28, 29.

Application. And is this true indeed? Is this thy misery? Yea, 'tis 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 thine 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 caitiff! what stupidity and senselessness hath surprised thee! Oh! 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 walking ghost, a senseless lump? Art thou a reasonable soul, and yet so far brutified, as to forget thyself immortal, and to think thyself to be as the beasts that perish? Art thou turned into flesh, that thou savourest nothing but gratifying the sense, and making provision for the flesh? Or else, having reason to understand the eternity of thy future estate, dost thou yet make light of being everlastingly miserable? Which is to be so much below a brute, as it is worse to act against reason, than to act without it. O unhappy soul, that wast the glory of man, the mate 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, a slave to so base an idol as thy belly ; for no higher felicity than to fill thee with the wind of man's applause, or heaping together a little refined earth, no more suitable to thy spiritual, immortal nature, than the dirt and sticks ? Oh ! why dost thou not bethink thee where thou shalt be for ever ? Death is at hand, the judge is even at the door, James v. 9. Yet a little while, and *time shall be no longer*, Rev. x. 5. 6. 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 thy nearest concernments. 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 ? Oh ! if thou hast a spark of reason, consider, and turn, and harken to thy very friend, who would therefore shew thee thy present misery, that thou mightst 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 ?* Jer. v. 22. O sinners, do ye make light of the wrath to come ? Matth. iii. 7. I am sure there is a time coming when ye will not make light of it. Why, the very devils do believe and tremble, James ii. 19. What ! 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 *cokatrice's* den? will you dance about the fire till you are burnt? or dally with devouring wrath, as if you were at a point of indifferency whether you did escape it or endure it? O madness of folly? *Solomon's* madman, that casteth fire-brands, and arrows, and death, and saith, *Am not I in jest?* Prov. xxi. 18. is nothing so distracted as the wilful sinner, Luke xv. 17. that goeth on in his unconverted estate, without sense, as if nothing ailed him. The man that runs on the cannon's mouth, that sports with his blood, or lets out his life in a frolic, is sensible, sober, and serious, to him that goeth on still in his trespasses, Psal. lxxviii. 21. *For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers,* Job. xv. 25, 26. Is it wisdom to dally with the second death, or to venture into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. xxi. 8. as if thou wert but going to wash thee, or swim for thy recreation? Wilt thou, as it were, fetch thy vieze, and jump into eternal flames, as the children through the bonfire? What shall I say? I can find out no expression, no comparison, whereby to set forth the dreadful distraction of that soul that shall go on in sin.

Awake, awake, Eph. v. 14. O sinner! arise and take thy flight: there is but one door that thou mayst fly by, and that is the strait door

of conversion and the new birth. Unless thou turn unfeignedly from all thy sins, and come into 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 and nights from hence. Oh! set thine heart to think of thy case. Is not thine everlasting misery or welfare that which doth 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 expedition for preventing his utter ruin? O man! who hath bewitched thee? Gal. iii. 1. that in the matters of this present life thou shouldst be wise enough to forecast thy business, foresee thy danger, and prevent thy mischief; but in matters of everlasting consequence shouldst be slight and careless, as if they little concerned thee? Why, is it nothing to thee to have all the attributes of God engaged against thee? Canst thou do well without his favour? 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 in the paw of the lion, under the power of corruption, in the dark and noisome prison, fettered with thy lusts, working out thine own dam-

nation ; and is not this worth the considering ? Wilt thou make light of all the terrors of the law, of all its curses and thunderbolts, as if they were but the report of the children's pop-guns, or thou wert to war with their paper pellets ? 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, Job xl. 7. Art thou such a *Leviathan* as that the scales of thy pride should keep thee from thy Maker's coming at thee ? 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 his barbed irons ? Job xli. 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 not affrighted, neither turnest back from God's sword, when his quiver rattleth against thee, the glittering spear and the shield ? Job xxxix. 21, 22, 23. Well, if the threats and calls of the word will not fear thee nor awaken thee, I am sure death and judgment will. Oh, what wilt thou do when the Lord cometh forth against thee, and in his fury falleth upon thee, and thou shalt feel what thou readest ! 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 ever they came at the bottom of the den, Dan. vi. 24. what shall be done with thee, when thou fallest into the hands of the living God? When he shall grip thee in his iron arms, and grind and crush thee to a thousand pieces in his wrath?

Oh, do not then contend with God? repent and be converted, so none of this shall come upon thee, Isa. lv. 6, 7. *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.*

CHAP. VI.

CONTAINING DIRECTIONS FOR CONVERSION.

Mark x. 17. *And there came one, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

BEFORE thou readest these directions, I advise thee, yea, I charge thee, before God and his holy angels, to resolve to follow them (as far as conscience will be convinced of their agreeableness to God's word, and thy estate) 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, that the word of the living God doth require.

Now then attend; *set thine heart unto all that I shall testify unto thee in this day; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life, Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.* 'This is the end of all that hath been spoken hitherto, to bring you to set upon turning, and making use of God's means for your conversion. I would not trouble you, nor torment you before the time, with the forethoughts 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 (as one speaks) to let you alone, that you might take in that little poor comfort that you are capable of here in this world: but you may yet be happy, if you do not wilfully refuse the means of your recovery. Behold I hold open the door unto you; arise, take your flight: I set the way of life before you; walk in it, and you shall live and not die, Deut. xxx. 19. Jer. ix. 16. It pities me to think you should be your own murderers, and throw yourselves headlong, when God and men cry out to you, as *Peter*, in another case, to his master, *spare thyself*. A noble virgin that attended the court of *Spain*, was wickedly ravished by the king; and hereupon exciting the duke her father to revenge, he called in the *Moors* to his help, who, when they had

cuted his design, miserably wasted and spoiled the country; which this virgin laying so exceedingly to heart, shut herself up in a tower belonging to her father's house, and desired her father and mother might be called forth; and bewailing to them her own wretchedness, that she should have occasioned so much misery and desolation to her country for the satisfying of her revenge, she told them she was resolved to be avenged upon herself. Her father and mother besought her to pity herself and them, but nothing could prevail, but she took her leave of them, and threw herself off the battlements, and so perished before their faces.

Just thus is the wilful destruction of ungodly men. The God that made them, beseecheth them, and crieth out to them, as *Paul* to the distracted jailor, when about to murder himself, *Do thyself no harm*. The ministers of Christ forewarn them, and follow them, and fain would have them back; but alas! no expestulations, nor obtestations 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 reigning plague, he should have a receipt (as one well said) that would infallibly cure all the country, and recover the most hopeless patients, and yet his friends and neighbours should die by the hundreds about him, because they would not use it? Men and brethren, tho' you carry the certain symptoms of death in your faces, yet I have a receipt

that will cure you all, that will cure infallibly; follow but these few 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.

Direct. 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, Matth. xviii. 3. John iii. 3. doth he not keep the keys of heaven, and canst thou get in without his leave; as thou must, if ever thou comest thither in thy natural condition, without a sound and thorough renovation?

Direct. II. *Labour to get a thorough sight, and lively sense and feeling of thy sins.* Till men are weary and heavy laden, and pricked at the heart, and stark sick of sin, they will not come unto Christ, in his way, for ease and cure; nor to purpose enquire, *What shall we do?* Matth. xi. 28. Acts. ii. 37 Matth. ix. 12. They must set themselves down for dead men, before they will come unto Christ, that they may have life, John v. 40. Labour therefore to set all thy sins in order before thee; never be afraid to look upon them, but let thy spirit make diligent search, Psal. lxxvii. 6. enquire into thine heart, and into thy life; enter into a thorough examination of thyself and of all thy ways, Psal. exix. 59. that thou mayest make a full dis-

covery : and call in the help of God's Spirit, in the sense of thine own inability hereunto, for it is proper work to convince of sin, John xvi. 8. spread all before the face of thy conscience, till thine heart and eyes be set a-broach. Leave not striving with God, and thine own soul, till it cry out under the sense of thy sins, as the enlightened jailor, *What must I do to be saved ?* Acts xvi. 30. To this purpose ;

Meditate of the numerousness of thy sins. David's heart failed when he thought of this, and considered that he had more sins than hairs, Psal. xl. 12. This made him cry out upon the multitude of God's tender mercies, Psal. li. 1. The loathsome carcass doth not more hatefully swarm with crawling worms, than an unsanctified soul with filthy lusts ; they fill the head, the heart, the eyes and mouth of him. 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 poison is not shed ? Oh, how great is the sum of thy debts, who hast been all thy life long running upon the books, and never didst, nor 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, commissions, the sins of thy thoughts, of thy words, of thine actions, the sins of thy youth, the sins of thy years, &c. 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, Rev. xx. 12.

Meditate upon the aggravations of thy sins, as they are the grand enemies against the God of thy life, against 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 injuriousness to God, their opposition to his good and righteous laws, the mercies, the warnings that they were committed against, Neh. ix. Dan. ix. Ezra ix. O the work that sin hath made in the world. This is the enemy that hath brought in death, that hath robbed and enslaved man, that blacked the devil, that hath digged hell, Rom. v. 12. 2 Peter ii. 4. John viii. 84. This is the enemy that hath turned the creation upside down, and sown dissension between man and the creatures, between man and man; yea, between man and himself, setting the sensitive part against the rational, the will against the judgment, lust against conscience; yea, worst of all, between God and man, making the lapsed sinner both hateful to God, and the hater of him, Zech. xi. 8. O man! how canst thou make so light of sin? This is the traitor that sucked the blood of the Son of God, that sold him, that mocked him, that scourged him, that spit in his face, that digged his hands, that pierced his side, that pressed his soul, that mangled his body, that never left, till he had bound him, condemned him, nailed him, crucified

him, and put him to open shame, Isai. liii. 4, 5, 6. This is that deadly poison, so powerful of operation, as that one drop of it shed upon the root of mankind, hath corrupted, spoiled, and poisoned, and undone his whole race at once, Rom. v. 18, 19. This is the common butcher, the bloody executioner, that hath killed the prophets, burnt the martyrs, murdered all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the kings and potentates, that hath destroyed cities, swallowed empires, butchered and devoured whole nations. Whatever was the weapon that 'twas done by, sin was it that did execution, Rom. vi. 23. Dost thou yet think it but a small thing? If *Adam* and all his children could be digged 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 the skirts of sin. Study the nature of sin, till thy heart be brought to fear and loathe it. And meditate on the aggravations of thy particular sin, how thou hast sinned against all God's warnings, against thine own prayers, against mercies, against corrections, against clearest light, against freest love, against thine own resolutions, against promises, vows, covenants of better obedience, &c. Charge thine heart home with these things, till it blush for shame, and be brought out of all good opinion of itself. Ezra ix. 6.

Meditate upon the desert of sin. It crieth up to heaven, it calls for vengeance, Gen. xviii. 21. its due wages is death and damna-

tion : it pulls the curse of God upon the soul and body, Gal. iii. 10. Deut. xxviii. The least sinful word or thought lays thee under the infinite wrath of God Almighty, Rom. ii. 8, 9. Matth. xii. 36. Oh, what a load of wrath, what a weight of curses, what treasure of vengeance have all the millions of thy sins then deserved? Rom. ii. 5. John iii. 36. Oh, judge thyself, that the Lord may not judge thee, 1 Cor. xi. 31.

Meditate upon the deformity and defilement of sin. 'Tis as black as hell, the very image and likeness of the devil drawn upon the soul, 1 John iii. 8, 10. It would more affright thee to see thyself in the hateful deformity of thy nature, than to see the devil. There is no mire so unclean, no vomit so loathsome, no carcass or carrion so offensive, no plague or leprosy so noisome as sin, in which thou art all enrolled, and covered with its odious filth, whereby thou art rendred more displeasing to the pure and holy nature of the glorious God, than the most filthy object, composed of whatever is hateful to all thy senses, can be to thee, Job xv. 15, 16. Couldst thou take up a toad into thy bosom? Couldst thou cherish it, and take delight in it? Why, thou art as contrary to the pure and perfect holiness of the divine nature, and as loathsome as that is to thee, Matth. iii. 33. till thou art purified by the blood of Jesus, and the power of renewing grace.

Above all other sins, fix the eye of consideration on these two. (1.) The sin of thy nature. 'Tis to little purpose to lop the branch-

es, while the root of original corruption remains untouched. In vain do men leave out the streams, when the fountain is running, that fills up all again. Let the ax of thy repentance (with *David's*) go to the root of sin, Psal. li. 5. Study how deep, how close, how permanent is thy natural pollution, how universal it is, till thou do cry out, with *Paul's* feeling, upon thy body of death, Rom. vii. 24. Look into thy parts and powers, and see what unclean vessels, what styes, what dunghills, what sinks they are become, *Heu miser, quid sum? Vas sterquilinii, concha putredinis: plenus fœtore & horrore*, August. Solil. c. 2. The heart is never soundly broken, till thoroughly convinced of the heinousness of original sin. Here fix thy thoughts. This is that, which makes thee backward to all good, prone to all evil, Rom. vii. 15. that sheds blindness, pride, prejudice, unbelief, into thy mind; enmity, unconstancy, obstinacy, into thy will; inordinate heats and colds, into thy affections: insensibleness, benumbedness, unfaithfulness, into thy conscience; slipperiness, into thy memory: and, in a word, hath but every wheel of thy soul out of order, and made it, of an habitation of holiness, to become a very hell of iniquity, James iii. 6. This is that which hath defiled, corrupted, perverted all thy members, and turned them into weapons of unrighteousness, and servants of sin, Rom. vi. 19. that hath filled the head with carnal and corrupt designs, Mich. ii. 4. the hand with sinful practices, Isai. i. 15. the eyes with wander-

ing and wantonness, 2 Pet. ii. 14. the tongue with deadly poison, James iii. 8. that hath opened the ears to tales, flattery, and filthy communication, and shut them against the instruction of life, Zech. vii. 11, 12. and hath rendered thy heart a very mint and forge for sin, and the cursed womb of all deadly conceptions, Matth. xv. 19. so that it poureth forth its wickedness without ceasing, 2 Pet. ii. 14. even as naturally, freely, and unweariably, as a fountain doth pour forth its waters, Jer. vi. 7. or the raging sea doth cast forth mire and dirt, Isai. lvii. 20. And wilt thou yet be in love with thyself, and tell us any longer of thy good heart? Oh! never leave meditating on this desperate contagion of original corruption, till, with *Ephraim*, thou bemoan thyself, Jer. xxxi. 18. and with deepest shame and sorrow, smite on thy breast, as the *Publican*, Luke xviii. 13. and with *Job*, abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes, Job xlii. 6, 22. (2.) The particular evil that thou art most addicted to, find out all its aggravations, set home upon thy heart all God's threatenings 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, Psal. xviii. 23. Oh! labour to make this sin odious to thy soul, and double thy guards, and thy resolutions against it, because this hath, and doth most dishonour God, and endanger thee.

Direct. III. *Strive to affect thine 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 thine heart. Remember when thou liest down, that for ought 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 a just matter to live in such a fearful case? To stand tottering upon the brink of the bottomless pit, and to live at the mercy of every disease, that if it will 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 twine-thread, which were ready to break every moment, would not thine heart tremble for such an one? Why, 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? (why 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 crack but of this thread, thou fallest into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone; where thou must lie scalding and sweltering in a fiery ocean, while God hath a being, if thou die in thy present case. And doth not thy soul tremble as thou readest? Doth 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? Oh, what is thy heart made of?

Hast thou not only lost all regard to God, but art without any love and pity to thyself?

Oh, study thy misery, till thy heart do cry out for Christ, as earnestly as ever a drowning man did for a boat, or the wounded for a chirurgeon. Men must come to see the danger, and feel the smart of their deadly sores and sickness, or else Christ will be to them a physician of no value, Matth. ix. 12. Then the man-slayer hastens to the city of refuge, when pursued by the avenger of blood. Men must be even forced and fired out of themselves, or else they will not come to Christ. 'Twas distress and extremity that made the prodigal think of returning, Luke xv. 16, 17. 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, nakedness, before she will come to Christ for gold, raiment, eye-salve, Rev. iii. 17, 18. therefore hold the eyes of conscience open, amplify thy misery as much as possible, do not fly 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 fear the torments that abide thee now, than feel them hereafter.

Direct. IV. *Settle it upon thy heart, that thou art under everlasting inability ever to recover thyself.* Never think thy praying, reading, hearing, confessing, amending will do the cure. These must be attended, but thou art undone if thou retest in them, Rom. x. 3. Thou art a lost man, if thou hopest to es-

cape drowning upon any other plank, but Jesus Christ, Acts iv. 12. Thou must unlearn thyself, and renounce thine own wisdom, thine own righteousness, thine own strength, and throw thyself wholly upon Christ, as a man that swimmeth casteth himself upon the water, or else 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, Luke xviii. 9. Philip. iii. 3. Thou must know thy gain to be but loss and dung, thy strength but weakness, thy righteousness rags and rottenness, before there will be an effectual closure between Christ and thee, Philip. iii. 7, 8, 9. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Isa. lxiv. 6. Can the lifeless carcass shake off its grave-clothes, and loose the bands of death? Then mayest thou recover thyself, who are dead in trespasses and sins, and under an impossibility of serving thy Maker (acceptably) in this condition, Rom. viii. 8. Heb. xi. 6. 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 thy duty, but lie at the pool, and wait in the way of the Spirit. While the Eunuch was reading, then the Holy Ghost sent Philip to him, Acts viii. 28, 29. when the disciples were praying, Acts iv. 31. when Cornelius and his friends were hearing, Acts x. 44. then the Holy Ghost fell upon them and filled them all. Strive to

give up thyself to Christ, strive to pray, strive to meditate, strive an hundred and an hundred times, try to do it as well as thou canst; and while thou art endeavouring in the way of thy duty, the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and help thee to do what of thyself thou art utterly unable unto, Prov. i. 24.

Direct. V. Forthwith renounce all thy sins. If thou yield thyself, to the contrary practice of any sin, thou art undone, Rom. vi. 17. In vain dost thou hope for life by Christ, except thou depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Forsake thy sins, or else thou canst not find mercy, Prov. xxviii. 13. Thou canst not be married to Christ except divorced from sin. Give up the traitor, or you can have no peace with heaven. Cast the head of Sheba over the wall: keep not Dalilah in thy lap. Thou must part with thy sins, or with thy soul: spare but one sin, and God will not spare thee. Never make excuses, thy sins must die, or thou must die for them, Psal. lxxviii. 21. If thou allow of one sin, tho' but a little, a secret one, tho' thou mayst plead necessity, and have a hundred shifts and excuses for it, the life of thy soul must go for the life of that sin, Ezek. xviii. 21. 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 thee this day, that if thou perish, it is not because there was never a Saviour provided, nor life tendered, but because thou preferredst (with the Jews) the murderer be-

fore thy Saviour, sin before Christ, and lovedst darkness rather than light, John iii. 10. Search thy heart therefore with candles, as the Jews did their houses for leaven before the passover: labour 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 dart thro' the heart of thy sins, as Joab did thro' Absalom's, 2 Sam. xviii. 14. Never stand looking upon thy sin, nor rolling the morsel under thy tongue, Job xx. 11. but spit it out as poison, with fear and detestation. Alas! what will thy sins do for thee, that thou shouldst stick at parting with them? They will flatter thee, but they will undo thee; and cut thy throat, while they smile upon 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. Oh! 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.

Direct. VI. Make a solemn choice of God for thy portion and blessedness, Deut. xxvi. 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

excellencies and perfections, on the other, and see that thou do deliberately make thy choice, Josh. xxiv. 15. Take up thy rest in God, John vi. 63. Set thee down under his shadow, Cant. ii. 3. 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 while thou hast a 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 carry the preferments and glory of the world, place thou thy happiness in his favour, and the light of his countenance, Psal. iv. 6, 7.

Poor sinner! thou art 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, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. What sayest thou, man? Wilt thou have the Lord for thy God? Why, take this counsel and thou shalt have him, come to him by his Christ, John xiv. 6. Renounce the idols of thine own pleasures, gain, reputation, 1 Thess. i. 9. Let these be pulled out of the throne, and set God's interest uppermost in thine heart: take him as God, to be chief in thine affections, estimations, intentions; for he will not endure to have any set above him, Rom. i. 24. Psal. lxxxiii. 25. In a word thou must take him in all his *personal relations*. and in all his *essential perfections*.

First, In all his personal relations. God

the Father must be taken for thy Father, Jer. iii. 4, 19, 22. Oh! 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 a dog, a swine, a devil, to be thy child, I solemnly take thee for my Father, commend myself to thy care, and trust to thy providence, and cast my burden on thy shoulders. 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 depose my concerns with thee: I will be for thee, and for no other." Again, God the Son must be taken for thy Saviour, for thy Redeemer; and righteousness, John i. 12. He must be accepted as the only way to the Father, and the only means of life, Heb. vii. 25. Oh then, put off the raiment of thy captivity, on with the wedding garment, and go and marry thyself to Jesus Christ. "Lord I am thine, and all that I have, my body, my soul, my name, my estate. I send a bill of divorce to my other lovers, 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, as thy loan during thy leave, resigning all to thee. I will have no king but thee, reign thou 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 and vowing, to serve, and love, and fear thee, above all competitions. I disavow mine own righteousness, and despair of ever being pardoned and saved for mine own duties, or graces, and lean only on thine all-sufficient sacrifice and intercession, for pardon, and life, and acceptance before God. I take thee for mine only guide and instructor, resolving to be led and directed by thee, and to wait for thy counsel, and that thine shall be the casting voice with me," *Lastly*, God the Spirit must be taken for thy Sanctifier, Rom. viii. 9, 14. Gal. v. 16, 18. for thine advocate, thy counsellor, thy comforter, the teacher of thine ignorance, the pledge and earnest of thine inheritance, Rom. viii. 26. Psal. lxxiii. 24. John xiv. 26. Eph. iv. 30. *Awake thou north wind, and come thou forth, and blow upon my garden*, Cant. iv. 16. "Come, thou Spirit of the Most High, here is a house for thee, here is a temple for thee : here do thou rest forever ; dwell here, and rest here : lo, I give up the possession to thee, full possession. I send thee the keys of my heart, that all may be for thy use, that thou mayst put thy goods, thy grace into thy every room. I give up the use of all to thee, that every faculty, and every member may be thine instrument to work righteousness, and do the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Secondly. 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 blessed news that ever came to the sons of men: the Lord will be thy God, Gen. xvii. 7. Rev. xxi. 3. if thou wilt but close with him in his excellencies. Wilt thou have the merciful, the gracious, the sin-pardoning God to be thy God? Oh, yes, (saith the sinner) I am undone else. But he further tells thee, I am the holy and sin-hating God: if thou wilt be owned as one of my people, thou must be holy, 1 Pet. i. 16. holy in heart, holy in life. Thou must put away all thine iniquities, be they never so near, never so natural, never so necessary to the maintaining thy fleshly interest. Unless thou wilt be at distance 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, or else I can have nothing to do with thee, Isa. i. 16, 17, 18. 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, 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: Oh! 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 my infirmities that I cannot get rid of tho' I would, I will strive against them in the use of means. I detest them, and will pray and war against them, and never

let them have quiet rest in my soul." Beloved, whosoever of you will thus accept of the Lord for his God, he shall have him.

Again, he tells you, I am the all-sufficient God, Gen. xvii. 1. Will you lay all at my feet, and give it up to my dispose, and take me for your only portion? Will you own and honour mine 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? Gen. xv. 1. Psal. lxxxiv. 11. Now, what dost thou say to this? Doth thy mouth water after the onions and flesh-pots of Egypt? Art thou loth to exchange the earthly happiness, for a part in God? And tho' 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, Matth. xiii. 46. if thine heart answers, "Lord, I desire no other portion but thee. Take the corn, and the wine, and the oil, whoso will, so I may have the light of thy countenance. I pitch upon thee for my happiness, I gladly venture myself on thee, and trust myself with thee. I set my hopes 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 be 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 thine own.

Again, he tells you, I am the sovereign Lord. If you will have me for your God, you must give me the supremacy, Matth. vi. 24. I will not be an underling ; you must not make me a 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 list. 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 mine own list : I had rather have thy will to be done than mine : I approve of, and consent to, thy laws, and account it my privilege to lie under them. And tho’ the flesh rebel, and often break over bounds, I am resolved to take no other Lord but thee. I willingly take the oath of thy supremacy, and acknowledge thee for my Liege Sovereign ; and resolve all my days to pay the tribute of worship, obedience, and love and service to thee, and to live to thee, as the end of my life.” This is a right accepting 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, 2 Tim. i. 12. Prov. iii. 5. Will you venture yourselves upon my word, and depend on my faithfulness, and take my bond for your secu-

rity? Will you be content to follow me, in poverty, and reproach, and affliction here, and to see much going out, and little coming in, and to tarry till the next world for preferment? Matth. ix. 21. I deal much upon trust: will you be content to labour, and suffer, and to tarry for your returns till the resurrection of the just? Luke xiv. 14. The womb of the promise will not presently bring forth: will you have the patience to wait? Heb. x. 36. 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 roll upon thee, we know whom we have trusted, we are willing to take thy word, we will prefer thy promises before our own possessions, and the hopes of heaven before all the enjoyments of the earth, we will wait thy leisure: 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, but not for their portion; this is no thorough nor sound conversion.

Direct. VII. *Accept of the Lord Jesus in all his offices, with all his inconveniences, 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 climb up: but Jesus Christ is able and ready to help thee, and he freely tenders himself to thee, Heb. vii. 25. John iii. 36. Be thy sins never so many, never so great, of never 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 unto thee. The Lord Jesus calleth unto thee, to look unto him and be saved, Isa. xlv. 22, to come unto him, and he will in no wise cast thee out, John vi. 37. Yea, he is a suiter to thee, and beseecheth thee to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v. 20. He crieth in the streets, he knocketh at thy door, he wooeth thee to accept of him, and live with him, Prov. i. 20. Rev. ii. 30. If thou diest, 'tis because thou wouldst not come to him for life, John v. 40. Now accept of an offered Christ, and thou art made up for ever: now give up thy consent to him, and the match is made, all the world cannot hinder it. Do not stand off because of thine unworthiness. Man, I tell thee, nothing in all the world can undo thee, but thine own unwillingness.— Speak, man; art thou willing of the match? Wilt thou have Christ in all his relations to be thine; thy king, thy priest, thy prophet? Wilt thou have him with all his inconveniences? Take not Christ hand over head, 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, fixedly determined to cleave to him in all times and conditions? If so, my soul for thine, thou shalt never perish, John iii. 16, but art passed from death to 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.

Direct. VIII. *Resign up all thy powers and faculties, and thy whole interest to be his. They gave their own selves unto the Lord, 2 Cor. viii. 5. Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, Rom. xii. 1. 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, 2 Cor. vi. 20. In a right closure with Christ, all the faculties give up to him. The judgment subscribes, "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. iii. 13, 14, 15. The understanding lays aside its corrupt reasonings and cavils, and its prejudices against Christ, and his ways. It is now past questioning and disputing, and casts it for*

Christ, against all the world. It concludes, 'tis good to be here; and sees such a treasure in this field, such a value in this pearl, as is worth all, Matt. xiii. 44. "Oh, here is the richest bargain that ever I made, here is the richest prize that ever man was offered, here is the sovereignest 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. v. 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, nor wishing and woulding, but it 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, thou shalt have all, let me have but thee." The memory gives up to Christ: "Lord, here is a store-house for thee: out with this trash, lay in the treasure; let me be a granary, 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 register. 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: "Oh, saith love, I am sick of thee. Oh, saith desire, now I have my longing: here is the satisfaction 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 thy 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 mine own iniquities, shall be that which shall set me abroad: 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 befooled and bewitched, as to hearken to the flatteries of sin, and temptations of Satan against thee." Hatred, too, will side with Christ: "I protest mortal enmity with thine enemies, that I will never be friends with thy foes; I vow an immortal quarrel with every sin, I will give no quarter, I will make no peace." Thus let all thy powers give up 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 thine undoing, Luke xiv. 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 of him, and as far as it stands in competition with him, Matt. x. 37. Luke xiv. 26, 27, &c. In a word, thou must give him thyself, and all that thou

hast, without reservation, or else thou canst have no part in him.

Direct. IX. *Make choice of the laws of Christ as the rule of your words, thoughts and actions, Ps. cxix. 30.* 'This is the true convert's choice. But here remember these three rules, (1.) *You must chuse them all.* There is no coming to heaven by a partial obedience:—read Ps. cxix. 6, 128, 160. Ezek. xviii. 24. 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 grate upon the interest 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, Ps. cxix. 6, 113. Matt. xxiii. 23.—(2.) *For all times:* for prosperity and for adversity; whether it rain or shine. A true convert is resolved in his way, 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 alway, even to the end. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever, Ps. cxix. 31, 111, 117, 44, 93. I will have respect unto thy statutes continually.* 'This must not be done hand over head, but deliberately and understandingly. That disobedient son said, *I go, sir; but went not, Matt. xxiv. 30.* How fairly did they promise! *All that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee we will do it;* and 'tis like they spake as they meant: but when it

came to trial, it was found that there was not such a heart in them as to do what they had promised, Deut. v. 27, 29. If you would be sincere in closing with the laws and ways of Christ, *First*, Study the *meaning*, and *latitude*, and *compass* of them: remember that they are very 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, that they are very strict and self-denying, quite contrary to the grain of your natural inclinations, Matt. xvi. 24.— You must take the straight gate, the narrow way, and be content to have the flesh curbed from the liberty it desires, Matt. vii. 14. In a word, that they are very large: *For thy commandment is exceeding broad*, Ps. cxix. 96. *Secondly*, Rest not in *generals*, (for there is much deceit in that) but bring down thy 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 stuck in *generals*. When God's command crosseth their inclination, they will not obey, Jer. xlii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, compared with chap. xliii. ver. 2. Take the assembly's larger catechism, and see their excellent and most compendious exposition of the commandments, and put thy heart to it.— Art thou resolved, in the strength of Christ, to set upon the conscientious practice of every duty that thou findest there to be required of thee, and to set against every sin that thou

findest there forbidden? This is the way to be found in God's statutes, that thou mayest never be ashamed, Ps. cxix. 80. *Thirdly*, Observe the *special duties* that thy heart is most against, and the *special sins* that 'tis most inclined unto; 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, and hazardous, and flesh-displeasing duties? If thou haltest here, and dost not resolve, by the grace of God, to cross thy flesh, and put to it, thou art unsound, Ps. xviii. 23, and cxix. 6.

Direct. X. *Let all this be completed in a solemn covenant betwixt God and thy soul,* Ps. cxix. 106, Neh. x. 29. For thy better help therein take these few directions.

First, Set apart some time, more than once, to be spent in secret before the Lord.

1. In seeking earnestly his special assistance, and gracious acceptance of thee.

2. In considering distinctly all the terms or conditions of the covenant, expressed in the form hereafter proposed.

3. In searching thine heart, whether thou art sincerely willing to forsake all thy sins, and to resign up thyself, body and soul, unto God, and his service; to serve him in holiness and righteousness, all the days of thy life.

Secondly, Compose thy spirit into the most serious frame possible, suitable to a transaction of so high importance.

Thirdly, Lay hold on the covenant of God, and rely upon 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.

Fourthly, Resolve to be faithful; having engaged thine heart, opened thy mouth, and subscribed with thy hand unto the Lord, resolve in his strength never to go back.

Lastly, Being thus prepared, on some convenient time set apart for the purpose, set upon the work, and in the most solemn manner possible, as if the Lord were visibly present before thine eyes, fall down on thy knees, and spreading forth thine hands toward heaven, open thine heart to the Lord in these or the like words :

O MOST dreadful God ! for the passion of thy Son I beseech thee, accept of thy poor prodigal, now prostrating himself at thy door. I have fallen from thee by mine iniquity, and am by nature a son of death, and a thousand fold more the child of hell, by my wicked practice; but of thine infinite grace, thou hast promised grace to me in Christ, if I will; but turn to thee with all my heart: therefore upon the call of thy gospel, I am now come in, and, throwing down my weapons, submit myself to thy mercy.

The terms of our communion are either from which or to which.

And because thou requirest, as the condition of my peace with thee, that I should put *The terms* away mine idols; and be at *from which we* defiance with all thine enemies, *must turn, sin,* which I acknowledge I *satan, the world* have wickedly sided with, and *our own* against thee; I here from the *righteousness,* bottom of my heart renounce *which must be* them all, firmly covenanting *thus renounc-* with thee, not to allow myself *ed.* in any known sin, but conscientiously to use all the means that I know thou hast prescribed for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions. And whereas I have formerly, inordinately and idolatrously, let out my affections upon the world, I do here resign up my heart to thee that madest it, humbly protesting before thy glorious Majesty, that it is the firm resolution of my heart; and that I do unfeignedly desire grace from thee, that when thou shalt call me hereunto, I may practise this my resolution, through thy assistance to forsake all that is dear unto me in this world, rather than to turn from thee to the ways of sin; and that I will watch against all its temptations, whether of prosperity, or adversity, lest they should withdraw my heart from thee; beseeching thee also to help me against the temptations of satan, to whose wicked suggestions I resolve, by thy grace, never to yield myself a servant. And because my own righteousness is but menstruous rags, I renounce all confidence therein, and acknowledge that I am of myself a hope-

less, helpless, undone creature, without righteousness or strength.

And for as much as thou hast, of thy bottomless mercy, offered most graciously to me wretched sinner, to be again my God, through Christ, if I would accept of thee; I call heaven and earth to record this day, that I do here solemnly avouch thee for the Lord my God; and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of thy most sacred majesty, I do here take thee, Lord JEHOVAH, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for my portion, and chief good; and do give up myself, body and soul, for thy servant, promising and vowing to serve thee in holiness and righteousness, all the days of my life.

And since thou hast appointed the Lord Jesus Christ the only means of coming unto thee, I do here, upon the bended knees of my soul, accept of him, as the only new and living way by which sinners may have access to thee; and do hereby solemnly join myself in marriage covenant to him.

O blessed Jesus, I come to thee hungry and hardly bestead, poor, and wretched, and mis-

The terms to which we must turn are either ultimate or mediate.

The ultimate is God the Father, Son, & Holy Ghost, who must be thus accepted.

The mediate terms are either principal, or less principal.

The principal is Christ the Mediator, who must thus be embraced.

-erable, and blind, and naked ; a most loathsome, polluted wretch, a guilty, condemned malefactor, unworthy for ever to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, much more to be solemnly married to the king of glory : but sith, such is thine unparalleled love, I do here with all my power accept thee, and do take thee for my head and husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honor, and obey thee before all others ; and this to the death. I embrace thee in all thy offices : I renounce mine own unworthiness, and do here avow thee to be the Lord my righteousness : I renounce mine own wisdom, and do here take thee for mine only guide : I renounce mine own will, and take thy will for my law.

And since thou hast told me that I must suffer if I will reign, I do here covenant with thee to take my lot, as it falls, with thee, and, by thy grace assisting, to run all hazards with thee ; verily supposing that neither life nor death shall part between thee and me.

And because thou hast been pleased to give me thy holy laws as the rule of my life, and the way in which I should walk to thy kingdom, I do here willingly put my neck under thy yoke, and set my shoulder to thy burden ; and subscribing to all thy laws, as holy, just and good, I solemnly take them as the rule of my words, thoughts and actions ; promising that though my flesh contradict and rebel, yet I will en-

endeavor to order and govern my whole life according to thy direction, and will not allow myself in the neglect of any thing that I know to be my duty.

Only because, through the frailty of my flesh, I am subject to many failings, I am bold humbly to protest, That unallowed miscarriages, contrary to the settled bent and resolution of my heart, shall not make void this covenant; for so thou hast said.

Now, Almighty God, searcher of hearts, thou knowest that I make this covenant with thee this day, without any known guile or reservation; beseeching thee, that if thou espieest any flaw or falsehood therein, thou wouldst discover it to me, and help me to do it aright.

And now, glory be to thee, O God the Father, whom I shall be bold from this day forward to look upon as my God and Father, that ever thou shouldst find out such a way for the recovery of undone sinners. Glory be to thee, O God the Son, who hast loved me, and washed me from my sins in thine own blood, and art now become my Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to thee, O God the Holy Ghost, who, by the finger of thine almighty power, hast turned about my heart from sin to God.

O dreadful JEHOVAH, the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! thou art now become my covenant friend, and I, through thine infinite grace, am become thy covenant servant; *Amen*, So be it. And the

covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

THE AUTHOR'S ADVICE.

This covenant I advise you to make not only in heart, but in word ; not only in word, but in writing ; and that you would, with all possible reverence, spread the writing before the Lord, as if you would present it to him as your act and deed : And when you have done this, set your hand to it ; keep it as a memorial of the solemn transactions that have passed between God and you, that you may have recourse to it on doubts and temptations.

Direct. XI. *Take heed of delaying thy conversion, and set upon a speedy and present turning. I made haste and delayed not, Ps. cxix. 60. Remember and tremble at the sad instance of the foolish virgins, that came not till the door of mercy was shut, Matt. xxv. and of a convinced Felix, that put off Paul, to another season ; and we never find that he had such a season more, Acts xiv. 25. Oh, 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 that belong to thy peace should be hid from thine eyes. Now mercy is wooing of 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 the market is open, and oil may be had, thou hast opportunity for the buying : now Christ is to be*

had for the taking. Oh! strike in with the offers of grace: Oh! now or never. If thou make light of this offer, God may swear in his wrath, thou shalt never taste of his supper, Luke xiv. 24.

Direct. XII. Attend conscientiously upon the word as the means appointed for thy conversion, James i. 18, 19. 1 Cor. iv. 15. 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: "Oh, 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 ordinances, lift up thine heart thus to God:—"Lord, let this be the sabbath, let this be the season wherein I may receive renewing grace. Oh, let it be said, that to-day such a one was born unto thee."

Obj. Thou wilt say, I have been long a hearer of the word, and yet it hath not been effectual to my conversion.

Ans. 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 of this happy effect of it.

Direct. XIII. Strike in with the Spirit, when he begins to work upon thy heart.— When he works convictions, Oh, do not stifle them, but join in with him; and beg the Lord to carry on convictions to conversion. Quench not the Spirit; do not out-strive him, do not resist him. Beware of putting out

convictions by evil company, or worldly business. When thou findest any troubles for sin, and fears about thy eternal state, beg of God, that they may never leave thee, till they have wrought off thy heart thoroughly from sin, and wrought it over to Jesus Christ. Say to him, "Strike home, Lord, leave not the work in the midst. Thou seest that I am not yet wounded enough, that I am not troubled enough, wound me yet deeper, Lord; Oh! go to the bottom of my corruption, let out the life-blood of my sin." Thus yield up thyself to the workings of the Spirit, and hoist thy sails to his gusts.

Direct. XIV. Set upon the constant and diligent use of serious and fervent prayer. He that neglects prayer, is a profane and un-sanctified sinner, Job xv. 4. He that is not constant in prayer, is but an hypocrite, Job xxvii. 10. (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 on praying, Acts ix. 41. Therefore set to this duty: let never a day pass over thee, wherein thou hast not, morning and evening, set apart some time for set and solemn prayer in secret. Call thy family also together daily and duly, to worship God with thee. Wo be unto thee, if thine be found amongst the families that call not on God's name, Jer. x. 25. 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, Matt. xi. 12. 'Thou must strive to enter, Luke xiii. 24, and wrestle with tears and supplications, as Jacob, if thou meanest to carry the blessing, Gen. xxxii. 24, compared with Hos. xii. 4. 'Thou art undone for ever without grace, and therefore thou must put to it and resolve to take no denial. 'That man that is fixed in this resolution— "Well, I must have grace: and I will never give over, till I have grace; and I will never leave seeking, and waiting, and striving with God, and mine own heart, till he do renew me by the power of his grace;" This man is in the likeliest way to win grace.

Obj. But God heareth not sinners; their prayer is an abomination.

Ans. Distinguish between sinners. (1.) There are *resolved sinners*: their prayers God abhors. (2.) *Returning sinners*: these God will come forth to, and meet with mercy, though yet afar off, Luke xv. 20. 'Though the prayers of the unsanctified cannot have full acceptance, yet God hath done much at the request of such; as at Ahab's humiliation, and Nineveh's fast, 1 Kings xxi. 26. Jonah iii. 8, 9, 10. Surely thou mayest go as far as these, though thou hast no grace: and how dost thou know but thou mayest speed in thy suit, as they did in theirs? Yea, is he not far more likely to grant thee, than them, since thou askest in the name of Christ, and that not for temporal blessings, as they, but for things much more pleasing to him; viz. for *Christ, grace, pardon, that thou mayest be justified, sanctified, renewed, and fitted to*

serve him? Turn to these soul-encouraging scriptures, Prov. ii. 1, to 6. Luke xi. 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Prov. viii. 34, 35.

Is it not good comfort, that he calleth thee? Mark x. 49. Doth he set thee on the use of means, and dost thou think he will mock thee? Doubtless, he will not fail thee, if thou be not wanting to thyself. Oh, pray and faint not, Luke xviii. 1. A person of great quality having offended the Duke of Buckingham, the King's great favorite, being admitted into his presence, after long waiting, prostrates himself at his feet, saying, *I am resolved never to rise more, till I have obtained your Grace's favor*: with which carriage he did overcome him. With such a resolution do thou throw thyself at the feet of God: 'tis for thy life, and therefore follow him, and give not over. Resolve thou wilt not be put off with bones, with common mercies. What though God do not presently open to thee: is not grace worth the waiting for? Knock, and wait, and no doubt but sooner or later, mercy will come.

And this know, that thou hast the very same encouragement to seek and wait, that the saints now in glory once had, for they once were in thy very case: and have they sped so well, and wilt thou not go to the same door, and wait upon thy God in the same course?

Direct. XV. *Forsake thy evil company, Prov. ix. 6, and forbear the occasions of sin, Prov. xxiii. 31. 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, as to fly the occasions. If thou wilt be nibbling at the bait, and playing on the brink, and tampering and meddling with the snare, thy soul will surely be taken. Where God doth expose men in his providence unavoidably to temptations, 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 company. Oh, what hopeful beginnings have these often stifled! Oh, the souls, the estates, the families, the towns that these have ruined! How many a poor sinner hath been enlightened and convinced, and hath been just ready to give the devil the slip, and hath even escaped the snare, and yet wicked company have pulled him back at last, and made him seven-fold more the child of hell. In one word, I have no hopes of thee, except thou wilt shake off thy evil company. Christ speaketh to thee, as to them in another case, *If thou seek me, then let these go their way*, John xviii. 8.—Thy life lies upon it: forsake these, or else thou canst not live, Prov. ix. 6. Wilt thou be worse than the beast, to run on when thou seest the Lord with a drawn sword in the way? Num. xxii. 33. Let this sentence be written in capitals upon thy conscience, *A*

COMPANION OF FOOLS SHALL BE DESTROYED, Prov. xiii. 20. 'The Lord hath spoken it, and who shall reverse it?— And wilt thou run upon destruction, when God himself doth forewarn thee? If God do ever change thy heart, it will appear in the change of thy company. Oh! fear and fly this gulf, by which so many thousand souls have been swallowed into perdition. It will be hard for thee, indeed, to make thine 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 not thou 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 lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives*, Prov. i. 10 to 18, and iv. 14 to 20. My soul is moved within me, to see how many of my hearers are like 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, Num. xvi. 26, *And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men. Oh! flee them as you would those that had the*

plague-sores ruuning in their foreheads.— These are the devils panders, and decoys; and if thou dost not make thine escape, they will toll thee into perdition, and will prove thine eternal ruin.

Direct. XVI. *Lastly, Set apart a day to humble thy soul in secret, by fasting and prayer, to work the sense of thy sins and miseries upon thy heart.* Read over the *Assembly's exposition of the commands*, 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 to the terms, join thyself solemnly to the Lord in that covenant set down in the tenth direction, and the Lord grant thee mercy in his sight.

Thus I have told thee, what thou must do to be saved. Wilt thou not now obey the voice of the Lord? Wilt thou arise, and set to thy work? O man, what answer wilt thou make, what excuse wilt thou have, if thou shouldst perish at last through very wilfulness, when thou hast known the way of life? I do not fear thy miscarrying, if thine own idleness do not at last undo thee, in neglecting the use of the means that are so plainly here prescribed. Rouse up, O sluggard, and ply thy work: be doing, and the Lord will be with thee.

A short soliloquy for an unregenerate Sinner.

‘AH wretched man that I am! what a condition have I brought myself into by sin!

Oh ! I see my heart hath but deceived me all this while, in flattering me, that my condition was good. I see, I see, I am but a lost and undone man, forever undone, unless the Lord help me out of this condition. My sins ! my sins ! Lord, what an unclean, polluted wretch am I ! more loathsome and odious to thee, than the most hateful venom, or noisome carcase can be to me. Oh, what a hell of sin is in this heart of mine, which I have flattered myself to be a good heart ! Lord, how universally am I corrupted, in all my parts, powers, performances ! all the imaginations of the thoughts of my heart are only evil continually. I am under an inability to, averseness from, and enmity against any thing that is good ; and am prone to all that is evil. My heart is a very sink of all sin : And Oh the innumerable hosts and swarms of sinful thoughts, words, and actions, that have flown from thence ! Oh the load of guilt that is on my soul ! my head is full, my heart full, my mind, and my members ; they are all full of sin. O my sins ! how do they stare upon me ! how do they witness against me ! wo is me, my creditors are upon me, every commandment taketh hold upon me, for more than ten thousand talents, yea, ten thousand times ten thousand. How endless then is the sum of all my debts ! if this whole world were filled up from earth to heaven with paper, and all this paper written over, within and without, by arithmeticians ; yet when all were cast up together, it would come inconceivably short of what I owe to the least of

God's commandments. Wo unto me, for my debts are infinite, and my sins are increased; they are wrongs to an infinite Majesty: and if he that committeth treason against a silken mortal, is worthy to be racked, drawn and quartered; what have I deserved, that have so often lifted up my hands against heaven, and have struck at the crown and dignity of the Almighty!

O my sins! my sins! behold a troop cometh! multitudes, multitudes! there is no number of their armies. Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me; they have set themselves in array against me. Oh! it were better to have all the regiments of hell come against me, than to have my sins fall upon me, to the spoiling of my soul. Lord, how am I surrounded? How many are they that rise up against me? They have beset me behind and before: they swarm within me, and without me: they have possessed all my powers, and have fortified mine unhappy soul, as a garrison, which this brood of hell doth man, and maintain against the God that made me.

And they are as mighty, as they are many. The sands are many, but they are not great; the mountains are great, but they are not many: but wo is me! my sins are as many as the sands, and as mighty as the mountains; their weight is greater than their number. It were better that the rocks and the mountains should fall upon me, than the crushing and insupportable load of my own sins. Lord, I am heavy laden; let mercy

help, or I am gone: Unload me of this heavy guilt, this sinking load ; or I am crushed without hope, and must be pressed down to hell. If my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my sins laid in the balances together, they would be heavier than the sands of the sea ; therefore my words are swallowed up : they would weigh down all the rocks, and the hills, and turn the balance against all the isles of the earth. O Lord, thou knowest my manifold transgressions, and my mighty sins.

Ah my soul ! alas, my glory ! whither art thou humbled ? Once the glory of the creation, and the image of God ? Now a lump of filthiness, a coffin of rottenness, replenished with stench and loathsomeness. Oh, what work hath sin made with thee ! Thou shalt be termed forsaken, and all the rooms of thy faculties desolate ; and the name that thou shalt be called by is Ichabod, or where is the glory ? How art thou come down mightily ? My beauty is turned into deformity, and my glory into shame. Lord, what a loathsome leper am I ? The ulcerous bodies of Job or Lazarus were not more offensive to the eyes and nostrils of men, than I must needs be to the most holy God, whose eyes cannot behold iniquity.

And what misery have my sins brought upon me ? Lord, what a case am I in ? Sold under sin, cast out of God's favour, accursed from the Lord, cursed in my body, cursed in my soul, cursed in my name, in my estate, my relations, and all that I have.

My sins are unpardoned, and my soul within a step of death. Alas! what shall I do? Whither shall I go? Which way shall I look? God is frowning on me from above; hell gaping for me beneath; conscience smiting me within; temptations and dangers surrounding me without. Oh! whither shall I fly? What place can hide me from omniscience? What power can secure me from omnipotency?

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 this misery? Is it good for thee to be here? Alas! what shall I do? Shall I go on in my sinful ways? Why, then certain damnation will be mine end: and shall I be so besotted and bemaddened, 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 content to my flesh? Shall I linger any longer in this wretched estate? No, if I tarry here, I shall die. What then? Is there no help, no hope? None, except I turn. Why, 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 presently, unfeignedly, and unreservedly I turn by Christ to him.

Why then, I thank thee upon the bended knees of my soul, O most merciful Jehovah, that thy patience hath waited upon me hitherto; for hadst thou took me away in this estate, I had perished forever. And now I adore

thy grace, and accept the offer 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, who am not worthy to lick up the dust of thy feet? Yet since thou holdest forth the golden sceptre, I am bold to come and touch it. 'To despair, would be to disparage thy mercy ; and, to stand off when thou biddest me come, would be at once to undo 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 in 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 : Oh 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 : Oh that it were better ! But, Lord, I put it in 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 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 else I perish : I come to thee with the rope about my neck ; I am worthy to die, and to be damned. Never was the hire more due to the servant, never was the penny more due to the labourer, than death and hell, my just wages, is due to me for my sins : But I fly to thy merits, I trust alone to the value and virtue of thy sacrifice, and 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 but 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 agents, 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 dietates 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 proper goods : set thy mark upon me, upon every member of my body, and every faculty of my soul. I have chosen thy precepts, thy law will I lay before me ; this shall be the copy which I will keep in my eye, and study to write after. According to this rule do I resolve, by thy grace, to walk ; after this law shall my whole man be governed ; and though I cannot 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 cost me. I am sure I cannot come off a loser by thee, 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, little and despised here, so I may be but 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 I will stand, in this resolution, by 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.*

CHAP. VII.

CONTAINING 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 considering mind to resolve upon a present turning or conversion 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 in Christ, some motives to persuade you hereunto.

“O Lord, fail me not now, at my last attempts. If any soul hath read hitherto, and be yet untouched, now, Lord, fasten in him, and do thy work: now take him by the heart, overcome him, persuade him, till he say, Thou hast prevailed, for thou wert stronger than I. Lord, didst thou not 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 inelose with arguments the souls I seek for, 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 unto you.

Men and brethren, heaven and earth do call upon you; yea, hell itself doth preach the doctrine of repentance unto you: the angels of the churches travail with you, Gal. iv. 19, the angels of heaven wait for you, for your repenting and turning unto God. O sinner! why should the devils make merry with thee? Why shouldst thou be a morsel for that devouring Leviathan? Why should harpies and hell-hounds tear thee, and make a feast upon thee; and when they have got thee into the snare, and have fastened their talons in thee, laugh at thy destruction, and deride thy misery, and sport themselves with thy damnable folly? This must be thy case, except thou turn. And were it not better thou shouldst be a joy to angels, than a laughing stock and spert for devils? Verily, if thou wouldst but come in, the heavenly host would take up their anthems, and sing, *Glory be 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 holyday in heaven, and the glorious spirits would rejoice, in that there is a new brother added to their society, Rev. xxii. 9, another heir born to their Lord, and the lost son received safe and sound. The true penitent's tears are indeed the wine that cheereth both God and man.

If it be little, that men and angels would rejoice at thy conversion, know that God himself would rejoice over thee, even with sing-

ing, and rest in his love, *Luke xv. 9.* *Isa. lxii. 5.* Never did Jacob with such joy weep over the neck of his Joseph, as thy heavenly Father would rejoice over thee, upon thy coming in to him. Look over the story of the prodigal: methinks I see how the aged father lays aside his state, and forgets his years. Behold how he runneth! *Luke xv. 20.* Oh the haste that mercy makes! the sinner makes not half that speed. Methinks I see how his bowels turn, how his compassions yearn.— (How quick sighted is love!) Mercy spies him a great way off, forgets his riotous courses, unnatural rebellion, horrid unthankfulness, debauched practices, (not a word of these) and receives him with open arms, clasps about his neck, forgets the nastiness of his rags, kisseth the lips that deserved to be loathed, the lips that had been joined to harlots, that had been commoners with the swine: calls for the fatted calf, the best robe, the ring, the shoe, the best cheer in heaven's store, the best attire in heaven's wardrobe, *Luke xv. 6, 9, 23.* Yea, the joy cannot be held in one breast, &c. others must be called to participate; the friends must meet, and make merry: angels must wait, but the prodigal must be set at the table, under his Father's wing: he is the joy of the feast: he is the sweet subject of the Father's delight:— the friends sympathize; but none knows the felicity the Father takes in his new born son, whom he hath received from the dead. Methinks I hear the music and the dancing at a distance. Oh the melody of the heavenly

choristers ! I cannot learn the song, Rev. xiv. 3, but methinks I overhear the burden, at which all the harmonious choir with one consent strike sweetly in ; for thus goes the round at heaven's table, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again, was lost, and is found," Luke xv. 22, 24, 32. I need not further explain the parable : God is the Father, Christ is the cheer, his righteousness the robe, his graces the ornaments, ministers, saints, angels, the friends and servants ; and thou that readest (if thou wilt but unfeignedly repent and turn) the welcome prodigal, the happy instance of this grace, and blessed subject of this joy and love.

O rock ! O adamant ! what ! not moved yet ? nor 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 unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. If one went unto them from the dead, they will repent,* Luke xvi. 27, 28, &c. Hear, O man ! thy predecessors in impenitence preach to thee from the infernal gibbets, from the flames, from the rack, that thou shouldst repent. Oh ! look down into the bottomless pit : seest thou how the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever ? Rev. xiv. 11. How black are the fiends ! how furious are their tormentors ! 'Tis their

only music to hear how their miserable patients roar, to hear their bones crack; 'tis their meat and drink to see how their flesh frieth, and their fat droppeth; to drench them with burning metal, and to rip open their bodies, and to pour in the fierce burning brass into their bowels, and the recesses and ventricles of their hearts. What thinkest thou of those chains of darkness, of those instruments of cruelty? Canst thou be content to burn? Seest thou how the worm gnaweth, how the oven gloweth, how the fire rageth? What sayest thou to that river of brimstone, that dark and horrible vault, that gulf of perdition? Wilt thou take up thy habitation here? Oh! lay thine ear to the door of hell: hearest thou the curses and blasphemies, the weepings and the wailings; how they lament their folly, and curse their day? Matt. xxii. 13. Rev. xvi. 9. How do they roar and yell, and gnash their teeth? How deep are their groans? How feeling are their moans? How inconceivable are their miseries? If the shrieks of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, were so terrible (when the earth clave asunder, and opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and all that appertained to them) that all Israel fled at the cry of them, Num. xix. 33, 34. Oh! 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 and ever.*

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

Oh! 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 in the world that may be called madness and folly, and any thing that may be counted sottish, absurd, brutish, unreasonable, it is this, to go on in thine unconverted estate. Let me beg of thee, as thou wouldst not wilfully destroy thyself, to sit down and weigh, besides what hath been said, these following motives, and let conscience speak, if it be not reason that thou shouldst repent and turn.

1. *The God that made thee doth most graciously invite thee.*

First, *His most sweet and merciful nature doth invite thee.* O the kindness of God, his working bowels, his tender mercies! they are infinitely above our thoughts: *higher than heaven, what can we do? Deeper than hell what can we know?* Job xi. 7, 8, 9. *He is full of compassion, and gracious; long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy,* Psal. lxxxvi. 15. 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 were some discouragement to us why we should not repent. If there were no

hope of mercy, it were no such wonder if rebels should stand out: but never had subjects such a gracious prince, such piety, patience, clemency, pity to deal with as you have. *Who is a god like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity? &c.* Micah vii. 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,* ver. 19. *Return unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will return unto you,* Mal. iii. 17. Zech. i. 3. 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 mercy is beyond all imagination, Isa. lv. 9, great mercies, 1 Chron. xxi. 13, manifold mercies, Neh. ix. 49, tender mercies, Psal. xxv. 6, sure mercies, Isa. lv. 3, everlasting mercies, Psal. ciii. 17. Isa. liv. 8, and all thine own if thou wilt but turn. Art thou willing to come in? Why, the Lord hath lain aside his terror, erected a throne of grace, 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, Exod. xxxiv. 7. Read their experience, Neh. ix. 17.

Secondly, *His soul-encouraging calls and promises do invite thee.* Ah, what an earn-

est suiter is mercy to thee ! how loving, how instantly it calleth after thee ! how passionately it wooeth thee ! *Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine 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, for I am married unto you. Return, and I will heal your backslidings. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord, Jer. iii. 11, 12, 13, 14, 22. 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 ? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. "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 his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him : in his righteousness that he hath done shall he live. Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, and make you a clean 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, Ezek. xviii. 21, 22, 30, 31, 32."*

O melting, gracious words ! The voice of a God and not of a man ! This is not the

manner of men, for the offended sovereign to sue to the offending traitorous varlet. Oh, how doth mercy follow thee, and plead with thee! is not thy heart broken yet? Oh 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 administered to thee.* Christ now bespeaks thee, (as she her husband) *Arise and take possession, 1 Kings xxi. 15.* View the glory of the other world, as set forth in the map of the gospel. Get thee up into Pisgah of the promises, and lift up thine eyes westward, northward, southward and eastward, 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, Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 17. 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, Psal. lxxxvii. 3, 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 worse than distracted, that will not take possession, when the gates are flung open to thee, and thou art bid to enter? O ye sons of folly, will ye embrace the dunghills, and refuse the kingdom? Behold the Lord God taketh you up into the mountain, shews you the kingdom of heaven, and all the glory thereof; and tells you, *All this will I give you, if you will fall down and worship 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 court the harlot? Will you seek and serve the world, and neglect the eternal glory? What! not enter into paradise, when the flaming sword that 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. Why, what shall I think you? Either you are desperate unbelievers, that do not credit it, or stark distracted, that you know and believe the excellency and eternity of his glory, and yet do so fearfully neglect it. Surely you have no faith, or no reason; and I had almost said, conscience should tell you so before I leave you.

Do but attend what is offered to you: O blessed kingdom! a kingdom of glory, 1 Thess. ii. 1, a kingdom of righteousness, 2 Pet. iii. 13, a kingdom of peace, Rom. xiv. 17, an everlasting kingdom, 2 Pet. i. 11. Here thou shalt dwell, here thou shalt reign for ever, and the Lord shall set thee in a throne of glory, Matt. xix. 28, 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, Rev. xxi. 3, 4, 5, 23, 27) not of gold, (for this shall be viler than the dirt in that day) but a crown of life, James i. 12, a crown of righteousness, 2 Tim. iv. 8, a crown of glory, 1 Pet. v. 4. Yea, thou shalt put on glory as a robe, 1 Cor. xv. 53, and shalt shine like the sun in the firmament, in the glory of thy Father; Matt. xiii. 43. Look now upon thy dirty flesh, thy clay, thy worm's meat; this very flesh, this lump, this carcase shall be brighter than the stars, Dan. xii. 3. In short, thou shalt be made like unto the angels of God, Luke xx. 36, and behold his face in righteousness, Psal. xvii. 15. 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 say thou believest, let me next know thy resolutions. 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 spit in the harlot's face, and stop thine ears at her flatteries, and wrest thee out of her embraces? Wilt thou be content to take up with present reproach and poverty, if it lie in thy 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 art not thou fairly offered? Is it not pity but he should be damned

that will needs go on and perish, when all this may be had for the taking? In a word, wilt thou now close with these proffers? Wilt thou take God at his word? Wilt thou let go thy holdfast 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 distracted or bewitched, that thou shouldst neglect so happy a choice, by which thou mightest be made up for ever.

3. *God will settle unspeakable privileges at present upon thee, 1 Cor. iii. 22. Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.* Though the full of your blessedness shall be deferred till hereafter, yet God will give you no little things in hand.

He will redeem you from your thralldom, John viii. 36. He will pluck you from the paw of the lion, Col. i. 13. The serpent shall bruise your heel, but you shall bruise his head, Gen. iii. 15. He shall deliver you from the present evil world, Gal. i. 4. Prosperity shall not destroy you, adversity shall not separate between him and you, Rom. viii. 35, 37, 38. He will redeem you from the power of the grave, Psal. xlix. 15, and make the king of terrors a messenger of peace to you. He will take out the curse from the cross, Psal. cxix. 71, and make affliction the fining pot, the fan, the physic, to blow off the chaff, purify the metal, and purge the mind, Dan. xii. 10. Isa. xxvii. 9. He will save you from the arrest of the law, and turn the curse into a blessing to you, Rom. vi. 14. Gal. ii. 24. He hath the keys of hell and death, and shutteth that no man openeth,

Rev. iii. 7, and i. 18, and he will shut its mouth, as once he did the lions, Dan. vi. 22, that you shall not be hurt of the second death, Rev, ii. 11.

But 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 unto you, and a father to you, 2 Cor. vi. 18. He will be a sun and a shield to you, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. In a word, he will be a God to you, Gen. xvii. 7. And what can be said more? Whatever you may 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 a suitable state, and have an answerable dowry. He that hath a king for his father, or 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 coloured palmer-worm amongst the rest of the worms, if compared with God. As he doth infinitely exceed 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, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. He will take you for his sons and daughters, and make you heirs of his promises, Heb. vi. 17, and establish his everlasting covenant with you, Jer. xxxii. 40. He will justify you from all that law, conscience and Satan can

charge upon you, Rom. viii. 33, 34. He will give you free access into his presence, and accept your person, and receive your prayers, Eph. ii. 12, and i, 6. 1 John v. 14. He will abide in you, and make you the men of his secrets, and hold a constant and friendly communion with you, John xiv. 23, and xv. 15. 1 John i. 3. His ear shall be opened, his door opened, 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 about all things for good unto you, Psal. cxv. 13. Rom. viii. 28.

4. *The terms of mercy are brought as low as possible to you.* God hath stooped as low to sinners as with honour he can. He will not be thought a favourer of sin, nor stain the glory of his holiness: and whether could he come lower than he hath, unless he should do this? He hath abated the impossible terms of the first covenant, Jer. iii. 13. Mark v. 26. Acts. xvi. 31, and iii. 19. Prov. xxxviii. 13. He doth 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, by you: (1.) *That you should fully satisfy the demands of justice for past offences.* (2.) *That you should perform personally, perfectly and perpetually the whole law for the time to come.* Both these are to us impossible, Rom. viii. 3. But behold God's gracious abatement in both! He doth not stand upon satisfaction, he is content to take of the surety, (and he of his own providing

too) what he might have exacted from you, 2 Cor. v. 19. He declares himself to have received a ransom, Job xxxiii. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 6, and that he expects nothing but that you should accept his Son, and he shall be righteousness and redemption to you, John i. 12. 1 Cor. i. 30. And for the future obedience, here he is content to yield to your weakness, and omit the rigour. He doth not stand upon perfection, (as a condition of life, though he still insists upon it as due) but is content to accept of sincerity, Gen. xvi. 1. Prov. xi. 20. 'Though you cannot pay the full debt, he will accept you according to that which you have, and take willing for doing, and the purpose for the performance, 2 Cor. viii. 12. 2 Chron. vi. 17. And if you come in his Christ, and set your hearts to please him, and make it the chief of your cares, he will approve and reward you, though the vessel be marred in your hands.

Oh, consider your Maker's condescension. 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 unto thee, Wash and be clean?* 2 Kings v. 13. 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 yourselves with famine, or to offer the fruit of your bodies for the sin of your souls, would you not have thankfully accepted eter-

nal redemption, though these had been the conditions? Yea, further, if God should have told you, you should have fried in the fire for millions of ages, or been so long tormented in hell, would you not have gladly accepted it? Alas! all these are not so much as one sand in the glass of eternity. If your offended Creator should have held you but one year upon the rack, and then bid you come and forsake your sins, accept of 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 stuck at the offer, and disputed the terms, and have been unresolved whether you were best to accept of the motion? O sinner, return and live; why wouldst thou die, when life is to be had for the taking, and mercy should be beholden to thee (as it were) to be saved? Couldst thou say indeed, *Lord, I knew thou wast an hard man*, Matt. xxv. 24, thou hadst some little excuse: but when the God of heaven hath stooped so low, and bated so far, if now thou shouldst stand off, who shall plead for thee?

Obj. Notwithstanding all these abatements, I am no more able to perform those conditions (in themselves so easy) of faith and repentance, and sincere obedience, than to satisfy and fulfil the law.

Ans. These you may perform by God's grace enabling; whereas the others are naturally impossible in this state, even to believers themselves. But let the next consideration serve for a fuller answer.

5. *Wherein you are impotent, God doth offer grace to enable you. I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded, Prov. i. 24.* 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 stretcheth 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, Rev. iii. 20.* What though you are poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked? Christ offereth a cure for your blindness, a cover for your nakedness, a remedy for your poverty, he tendereth you his righteousness, his graces: *I counsel thee to buy of me, gold, that thou mayst be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayst be clothed; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayst see, Rev. iii. 17, 18.* 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, *Isa. lv. 1.* This buying is by begging, and seeking with diligence and constancy in the use of God's means, *Prov. ii. 3, 4.* 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 this fear? I answer, God doth offer to enlighten thy mind, and to teach thee his fear, that is presented to thy choice, *Prov. i. 29.* *For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.* So that now, if men live in ignorance and estrangement from the Lord, it is because *they will not understand, and desire not the*

knowledge of his ways, Job xxi. 14. *If thou criest after knowledge, if thou seekest her as silver, &c. then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God,* Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5. Is not here a fair offer?—*Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you,* Prov. i. 23. Though of yourselves you can do nothing, yet you may do all through his spirit enabling you; and he doth offer assistance to you. God bids you *wash, and make you clean,* Isa. i. 16.—You say, you are unable, as much as the leopard, to wash out his spots, Jer. xiii. 23. Yea, but the Lord doth offer to purge you; so that if you be filthy still, it is through your own wilfulness, Ezek. xxiv. 13. *I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged.* Jer. xiii. 27. *O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?* God doth wait when you will be made clean, when you will yield to his motions, and accept of his offers; and let him do for and in you what you cannot do for yourselves. You do not know how much God will do upon your importunity, if you will but be restless and instant with him, Luke xi. 8, and xviii. 5.

If God hath not bound himself by express promise to wicked men, to give them grace in the diligent use of the means, yet he hath given them abundant encouragement to expect it from him, if they seek it earnestly in his way. His most gracious nature is abundant encouragement. If a rich and most bountiful man should see thee in misery, and bid thee come to his door, wouldst thou not, with con-

fidence, expect, at thy coming, to find some relief? Thou art not able to believe nor repent: God appointed thee to use such and such means, in order to thy obtaining faith and repentance: doth not this argue that God will bestow these upon thee, if thou dost ply him diligently in prayer, meditation, reading, hearing, self-examination, and the rest of his means? otherwise God should but mock his poor creatures, to put them upon these self-denying endeavors; and then, when they have put hard to it, and continued waiting upon him for grace, deny them at last. Surely, if a sweet natured man would not deal thus, much less will the most merciful and gracious God.

I intended to have added many other arguments, but these have swollen under my hand; and I hope the judicious reader will rather look upon the weight than number.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE.

AND now, my brethren, let me know your minds: what do you intend to do? Will you go on and die? Or will you set upon a thorough and speedy conversion, and lay hold on eternal life? How long will you linger in Sodom? How long will you halt between two opinions? 1 Kings xviii. 21. Are you not yet resolved whether Christ or Barabbas, whether bliss or torment, whether the land of Cabul, 1 Kings ix. 13, 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 puddle of sin 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, that Christ can? Will it stand by you to eternity? Will pleasures, titles, lands, treasures, descend with you? Ps. xlix. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 7. If not, had you not need look after somewhat that will? What mean you to stand wavering, to be off and on? Foolish children! how long will you stick between the womb and the world? Shall I leave you at last no farther than Agrippa, but almost persuaded? Why, you are for ever lost if left here: as good not at all, as not altogether Christians. You are half of the mind to give over your former negligent life, and to set a strict and holy course; you could wish you were as some others be, and could do as they can do: how long will you rest in idle wishes, and fruitless purposes? When will you come to a fixed, full, and firm resolve? Do not you see how satan gulls you, by tempting you to delays? How long hath he tolled you on in the way of perdition?—How many years have you been purposing to amend? What if God should have taken you off this while?

Well, put me not off with a dilatory answer: tell me not of hereafter, I must have your present consent. If you be not now resolved, while the Lord is treating with you, and wooing of you, much less are you like to

be hereafter, when these impressions are worn out, and you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Will you give me your hands? Will you set open the doors, and give the Lord Jesus the full and present possession? Will you put your names into his covenant? Will you subscribe? What do you resolve upon? If you are still upon your delays, my labour is lost, and all is like to come to nothing. Fain I would, that you should now put in your adventures. Come, cast in your lot, make your choice : *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of thy salvation : to day if you will hear his voice.* Why should not this be the day from whence thou shouldst be able to date thine happiness? Why shouldst thou venture a day longer in this dangerous and dreadful condition? What if God should this night require thy soul? *Oh ! that thou mightest know, in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace, before they be hid from thine eyes,* Luke xix. 42. This is thy day, and it is but a day, John ix. 4. 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 the whole eternity. Remember thou art now upon thy good behaviour for everlasting ; if thou make not a wise choice now, thou art undone for ever. Look what thy present choice is, such must thine eternal condition be, Luke x. 24, and xvi. 25. Prov. i. 27, 28, 29.

And is it true indeed? Is life and death at thy choice? Yea, 'tis as true as truth is, Deut. xxx. 19. Why then, what hinders but that

you should be happy? Nothing doth or can hinder, but thine own wilful neglect, or refusal. It was the passage 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 in a box, (which, indeed, he refused deservedly, because upon unworthy terms:) but here the terms are most honorable and easy. O sinner! wilt thou burn with thy pardon by thee? Why, do but forthwith give up 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 the embracing? Why shouldst thou hesitate, or doubtfully dispute about the case? Is it not past controversy, whether God be better than sin, and glory better than vanity? Why shouldst thou forsake thine own mercy and sin against thine 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, *Prov. xxvii. 1.*

Beloved, now the holy Spirit is striving with you: he will not always strive. Hast thou not felt thy heart warmed by the word, and been almost persuaded to leave off thy sins, and come unto God? Hast thou not felt some good motions in thy mind, wherein thou hast been warned of thy danger, and told what

thy careless course will end in? It may be thou art like young Samuel, who, when the Lord called once and again, he knew not the voice of the Lord, 1 Sam. iii. 6, 7: But these motions and items are the offers and essays, and calls, and strivings of the Spirit: Oh, take the 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 pitifully, how passionately he calleth! The church is put into a sudden ecstacy upon the sound of his voice, *The voice of my beloved*, Cant. ii. 8. Oh, wilt thou turn a deaf ear to his voice? It is 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 the 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 of 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, Eph. vi. 15. 2 Cor. v. 18, 20. Methinks it should be with thee, as with the spouse, *My soul failed when he spake*, Cant. v. 6. I may say to thee, O sinner, as Martha to her sister, *The Master is come, and he calleth for thee*, John xi. 28. Oh, now 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*, John

vii. 37. Prov. i. 21. He broacheth his own body for thee: Oh, come and lay thy mouth to his side. How free is he! he excludeth none: *Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely, Rev. xxii. 17. Who is simple, let him turn in hither. Come, eat of my bread, drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live, Prov. ix. 4, 5, 6. Come unto me, &c. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, Matt. xi. 28, 29.—Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out, John vi. 37.* 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! Matt. xxiii. 37.—Behold me, behold me: I have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious people, Isa. lxxv. 1, 2.* Oh, be persuaded now at last, to throw yourselves into the arms of love.

Behold, O ye sons of men, the Lord Jesus hath thrown open the prisons, and now he cometh to you, (as the magistrates once to them, Acts xvi. 39) and beseecheth you to come out. If it were from a palace or a paradise, that Christ did call you, it were no wonder if you were unwilling; (and yet, how easily was Adam tolled from thence!) but it is from your prison, sirs, from your chains, from the dungeon, from the darkness, that he calleth you, Isa. xlii. 6, 7, and yet will you not come? He calleth you unto liberty, Gal. v. 13, and yet will you not hearken? His yoke is easy, his laws are liberty, his service

freedom, Matt. xi. 30. James i. 25. 1 Cor. vii. 22, and (whatever prejudices you have against his ways) if a 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, Prov. iii. 17. Ps. cxix. 165. 1 Pet. i. 8. Ps. cxix. 103, 111.

Beloved, I am loth to leave you : I cannot tell how to give over. I am now ready to shut up ; but fain I would drive this bargain between Christ and you before I end. What ! shall I leave you as I found you at last ?— Have you read hitherto, and are not yet resolved upon a present abandoning all your sins, and closing 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 yet must sit down at last in disappointment ? But is it a small matter that you turn me off ? You put a slight upon the God that made you, you reject the bowels and beseechings of a Saviour, and will be found resisters of the Holy Ghost, Acts vii. 51, if you will not now be prevailed with to repent and be converted.

Well, though I have called you long, and ye 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 a miserable *conclamatum est*.— 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, Jer. xxii. 29. 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 to you : *Hearken unto me, O ye children: hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not, Prov. viii. 32, 33.*

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. lv. 1, 2, 3.

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

Ho, every one that is in debt, and every one that is in distress, and every one that is discontented ; 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, Heb. vi. 18. Ps. xlvi. 3. Away with your sins, and come in unto

him, lest the avenger of blood seize you, lest devouring wrath overtake you.

Ho, every ignorant sinner, come, and buy eye-salve, that thou mayest see, Rev. iii. 18. Away with thine excuses, thou art for ever lost, if thou continuest in this estate, 2 Cor. iv. 3. But accept of Christ for thy prophet, and he will be a light unto thee, Isa. xlii. 6. Eph. v. 14. Cry unto him for knowledge, study his word, take pains about the principles of religion, humble thyself before him, and he will teach thee his way, and make thee wise unto salvation, Matt. xiii. 36. Luke viii. 9. John v. 39. Psal. xxv. 9. But if thou wilt not follow him in the painful use of his means, but sit down because thou hast but one talent, he will condemn thee for a wicked and slothful servant, Matth. xxv. 24. 30.

Ho, every profane sinner, come in and live : return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon thee : be entreated. Oh, return, come ; thou that hast filled thy mouth with oaths and execrations, all manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven thee, Matt. iii. 28, if thou wilt but thoroughly turn unto Christ, and come in. Though thou wast as unclean as *Magdalene*, *Yet put away thy whoredoms out of thy sight, and thine 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 as wool ; and though they be as crimson, they shall be white as snow,* Luke vii. 37. Hosea ii. 2. 1 Thess. iv. 4. Isa. i. 18.

Hear, O ye drunkards ! *How long will ye be drunken ? Put away your wine,* 1 Sam. i. 14, though ye have rolled in the vomit of your sin, take the vomit of repentance, and heartily disgorge your beloved lusts, and the Lord will receive you, 2 Cor. vi. 17. Give up yourselves unto Christ, to live soberly, righteously, and godly ; embrace his righteousness, accept his government ; and though you have been swine, he will wash you, Rev. iii. 6.

Hear, O ye loose companions ! whose delight is in vain and wicked society, to sport away your time in carnal mirth and jollity with them ; come in at wisdom's calls, and choose her, and her ways, and you shall live, Prov. ix. 5, 6.

Hear, O ye scorers ! hear the word of the Lord : Though you have made 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, Prov. i. 22, 23. In a word, though you should be found among the worst of that black roll, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 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, verse 11.

Ho, every formal professor, that art but a lukewarm and dough-baked Christian, and retest in the form of godliness, give over thy halving, and thy halting ; be a throughout Christian, and be zealous, and repent ; and

then, though thou hast been an offence to Christ's stomach, thou shalt be the joy of his heart, Rev. iii. 16, 19, 20.

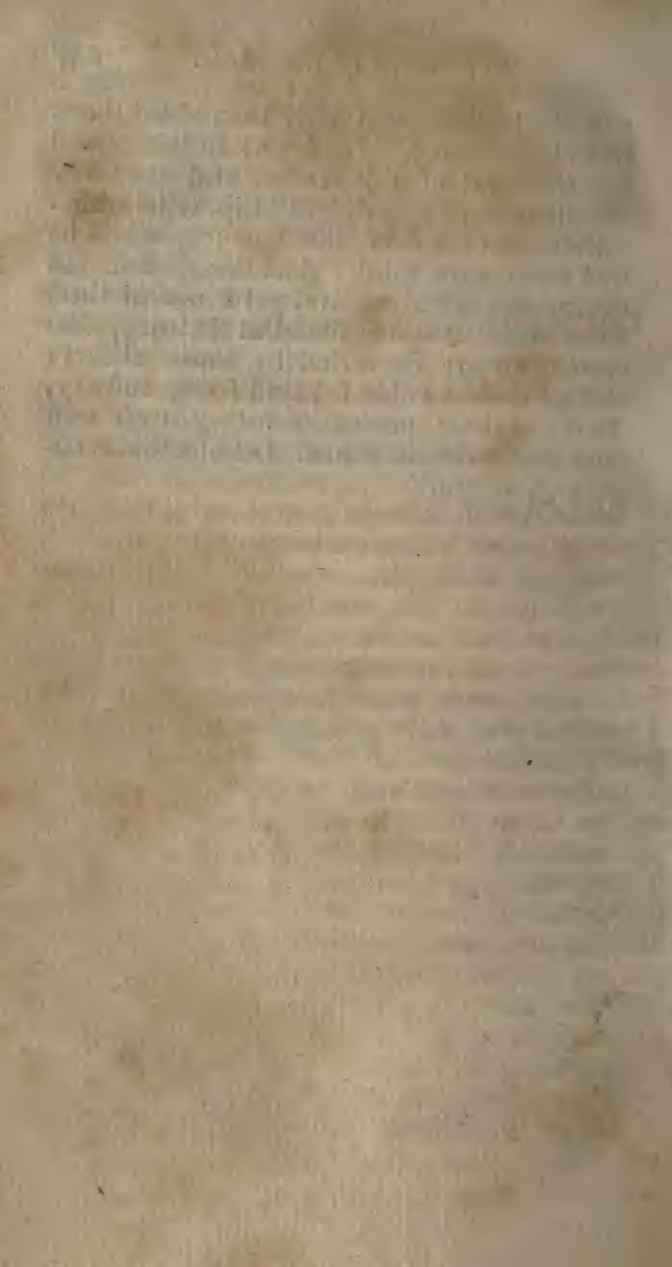
And now bear witness that mercy hath been offered you, *I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that you may live, Deut. xxx. 19.* I can but woo you, and warn you; I cannot compel you to be happy; if I could, I would. What answer will you send me with to my Master? Let me speak unto you, as Abraham's servant to them; *And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me, Gen. xxiv. 49.* Oh, for such a happy answer as Rebekah gave to them, Gen. xxiv. 57, 58. *And they said, we will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.* Oh that I had but thus from you! why should I be your accuser, Matt. x. 14, 15, who thirst for your salvation? Why should the passionate pleadings and wooing of mercy be turned into the horrid aggravation 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 endeavours 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, Matt. xi. 22, 24.*

Beloved, if you have any pity for your perishing souls, close with the present offers

of mercy : if you would not continue and increase the pains of your travailing ministers, do not stick in the birth. 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 up 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 wares, and bid you buy without money, and without price, in vain : let not his ministers, and his Spirit strive with you in vain, and leave you now at last unpersuaded, lest the sentence go forth against you, *The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them,* Jer. vi. 29, 30.

“Father of Spirits, take the heart in hand that is too hard for my weakness : do not thou have ended, though I have done : half a word from thine effectual power, will do the work. O thou that hast the key of David, that openest, when 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 be resolved to forego his sins, and to accept of life upon thy self-denying terms. In thy name, O Lord God, did I go forth to these labours ; in thy name do I shut them up : let not all the time they have cost be but lost hours ; let not all the thoughts of heart,

and all the pains that have been about them, be but lost labour. Lord, put in thine hand into 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, Lord God, let it be found at that day, that some souls are converted by these labours: 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.*”



MR. ALLEINE'S
COUNSEL FOR PERSONAL AND
FAMILY GODLINESS.

BELOVED, I despair of ever bringing you to salvation without sanctification, or possessing you of happiness without persuading you to holiness. God knows, I have not the least hope ever to see one of your faces in heaven, except you be converted, and sanctified, and exercise yourselves unto godliness: I beseech you, study personal godliness and family godliness.

1. *Personal godliness.* Let it be your first care to set up Christ in your hearts: see that you make all your worldly interest to stoop to him, that you be entirely and unreservedly devoted unto him. If you wilfully, and deliberately, and ordinarily harbour any sin, you are undone, Psal. lxxviii. 24. Ezek. xviii. 20. See that you unfeignedly take the law of Christ as the rule of your words, thoughts, and actions; and subject your whole man, members and mind faithfully to him Psal. cxix. 34. Rom. vi. 13. If you have not a true respect to all God's commandments, you are unsound at heart, Psal. cxix. 6. Oh, study

to get the image and impress of Christ upon you within. Begin with your hearts, else you build without any foundation. Labour to get a saving change within, or else all external performances will be to no purpose : and then study to shew forth the power of godliness in thy life : let piety be your first and great business ; it is the highest point of justice to give God his due. Beware that none of you be a prayerless person ; for that is a most certain discovery of a Christless and a graceless person, of one that is a very stranger to the fear of God, Psal. xiv. 4. John xv. 4. Suffer not your bibles to gather dust : see that you converse daily with the word, John v. 39. That man can never lay claim to blessedness, whose delight is not in the law of the Lord, Psal. i, 1, 2. Let meditation and self-examination be your daily exercise.

But piety without charity is but the half of Christianity, or rather impious hypocrisy. We may not divide the tables ; see therefore that you do justly, and love mercy, and let equity and charity run like an even thread throughout all your dealings. Be you temperate in all things and let chastity and sobriety be your undivided companions. Let truth and purity, seriousness and modesty, heaviness and gravity, be the constant ornament of your speech. Let patience and humility, simplicity and sincerity shine out in all the parts of your conversations. See that you forget and forgive wrongs, and requite them with kindness, as you would be found

the children of the most high. Be merciful in your censures, and put the most favourable constructions upon your brethrens carriage that their actions will reasonably bear. Be slow in promising, punctual in fulfilling. Let meekness and innocence, affableness, yieldingness, and simplicity commend your conversations to all men. Let none of your relations want that love and royalty, reverence and duty, that tenderness, care, and vigilance which their several places and capacities call for. This is thorough godliness. I charge you before the most high God, that none of you be found a swearer or a liar, or a lover of evil company, or a scoffer, or malicious, or covetous, or a drunkard, or a glutton, unrighteous in his dealing, unclean in his living, or a quarreller, or a thief, or a backbiter, or railer; for I denounce unto you from the living God, that destruction and damnation is the end of all such, Prov. xiii. 20. James v. 12. Rev. xxi. 8. 1 Cor. vi 9, 10. Gal. v. 19, 20, 21.

2. *Family godliness.* He that hath set up Christ in his heart, will be sure to study to set him up in his house. Let every family with you be a Christian church, 1 Cor. xix 19, every house a house of prayer; let every householder say with Joshua, I and my house will serve the Lord, Josh. xxiv. 15, and resolve with David, I will walk in my house with a perfect heart, Ps. ci. 2. Let me press upon you a few duties in general.

First, Let religion be in your families, not as a matter by the by (to be minded at

leisure, when the world will give you leave) but the standing business of the house : let them have your prayers as duly is their meals. Is there any of your families but have time for their taking food ? Wretched man ! canst thou not find time to pray in ?

Secondly, Settle it upon your hearts, that your souls are bound up in the souls of your family ; they are committed unto you, and if they be lost through your neglect, they will be required at your hands. Sirs, if you do not, you shall know, that the charge of souls is a heavy charge, and that the blood of souls is a heavy guilt. O man, hast thou a charge of souls to answer for, and dost thou not yet bestir thyself for them, that their blood be not found in thy skirts ? Wilt thou do no more for immortal souls than thou wilt do for the beasts that perish ? What dost thou do for thy children and servants ? Thou providest meat and drink for them agreeable to their nature ; and, dost thou not the same for thy beasts ? Thou givest them medicines, and cherishest them when they be sick ; and dost thou not the same for thy swine ? More particularly.

1. Let the solemn reading of the word, and singing of psalms be your family exercises, Isai. xxxiv. 36. John v. 39. Ps. cxviii. 15. See Christ singing with his family, viz. his disciples, Matt. xxvii. 30. Luke ix. 18.

2. Let every person in your families be duly called to an account of their profiting by the word heard or read, as they be about doing your own business : this is a duty of conse-

quence unspeakable, and would be a means to bring those under your charge to remember and profit by what they receive. See Christ's example in calling his family to account, Matt. xvi. 11, 13, 15.

3. Often take an account of the souls under your care, concerning their spiritual states, [herein you must be followers of Christ, Matt. xiii. 10, 36, 51. Mark iv. 10, 11.] make enquiry into their condition, insist much upon the sinfulness and misery of their natural state, and upon the necessity of regeneration and conversion, in order to their salvation. Admonish them gravely of their sins, encourage their beginnings, follow them earnestly, and let them have no quiet for you, until you see them in a saving change. This is a duty of very great consequence, but (I am afraid) most fearfully neglected: doth not conscience say, *Thou art the man?*

4. Look to the strict sanctifying of the sabbath by all your household, Exod. xx. 19. Levit. xxiii. 3. Many poor families have little time else: O improve but your sabbath days as diligently in labouring for knowledge, and doing your Maker's work, as you do the other days in doing your own work, and I doubt not but you may come to some proficiency.

5. Let the morning and evening sacrifice of solemn prayer be daily offered up in all your families, Ps. xcii. 1, 2. Exod. xxx. 7, 8. Luke i. 9, 10. Beware they be not found among the families that call not upon God's name; for, why should there be wrath from

the Lord upon your families? Jer. x. 25. O miserable families without GOD in the world, that are without family prayer! What! have you so many family sins, family wants, family mercies; what! and yet no family prayers? How do you pray with all prayer and supplication, if you do not with family prayer? Eph. vi. 18. Say not, *I have no time*; what! hast thou not all thy time on purpose to serve God and save thy soul? And yet is this it for which thou canst find no time? Find but an heart, and I will find time. Pinch out of your meals and sleep, rather than want for prayer. Say not, *My business will not give leave*: this is the greatest business, to save thyself and the souls committed to thee. Business! a whet will be no lett. In a word, the blessing of all is to be got by prayer, Jer. xxix. 11, 12. 2 Sam. vii. 29, and what is thy business without God's blessing? Say not, *I am not able*; use the one talent, and God will encrease, Matt. xxv. 24, &c. Helps are to be had till thou art better able. But if there be no other remedy thou must join with thine abler neighbour; God has special regard to joint prayer, James v. 4, to 19. Acts xii. 5, 10, 12. 2 Cor. i. 11, and therefore you must improve family advantages for the performing of it.

6. Put every one in your families upon private prayer. Observe whether they do perform it. Get them the help of a form, if they need it, till they are able to go without it. Direct them how to pray, by reminding them of their sins, wants, and mercies, the

materials of prayer. This was the practice of John, and of Jesus, Luke xi. 1, 2, &c.

7. Set up catechising in your families, at the least once every week. Have you no dread of the Almighty's charge, that you should *teach these things diligently to your children, and talk of them as you sit in your houses?* Deut. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9, and iv. 9, 10, and xi. 18, 19, 20, and *train them up in the way wherein they should go,* Prov. xxii. 6. the margin. Hath God so commanded Abraham, that he would *teach his children and household,* Gen. xviii. 19, and that he had many *instructed servants,* Gen. xiv. 14, (see the margin) and given such a promise to him thereupon, and will you not put in for a share, neither in praise, nor the promises? Hath Christ honored catechising with his presence, Luke ii. 46, and will you not own it with your practice? Say not, 'They are careless, and will not learn: what have you your authority for, if not to use it for God, and the good of their souls? You will call them up and force them to do your work, and should you not at least be as zealous in putting them upon God's work? Say not, They are dull, and are not capable: if they be dull, God requires of you the more pains and patience; but so dull as they are, you will make them learn how to work; and can they not learn as well how to live? Are they capable of the mysteries of your trade, and are they not capable of the plain principles of religion?— Well, as ever you would see the growth of religion, the cure of ignorance, the remedy of

profaneness, the downfall of error, *fulfil you my joy*, in going through with this duty.

Will you answer the calls of divine providence? Would you remove the incumbent, or prevent the impending calamities? Would you plant nurseries for the church of God? Would you that God should build your houses, and bless your substance? Would you that your children should bless you? O then set up piety in your families, as ever you would be blessed, or be a blessing: let your hearts and your houses be the temples of the living God, in which his worship (according to all the said mentioned directions) may be with constancy reverently performed. Prov. xxix. 1. *He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* Oh, be wise in time, that you be not miserable to eternity.

USEFUL QUESTIONS,

WHEREBY A CHRISTIAN MAY EVERY DAY EX-
AMINE HIMSELF.

Commune with your hearts upon your beds.
Ps. iv. 4.

EVERY evening before you sleep (unless you find some other time of the day more for your advantage in this work) sequester yourself from the world; and having set your hearts in the presence of the Lord, charge it before God to answer to these interrogatories.

For your Duties.

Question 1. Did not God find me on my bed when he looked for me on my knees?—
Job i. 5. Ps. v. 3.

Q. 2. Have not I prayed to no purpose, or suffered wandering thoughts to eat out my duties? Matt. xv. 8, 9. Jer. xii. 2.

Q. 3. Have not I neglected, or been very slovenly in the reading of God's holy word? Deut. xvii. 18. Josh. i. 7, 8.

Q. 4. Have I digested the sermon I heard last? Have I repeated it over, and prayed it over? Luke ii. 19, 51. Ps. i. 2, and cxix. 5, 11, 97.

Q. 5. Was there not more of custom and fashion in my family duties, than of conscience? Ps. ci. 2. Jer. xxx. 21.

Q. 6. Wherein have I denied myself this day for God? Luke ix. 23.

Q. 7. Have I redeemed my time from too long or needless visits, idle imaginations, fruitless discourse, unnecessary sleep, more than needs of the world? Eph. v. 16. Col. iv. 5.

Q. 8. Have I done any thing more than ordinary for the church of God, in this time extraordinary? 2 Cor. xi. 28. Isa. vi. 2. 6.

Q. 9. Have I took care of my company?—Prov. xiii. 20. Ps. cxix. 63.

Q. 10. Have not I neglected or done something against the duties of my relations, as a master, servant, husband, wife, parent, child, &c.? Eph. v. 22, to chap. vi. verse 10. Col. iii. 18, to chap. iv. verse 2.

For your Sins.

Q. 1. Doth not sin sit light?—Ps. xxxviii. 4. Rom. vii. 24.

Q. 2. Am I a mourner for the sins of the land? Ezek. ix. 4. Jer. ix. 1, 2, 3.

Q. 3. Do I live in nothing that I know or fear to be a sin? Ps. cxix. 101, 104.

For your Heart.

Q. 1. Have I been much in holy ejaculations? Neh. ii. 4, 5.

Q. 2. Hath not God been out of mind? heaven out of sight? Ps. xvi. 8. Jer. ii. 32. Col. iii. 1, 2.

Q. 3. Have I been often looking into mine own heart, and made conscience even of vain thoughts? Prov. iii. 23. Ps. cxix. 113.

Q. 4. Have I not given way to the workings of pride or passion? **2 Chron. xxxii. 26.—James iv. 5, 6, 7.**

For your Tongue.

Q. 1. Have I bridled my tongue, and forced it in? **James i. 26, and iii. 2, 3, 4. Psa. xxxix. 1.**

Q. 2. Have I spoke evil of no man? **Tit. iii. 2. James iv. 11.**

Q. 3. Hath the law of the Lord been in my mouth as I sat in my house, went by the way, was lying down, and rising up? **Deut. vi. 6, 7.**

Q. 4. Is there no company I come into, but I have dropped something of God, and left some good savour behind? **Col. iv. 6. Eph. iv. 29.**

For your Table.

Q. 1. Did not I sit down with no higher end than a beast, merely to please my appetite? Did I eat and drink to the glory of God? **1 Cor. x. 31.**

Q. 2. Was not my appetite too hard for me? **Jude 12. 2 Pet. i. 6.**

Q. 3. Did not I arise from the table without dropping any thing of God there? **Luke vii. 36, and xiv. 1, &c. John vi.**

Q. 4. Did not I mock God when I pretended to crave a blessing and return thanks?—**Acts xxvii. 25, 38. Matt. xv. 36. Col. iii. 17, 23.**

For your Calling.

Q. 1. Have I been diligent in the duties of my calling? Eccl. ix. 1 Cor. vii. 17, 20, 24.

Q. 2. Have I defrauded no man? 1 Thess. iv. 6. 1 Cor. vi. 8.

Q. 3. Have I dropped never a lie in my shop or trade? Prov. xxviii. 6. Eph. iv. 25.

Q. 4. Did not I rashly make, nor falsely break some promise? Ps. cvi. 33. Josh. ix. 14, &c. Ps. xv. 4.

DIVERS PRACTICAL
CASES OF CONSCIENCE,
SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED.

CHAP. I.

THE SINGULAR DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS.

First case of Conscience.

On Matt. v. 47. *What do you more than others?*

QUESTION I.

WHEREIN should Christians be singular in their obedience? or what may they, and must they do more than others?

Answer. Take the answer in these sixteen rules, containing the character and compass of a Christian.

Rule I. *Heartily to love them that slight you, and to wish and seek the good of those that hate you, and seek to hurt you.* 'This is the very thing urged in the text: *If you salute your brethren only, and love them that love you, do not even the publicans the same?*—Matt. v. 46, 47. 'To love them that do respect and value us, this every one can do: but to love them truly that think meanly of us, and have prejudices and hard thoughts against us, and to speak well of them that speak evil of us, (as the sweet spirited Calvin, Let Luther call me dog or devil, I will say of him

nevertheless, he is a precious servant of Jesus Christ,) this is to do more than others.— Thus the martyr Crammer, of whom it was a proverb, Do the Bishop of Canterbury a displeasure, and you shall ever have him your friend; thus that holy man, in his much to be admired panting words, “I had never any greater pleasure in all my life than to forget and forgive injuries, and to shew kindness to them that sought evil to me.” Study who have offended you, and disobliged you, and slighted you, and keep up good thoughts of them, (if the case will bear it) and speak nothing but good of them, and think what kindness you may shew them: *pray for them*, wish well to them, so shall ye be *the children of your father which is in heaven*, Matt. v. 44. 45.

Rule II. *To swim against the stream of the multitude.* The dead fish will swim with, but the living against the stream. Many will turn Jews when their interest will carry it in the world. When religion is in fashion every one will be in it. But to bear head against the current of the times, and to be for strict godliness in all your ways, when the stream runs quite against it, to bear it down, and to resolve, as David did, to *be yet more vile*; this is to be, and to do more than others.— The Samaritans will need be Jews when Alexander favors and helps them; but when Antiochus bloodily rages against them, (as in the time of the Maccabees) then they will be none of the kin, but pretend themselves to be of another stock, (which, by the way, was the

reason of the deadly hatred afterwards between the Jews and them.) But to be singular in your good choice and resolutions, with Joshua, though all should vote against you with one consent; and with Noah, to be perfect in our generation, when never so adulterous, and to walk with God when all flesh have corrupted their way, and tread a contrary course; this is to do more than others. Thus the three children, or rather the three champions, who would not fear the flouts of the multitude, nor the frowns of the great ones, nor the charge of singularity, when all the princes, governors, captains, counsellors, sheriffs, and all the people, nations, and languages, fell down and worshipped, they stood by themselves, and would not sinfully comply, Dan. iii. 3, 7, 18.

Rule III. *To take most care of that which is most out of sight.* A Christian's eye is most on the things least seen: 1. Upon his *heart*. Herein he doth exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees, whose great care was to keep all fair and clean that came to view, but looked no farther. Make great conscience of your carriage in secret, and let your main guard be upon your hearts, and this will be more than others reach to. This was Paul's care, to keep his conscience, his inside, clean and undefiled, Acts xxiv. 16, and Job's care, that though all the world did reproach him, he might not put a reproach in the mouth of his conscience, Job xxvii. 6, and David's care, that his heart might be clean. 2. Upon his *hope*. Others look to the things seen,

things in hand ; but the true believer eyes his hopes, walks by faith, not by sight, and lives a quite different life from any other in the world besides ; as living upon the hopes of heaven doth differ from living on the pleasures, profits and honors of the world.

Rule IV. To be merciful to other's failings, and very severe to our own. The noble Roman, Cato, could more easily forgive any than himself. To aggravate our own evils, and to have an excuse ready for our brother's, and to censure ourselves freely, and to come with the mantle behind us to cover our brother, this is to do more than others. The hypocrite is a censorer abroad ; he is like the eye, that can see any thing but itself ; he can discern a mote in his brother's eye, but not a beam in his own. But the servant of God rebukes others with meekness, but falls out easily and bitterly with himself.

Rule V. To suffer rather than to sin. This was Moses' choice ; but the hypocrite is quite contrary : he chooseth iniquity rather than affliction. To go far with Christ as our ways lie together, is to do no more than an unsound professor may reach to : the trial is when Christ's interest and ours do cross, and we must either baulk our duty, or our safety and advantage. The famous martyr under Julian would not give an half-penny toward the building of the idol's temple, though he was offered his life by the emperor on those terms : the godly high-priest Eleazer, when the nobles persuaded him to eat other meat under colour of swine's flesh, and they would per-

suade the king Antiochus that he had eaten swine's flesh, would die rather than stain his profession with the appearance of evil. When a man shall lie in outward misery, and have a door of deliverance opened, if he would but sin, and yet he will not accept of it, as those worthies in Paul's martyrology, Heb. xi. 35, &c. this is to do more than others.

Rule VI. *To rejoice for losses in Christ, and glory in the cross*; when others are discouraged at the news of hardship, as that forward and seemingly resolved disciple; or shall be offended as soon as the sun of persecution is up: when we shall take pleasure in infirmities, in tribulations, and rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ: this is to do more than others. When the servants of God shall not only patiently and triumphantly undergo the crosses that crack the brains, and break the hearts of others, and shall shake off the viper without receiving any hurt: when Paul and Silas shall sing in the stocks, and the resolved martyr shall embrace the faggots, and kiss the stake: when the valiant Philpot shall say of his prison, "In the judgment of the world we are in hell, but I find in it the sweet consolation of heaven;" and the holy Bradford, "My prison is sweeter to me than any parlour, than any pleasure I have had in all my life:" this is indeed to exceed others.

Rule VII. *To be good when we shall be evil spoken of for our labour.* A Pharisee will do those duties that will gain applause with man: but to take up with despised du-

ties, disgraceful duties, and with David to be religious, when it shall render him vile ; this is to do more than others. The philosopher could say, "It is noble indeed for a man to do well, when he knows he shall bear ill for it." To take up religion when every one kicks it off, to stand up alone, with Luther, for the truth, when the whole world is gone a wandering after the whore ; to have his hand against every man, and to be for Christ, with Athanasius, against the whole universe : this is indeed to do some singular thing.

Rule VIII. *To strike in with God's interest when it is falling.* To join ourselves with the Lord's people, when it is the weakest, to espouse their interest, with Moses, when they are in deepest affliction, Heb. xi. 25, 26, to own ourselves to be some of them undauntedly, when this way is every where spoken against ; this is to tread Antipedes to the course of this world.

Rule IX. *To be most cruel to the sin that is naturally most dear.* The hypocrite hides his sweet morsel under his tongue ; he spares, as it were, the fattest of the cattle ; he saith, *The Lord pardon his servant concerning this thing.* But when a man shall off with his right-hand, out with his right-eye, serve his Absalom as Joab did, when he took three darts and thrust through his heart ; this is to do more than others. The sincere Christian is most angry with the sin of his temper, against this he aims the arrows of all his prayers. *He keeps him from his iniquity ; he drives the whole herd of swine before him,*

But especially shoots at it, singles this to run it down.

Rule X. *To live upon the divine promises, when others live upon their profession.* Others are all for what is in hand; with them words are but wind, they cannot live upon them; the promises are to them *a barren heath, and dry breasts.* But when we make the promises our heritage, the staff of our life, the life of our hearts, when the promises are the bottle we run to in all our fainting; and while others hope in their wealth, our hope is in the word: this is to do more than others.

Rule XI. *To love that best, and choose that soonest, which crosses the flesh most.*—The godly man's rule is to take the self-denial aside, so he be sure it be safe. When other's study is to please themselves, his is to curb himself: the life of others is a flesh-pleasing, his a self-denying life; other's joy is when they can gratify themselves, his when he can get victory over himself.

Rule XII. *To be most hot in that wherein self is least concerned.* Paul is meek as a lamb under personal injury, 1 Cor. iv. 12, but how is his spirit stirred when God is dishonored? Acts xiii. 46. A man of understanding is of a cool spirit, that is, in his own concern; but Moses the meek waxes hot with indignation at the sight of the calf. To be hot and forward in those duties where the flesh's interest is not concerned, is to do more than Jehu, 2 Kings x. 16, 20.

Rule XIII. *To make a true conscience of the least sins, but most conscience of the great-*

est. In one of these will the hypocrite be found tardy. It may be he will fly from open sins, and startle at gross staring sins, but of little sins he makes little conscience; this he allows of and connives at; or else he will be very tender of little things, scruple the plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day, or the curing of the sick; and strain at the gnat, when he will in other things swallow a camel, and devour widows' houses. The sincere will indulge no sin; grieves for, groans under, cries out feelingly against his very infirmities; but most dreads what God most hates.

Rule XIV. *To allow yourselves in the neglect of no duty, but to reserve your zeal for the duties of most weight.* To tithe mint and cummin, and neglect judgment, mercy and faith; to be zealous for human ceremonies, ordinances, and men's traditions, and omit the weightier matters of the law, is right the Pharisee's guise; Matt. xxiii. 23, and xv. 2. To eye both the tables; to join sweetly together morality and piety; to be punctual with men, but not careless of God; to give to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, but first to give to God the things that are God's: this is to do more than others. The sincere Christian hath respect to all God's commandments, walks in all his statutes; he is throughout with God; but he is most zealous in those things that lie next the heart of religion.

Rule XV. *To love your reprovers.* Herein David doth more than Ahab: see their contrary frames, 1 Kings xxii. 8. Ps. clxi. 5.

Rule XVI. *To subject all your worldly interests to your Maker's glory, and perform holy duties with holy ends; and while others do their best actions with carnal aims, you must do your common and civil actions with heavenly aims.*

Quest. How may we know whether we be and do more than others that are unsound?

I shall answer this question by propounding eight questions to you, beseeching you to retire to the most solemn and strict examination, and make conscience to give a clear answer to these few interrogatories, and that will resolve the case.

Quest. I. *When others do pick and choose, have you respect to all God's commandments?* The hypocrite may have great respect for the comforts, but he hath little to the commands of religion: he is much for the privileges and promises, little for the precepts and duties: he is partial in the law; he will take but here and there where he likes, and where God's commands will serve his interest, or at least will not pinch too hard upon the flesh. The sound Christian sets all God's commands before him; he eyes all his copy, and heartily designs and studies a thorough conformity; he hath no starting holes, no contrived haunts; nor doth he halt between the Lord and Baal, nor serve two masters; he doth not fear the Lord, and serve other gods, nor divides his service between God and mammon: but he is all uniformity, and entirely devoted to God's service, and fear alone; he hath a good conscience, willing in all things to live hon-

estly ; and doth truly, though not perfectly, forsake all his sins, and keep all his statutes that are known to him. Let me therefore ask you two questions : (1.) *When others divide the tables, do you sweetly conjoin them in your practice ?* The hypocrite, may be, is just and square towards man ; but follow him to his family, or closet, you shall find but little of God ; his family is neglected, his soul is neglected : or it may be he is a forward first table man ; but you shall find him tardy in the second. He will make many prayers, and long prayers, yet make no conscience of devouring widows' houses. He is a great pretender to piety, but meanwhile neglects judgment and mercy. The sincere join all together : he is so far careful of justice with man, that meanwhile he will not neglect the first and great part of justice, viz. To give God his due : he doth justly, he loves mercy, but withal walks humbly with God : he walketh soberly with respect to himself, righteously towards his neighbor, and godly towards his Maker. He is not one of those that are good only on their knees, but you shall find him every where conscientious ; you shall have temperance at his table, chastity and modesty in his behaviour, grace and truth in his works, charity in his deeds, faithfulness in his trust, justice in his dealings. He doth not only seem to be religious, but bridleth his tongue ; he is not only a good Christian, but a good neighbor ; not only a good man, but a good husband, a good master, a dutiful child, a diligent and faithful servant, a good subject.—

In a word, he makes a great conscience of discharging the duties of his relations among men. (2.) *When others stick in externals, do you look to the spiritual part of every command, and principally mind the inwards, and vitals of religion? Do you not only make conscience of performing duties, but do you carefully look to the manner of performing them, and the ends for which you do perform them? Do you not only make conscience of open, but of secret sins? Do you abound, above all, in secret duties? Do you keep a watch upon your heart, and make conscience, not only of the gross acts of sin, but even of sinful thoughts, inclinations, and desires, and are grieved even with your very infirmities, and corrupt dispositions of your natures, which you cannot help, though you would?*

Quest. II. *When others have their reserves in closing with Christ, do you give up all to him entirely? Have you taken Christ not hand over head, but deliberately, understandingly, sitting down first, and counting the cost? Have you no secret reserves, for your own ease, safety, estate, esteem, on some beloved sins? Have you, upon solemn considerations, accepted Christ as the Lord your righteousness, for better, for worse, for all changes of times and conditions, to run all hazards with him, and to take your lot with him, fall as it will?*

Quest. III. *When others are for a little of religion, by the by, do you make religion your business? Do you not put off God with the world's leavings, and serve him when you*

are at leisure? Must not God stand by, while the world is first served? And are not your souls the least of your cares, and put off with some by-scrapes and ends your time? Is religion your trade, and your conversation in heaven? Do you walk with God? Or have you only now and then a turn with him? When you have ended your prayers, is there an end of your religion till you come to them again? Or do you carry on a design of religion throughout your whole course? Have you only a list of religion at the outside of the piece? Or is the woof of religion woven into the whole cloth, into heart and life, into your discourse, and trades, and table? Do you first seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof? Is it the chief care of your lives, that God be served, and your souls be saved? And is this the one thing necessary with you, that you chiefly mind, and are most solicitous about? Do your very hearts say with *David*, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I will seek after?* &c.

Quest. IV. *When others are for the wages of religion, are you for the work?* Can you say with *David*, *I have chosen thy precepts?* Do your hearts come off freely in this choice? Had you rather be holy than otherwise, if you were at your choice? Had you rather be God's servants, and live to his command, than at your own lusts? Do you count the laws of Christ your heritage, or rather count them your bondage? Do you choose not only the wages of righteousness, but the ways of righteousness? Are God's commandments your

delight? And are the sweetest hours of your lives the hours ye spend with him? Do you never enjoy yourselves so much as when you most enjoy God? Is his service the greatest comfort, and is it meat and drink to you to do his will (unless when you are not yourselves, in the time of temptation and desertion?) Do you make use of holy duties only as men do of physic, when they are ill at ease, when conscience lasheth, or affliction stings, as it were, to conjure down the frightful furies? or to pacify God that he may not hurt you? Or else do you use them as your daily bread, and the very staff of your life, and means of your comforts?

Quest. V. *When others are for the cheap and easy religion, are you for self-denial? When others are for the religion that will serve them best, are you for that which will serve God best? When others are all upon the sparing hand, and will spare what may be spared, and study how they may best save charges in going to heaven, are you of princely spirits, to resolve not to serve the Lord with that which will cost you nothing? Is your course of religion such as doth put your flesh to it, and cross and curb its desires? Or do you love to give it what it craves, and suffer it to make its own way? Have you no enemy you dread so much as self? Do you pamper and please it, and make provisions for it? Or do you pray and watch against it, and grieve for its unhappy infirmities in your actions? and had rather than all the world that this enemy were under your feet?*

Quest. VI. *When others are for no more of religion than needs must, are you for the height of religion?* The hypocrite (as one well says) is very inquisitive what is the lowest pitch that a man may have, and go to heaven; and upon this design, if he could find but this, he would look no farther: but the sincere Christian, though satisfied that his state is good, will rest in no attainments in grace, but reaches forward, and presses on, if it were possible, to attain to the resurrection of the dead. He that doth not desire, and design, and endeavor perfection, never yet came up to sincerity. A true believer desires holiness for holiness' sake, and therefore is set upon perfecting holiness: others desire it only for heaven's sake, and are therefore only for so much as will bear their charges thither: others make use of holiness only as a bridge to heaven, and therefore are for no more than will just serve their turn.* The true believer hath a holy nature, and therefore holiness is his element, and natural employment; and he must needs desire holiness in its height, because every nature reaches after perfection in its kind. The godly man desires not holiness because it is the way to heaven; but he loves heaven the better for the holy way that leads to it, and for the perfect holiness which is there.

*And they have a false notion of heaven itself; else they might justly desire it, as the end of their present holiness, it being the fruition of God in perfect holiness.

Quest. VII. *When others are all for the salvation of Christ, are you as truly by sanctification for Christ? Do you take Christ as God offers him, with all his offices and benefits, to be both a Prince and a Saviour, to give you repentance, as well as remission of sins? Are you willing of the dominion of Christ, as well as deliverance by Christ? Do you close with his burden as well as his benefits? Do you count his laws your liberty? his government not your bondage, but your privilege? his service, your freedom? Do you go in Christ's ways, as in gaols and fetters; or do you run with enlargement of heart, delight, or real willingness?*

Quest. VIII. *When others do make self their end, do you set up God above all, as your highest end? The hypocrite doth the same duties which the godly do, but with different ends: he eats for himself, and fasts for himself, and prays with no better than self ends, and therefore is rejected. Now, is it your great design, in your whole course, to glorify God, and enjoy God? Do you count this your whole business and blessedness? Do you make other business to stoop to this; other interests to yield to this? Do your souls breathe after this above all worldly good, that Christ may be magnified in you? Do you count your name and your estate as loss, and the delights of sense but puddle water, in comparison of Christ? If conscience give a comfortable and clear answer to these questions, go in peace: blessed are you of the Lord, God is your friend, heaven is your*

herilage, the promises are your portion, Christ is your's, all is your's ; for *he that doth these things shall never be moved*, Ps. xv. 5.

A NECESSARY CASE ON 1 Thess. iv. 1.

Quest. *WHAT* may, and must a Christian be, and do, that he may please God ?

Ans. To your pleasing of God, something is necessary as to your persons or estates, and something as to your performances and acts.

First, As to your *persons* or *estates*, it is necessary in general, that you be in a state of reconciliation with God. If you would walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, you must, first, be friends with him, for *how can two walk together except they be agreed?*—Get the controversy taken up between God and thee, and then *thou shalt*, with Levi, *walk with God in peace*. Labour to get the breach made up, to have the enmity slain, to have divine displeasure removed : till thy pardon be obtained, and thy peace made, nothing thou canst do will please God : he will be angry with thy person, and angry with thy prayers. What a tart message is that to impenitent sinners ? Mal. i. 10. God cannot take pleasure in their persons. *I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts ; nor in any of their performances, neither will I accept an offering at your hand* : he professeth that his soul had no delight in them, and tells them, that they are unto him as a vessel wherein there is no pleasure, Jer. xxii. 28.—'Tis the modest expression of that vessel into

which nature empties itself. Come in, then, and touch the golden sceptre, yield to mercy, kiss the Son, resign to Christ: accept of the peace tendered you in the word of reconciliation, and then God will be friends. More particularly, that you may be in a state of reconciliation, and so in a capacity of pleasing God, you must follow these directions.

1. *Put off every sin.* It is your iniquity that separateth between you and your God; this is the make-bate. If thou wouldst have God pleased, turn every sin out of doors, pluck it out, cast it from thee: if thou *regard iniquity in thine heart, God will not hear thee*, nor regard thee, Ps. lxxvi. 18. If thou art of them that have pleasure in unrighteousness, the Lord hath no pleasure in thee. He is not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, evil shall not dwell with him: the foolish shall not stand in his sight: he hateth all the workers of iniquity. See that thou abandon every sin that thou knowest, spare not one Agag, not a right-eye, not an Herodias; for then God will not spare thee: give the darling of thy bosom a bill of divorce, say to all thy idols, Get thee hence. God will not look to that man, that looks pleasantly upon any sin: the jealous God will not endure to see thee hankering on the harlot's lips, embracing any sin with delight. He will not bear it, to see thee smile upon any sin. He holds thee for a traitor to his crown, if thou willingly harbour his enemy. Though thou be very diligent in God's service, and present him with multitudes of sacrifices, and many

prayers, he will be pleased with nothing, but hides his face, and stops his ears, whilst thou keepest thine iniquities in thine hands, Isa. i. 11, 15. God will not amicably treat with them that will not put away the evil of their doings. O look into thine hands, look into thy heart, look into thy house, into thy shop, thy trade, thy calling! see if there be not some way of wickedness that thou art found in. Thou canst not have peace with God, nor he pleasure in thee, till this be removed; *put off, therefore, the old man with his deeds.*

2. *Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. xiii. 14.*

(1.) *The red robe of his righteousness for justification.* The Lord will never give thee a good look, nor a good word, but in Christ; he is a revenging, a consuming fire out of Christ; but get on his robes, and he will be well pleased. Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God: but Christ had much more, that God was well pleased with sinners, in and for him. Away with these rags, and with these fig-leaves. How can the righteous soul of God but abhor you, whilst in the menstruous clothes of your own righteousness? Dare not to come to God, but with Christ in your arms. Approach him not but in the garments of your elder brother, lest you carry away the curse. Joshua's filthy garments must be put off, and Christ's raiment put on: or else there is no standing before the bright and burning eyes of infinite holiness. Put on the Lord Jesus in believing; that is, accept of him in all his offices, with

all his inconveniences, and deliver up thyself to him, and this will entitle thee to his merits and righteousness; without this nothing will avail. If thy head were waters, and thine eyes a fountain of tears, if thou shouldst wear thy tongue to the roots with praying, if thou shouldst weep an ocean, and wash thyself in thine own brine; all could not get out one spot; nothing can be accepted whilst thou art out of Christ; and therefore, in the first place, apply thyself to him; God will accept of no gift but off his altar.

(2.) *The white robe of his grace for sanctification*, Rev. vi. 11. Thou that art in the flesh, that is, unrenewed, unsanctified, *canst not please God*, Rom. viii. 8. Never think to make up the matter, by a little mending and reforming particular acts: man, thy heart must be renewed; thy state must be clean altered, or God cannot be pleased, Matt. vii. 17, 18. The tree must be made good, the fountain must be healed, or else the stream will be salt, and the fruit sour. If Christ be once formed in thee, that is, his image in his grace: (likeness is the ground of love; similitude and suitability of nature, is the load-stone of affection.) God cannot but love his own likeness: Wouldst thou have his favour? Wouldst thou be his delight? Then conform to his pleasure, study to be like him, purify thyself as he is pure. The righteous Lord loveth righteousness; he desireth truth in the inward parts, and takes infinite complacency in the graces of his people. These are the spikenard and saffron, the spices, the beds

of lilies ; the sweet ointment that Christ is so taken up with : these are the cinnamon, and the trees of frankincense ; the calamus, and camphire, the myrrh, and the aloes ; the chains of the neck, and the precious pearls, that he is so ravished withal, and doth so superlatively commend, Cant. iv. 4. This is the raiment of needle-work, and gold of Ophir, wherein the queen is presented to her royal husband, Ps. xlv. 9, 14. Therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, Col. iii. 12, 13, put ye on bowels of mercy, kindness ; put off all these, anger, wrath, malice, filthy communication, and put on the new man, ver. 9, 10. Particularly, let me commend to you some special graces which God doth manifest himself to be wonderfully pleased withal ; as ever you would please God, get on these.

1. *Be clothed with humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5. This is a garment which must be put on, or else you cannot be accepted or saved, Matt. xviii. 3. Here is the dress that you must come to God in : he must be served in humility of mind, Acts xx. 19, you must humble yourselves to walk with him, Micah vi. 8.—Humility is a plain, but yet a comely garment : this grace doth eminently honor God ; and therefore God doth put a peculiar honor upon, and manifest a most special delight in this : of all the men in the world, this is the man that God will look unto ; even he that is pure, and of a contrite spirit, that trembleth at his word, Isa. lxvi. 2, though he be *the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy* : from whence the trem-

bling soul is ready to conclude, that surely such a fearful Majesty cannot but despise him, such a sin-hating purity cannot but abhor him; yet he will lay (Isa. lvii. 45) aside his Majesty, and bear with man's weakness, and condescend to most familiar and constant communion and cohabitation with his poor dust, when contrite at his feet, and prostrate in humility. If thou wouldst be accepted of God, come as Benhadad's servants to the king of Israel, with a rope about thy neck, and ashes on thy head, 1 Kings xx. 22. Think meanly on thyself, and God will honor thee, 1 Sam. ii. 30. Put thyself in the lowest rooms, and God will set thee higher: be little in thine own eyes, and thou shalt be high in his. A proud heart, and a proud look, is with God the first-born of abomination. As ever thou wouldst have God well pleased with thee, be thoroughly displeased with thyself: if thou dost thoroughly loathe thyself, God doth love thee; if thou abhorrest thyself, God delighteth in thee. Be angry with thyself, and the Almighty will turn away his anger from thee: condemn thyself, and God will acquit thee. In no wise extenuate thy sins, nor justify thyself. Think the worse of thyself, and be willing that others should think meanly of thee, and heartily love them that slight thee. This is the frame in which God is well pleased: pass sentence on thyself, and God will absolve thee: set thyself at his foot-stool, and he will lift thee up into the throne, Rev. ii.

II. *Labour for sincerity.* This is not a

distinct grace from the rest, yet for doctrine sake I speak to it distinctly. Uprightness is the great thing that God looks after, and covenants for, Gen. xvii. 1. It renders all our persons and performances acceptable before God, Prov. xv. 8. Such as are upright in the way are God's delight, Prov. xi. 20, to these are all the promises of peace, salvation, pardon, preservation, blessedness, Ps. xcvi. 10. In a word, there is no good thing God will withhold from them that walk uprightly, Prov. xxviii. 10. This was Noah's praise, that he was upright in his generation. This was that which set off Job at such a rate, that God doth so extol him for, and, as it were, makes his boast of him; the singular sincerity and integrity of his heart. Study to be upright; that the main bent of your hearts be to please God, and honor him; that God's interest be uppermost with you; that he have the chief share in you. And the eyes of the soul be principally to him; for in this sincerity doth consist, as to your state. Let your great care be your heart; here is a Christian's great work. The Lord seeth not as man seeth, for man looketh to the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh to the heart; see therefore that thou look to it. Let thine eye be chiefly there where God's eye is; he looketh not so much what thou dost, as with what a heart; go then and do likewise. Yet be not satisfied in this, that you are upright as to your state, but labour to approve yourselves in uprightness to God in spiritual actions. Do common, as well as spiritual ac-

tions, with holy ends. Much of your lives are lost for want of this. So much as is done for God, of his grace, he accounts himself our debtor. But what is done from no higher end than self, is lost from our account.

III. *Put on a spirit of zeal and activity.* How wonderfully is God pleased with Phin-chas' zeal, Num. xxv. 11, 12, 13. What great approbation doth he manifest of him? What attestation doth he give to him? He is so greatly pleased with his zealous appearance for him, that he turns away his displeasure from the whole congregation of Israel, and overlooks their crimson provocations against him: on the contrary, there is nothing that God is more displeased with; than remissness, and lifelessness, and indifference in religion. The lukewarm water is not a greater offence to the stomach, than the lukewarm professor is to God; and therefore he will spew such a one out of his mouth, Rev. iii. 16. Christians, where is your zeal for the Lord of hosts? Christ's redeemed must be zealous of good works, Tit. ii. 14. *Not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, Acts xviii. 25. Rom. xii. 11. Acts xxvi. 6, 7, instantly night and day for the hope of the promise.* Do not only that which is right in the sight of the Lord, but do it with all your heart: the Lord loveth a willing servant. Bestir yourselves for the Lord. Be ye followers of Christ, who went up and down doing good. Every Christian should be a common blessing, a public good. This is to be the children of your Father

which is in heaven, who is good unto all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works. And be sure the father doth best love that child that is most like him. A private narrow spirit is a low and base spirit, unworthy of a Christian. A catholic communicative spirit is full of great desires, and great designs: a large heart set upon doing good, whose fire, though ever hottest within, will be breaking forth of his breast, and provoking others; whose love will not be confined to a party, but gladly and thankfully owneth Christ wherever he sees him: this catholic spirit, I say, is the glory of religion, the church's blessing, and God's delight.

IV. *Live by faith*, Heb. x. 38. 'This is a precious grace in God's account, 2 Pet. i. 1. 1 Pet. i. 7. It giveth glory to God, and therefore God taketh no small pleasure in it. By faith Enoch obtained that testimony, that he pleased God, Rom. iv. 20. Heb. xi. 5. 2 Cor. iv. 18. Heb. xi. 39. Matt. viii. 10, 11. If you would so walk as to please God, you must walk by faith: Christians must look to the things unseen; they must not live at the common rate; Christ must be their life and breath, their prayers and their promises, their daily bread. By faith did the elders obtain that good report: 'twas faith that Christ was so greatly taken with in the Centurion, which made him to commend him for a none-such. This was that which won such a singular praise and approbation from our Saviour to the woman of Canaan, even her victorious faith, Matt. xv. 28. *Thou hast taken away*

my heart, my sister, my spouse ; thou hast taken away my heart with one of thine eyes, Cant. iv. 9, that is, with thy faith. Live in the power of faith, and thou wilt please him to the heart. Give glory to him by believing ; let the life that thou now livest in the flesh, be by the faith of the Son of God. Faith, as one well says, is the navel of morality.

Live by faith in prosperity. Though thou hast the world about thee, let it not be above thee, keep it at thy feet, use it as thy servant : be much in the views of glory, and contemplation of eternity : buy as though thou possessest not, rejoice as though thou rejoicest not, love as though thou lovest not, use this world as not abusing it. It is but a fashion, not a substance, and that which passeth away, 1 Cor. vii. 30, 31. Use it therefore with mortified affections, and prove the sincerity of your faith by the victory over your inordinate content, and delight in, and desires after, and cares for the things of this world, 1 John v. 4.

Live by faith in adversity. Weep as though thou wept not, enduring the cross, and despising the shame, as looking unto Jesus, Heb. xii. 2. Heb. xi. 26, accounting Christ's reproaches your riches, his shame your glory, Acts v. 41. Compare these light afflictions with the weight of glory, 2 Cor. iv. 17. Rom. viii. 18. Ply your hearts with the promises ; count if you can get the riches that are laid up in them ; roll yourselves upon the Lord, Ps. xxxvii. 7, and know that your heavenly Father hath no greater delight, than to see his children trust him with confidence, when

all visible helps are out of sight, and he seem to be their enemy, Job xiii. 15.

V. *Put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit*; this is in the sight of God of great price. Study to be (1 Pet. iii. 4,) like your Father, slow to anger, ready to forgive, forgetting injuries, loving enemies, requiting ill-will with kindness, ill-words with courtesies, neglects with benefits; and if any wrong you, do him kindness the sooner: so shall you bear his likeness, and be his delight.— And know, ye that are of unmortified passions, and unbridled tongues, God hath an especial hatred and displeasure against a froward heart, and a froward tongue, Prov. iii. 32, and i. 19, and ii. 12, and viii. 13. Oh seek meekness: how can the holy dove rest in a wrathful heart? Christ is a Lamb of meekness, how can he take pleasure in an unquiet and contentious spirit? Verily, *with the froward he will shew himself froward*, Psa. xviii. 26. If you will not forgive others, he will not forgive you: Art thou hard to be pleased; a froward wife, a froward master, a cross and wilful servant? Surely God will not be pleased with thee, he will mete to you as you measure to others, Matt. vii. 2.

VI. *Get a spirit of self-denial*. God is then pleased best, when self is displeased most. When we can be content to be empty; content to be abased, that God may be honored, and, with the holy Baptist, are willing to be eclipsed by Christ; willing to decrease; counting ourselves no losers, whilst his interest is a gainer, John iii. 29, 30, rejoicing that

we are made low for Christ's advancement; this is well pleasing to God. How greatly was he pleased with Solomon's self-denying choice, and gives him his asking, throwing in riches and honor to the bargain? 1 Kings iii. 10, 11, 12. Strange was Abraham's self-denial. What! to sacrifice, with his own hand, the whole hope of his family! the heir of promise! the child of his years! a son! an only son! when his life was bound up in the lad's life! Was ever mortal thus put to it?—But Abraham shall not be a loser; God gives him a testimony from heaven, blesses him, blesses his seed, blesses all nations in him, Gen. xxii. 15, 16, 17, 18. Wonderful was Moses in self-denial, but more wonderful was his acceptance and reward, Heb. xi. 24; none like Moses, Deut. xxxiv. 10. God preferreth him in another manner than Pharaoh could. He must speak with him face to face, as a man with his friend; his word shall be, as it were, a law with God. Speak for whom he will, they shall be spared, though they seem to be devoted to destruction. But speak against him who durst, he shall be sure to bear his iniquity, Num. xii. 8. Forget self; renounce thine own wisdom, thine own worthiness, thine own will. Bite in thy passions, curb thine appetite, bridle thy tongue: this do, and thou shalt be gently accepted, and shalt find that God's favor will infinitely reward thee, for all murmuring oppositions, and discontents of thy flesh, which will be ready to be impatient to have the reins held so hard.

VII. *Maintain a spirit of resolution and constancy in the way of God, Heb. x. 38.*— This was the renown of the three worthies, Dan. iii. they feared not the fierceness of Nebuchadnezzar's rage, nor yet the fire of the furnace; all the world could not make them bow: and how gloriously did God own them, and miraculously evidence his pleasure in them! Stand your ground: resolve to live and die by substantial godliness; cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart; let no difficulties make you change your station: then shall you be an honor, and a pleasure to the God that made you. Well then, would you know what frame of heart is well pleasing to God? Why, this humble, sincere, zealous, active frame, this believing, meek, self-denying, resolved frame, this is the frame that is well pleasing in the sight of God.

Secondly, As to your performances, more briefly, that those may please God, you must heedfully look to these five things.

1. That they be done by the *right rule*, which is God's word: you must not follow the imaginations of your own hearts, Num. xv. 39. You must not do that which is right in your own eyes: in all sacred actions, you must have God's command to warrant you.— You may not offer to God that, of which you are not able to say, thou requirest these things at our hands, Isa. i. 12. In all civil actions, you must have God's allowance. Be sure he will never accept that which his word condemns; under pain of God's displeasure, dare not to set your hands to what the word forbids.

2. That they be done to *right ends*, which is God's glory. How damnably did the Pharisees err? How miserably did Jehu miscarry? And both in acts for the matter commanded, for want of aiming at this end.

3. That they proceed from *right principles*. (1.) *Faith*, without which it is impossible to please God; prayer will not avail, except it be the prayer of faith, Heb. xi. 6. *We believe, and therefore we speak.* (2.) *Love*. If we should give our goods to the poor, and bodies to the fire, and not from love, it would profit us nothing. Where the slavish fear of hell only, or the lashes of conscience, or the love of man's praise, carries men to duties; where any other carnal principle is predominant in the act; it cannot please God. (3.) *Fear*. We cannot serve God acceptably, without reverence and godly fear, (no slavish fear.) The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy.—Observe the happy mixture, where these two are conjoined, that is a true filial fear; saith David, *I will come to thy house in the multitude of thy mercy,* (behold his faith :) *and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple,* (there is his fear with faith.) Faith without fear were bold presumption; fear without faith is sinful despair: join them together, and God is well pleased.

4. That they may be done in a *right manner*: preparedly, not rashly and inconsiderately, in the presence of so dreadful a Majesty: prudently, for lawful acts may be spoiled, and be done unlawfully, without consideration

had to the offence, that may (in some cases) attend them; yea, holy duties, as well as common actions, may be turned into sins, by being ill timed, and for want of a due attending the present circumstances: holily, not rashly, uttering any thing with our mouths before God; but behaving ourselves as in his sight: heartily, not feignedly, with our lips going, when our minds are gadding.

5. That they be directed through the *right means*, that is, Jesus Christ, the only way to the Father. Bring all thy sacrifices to the High-Priest, offer all upon this altar, else all is lost. Not that it is enough to say, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen, at the end; but in every duty you must come with lively dependence on him for righteousness and strength, for assistance and acceptance. Remember to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, to come leaning upon his hand; without this, all your services will be rejected at last.



CHAP. II.

Third case of Conscience, grounded upon the words of our Saviour:

John viii. 29. *For I do always those things that please him.*

Quest. I. *IS any man able, in this life, to come up to the example of Christ in this, To do always those things that please God?*

Ans. In regard there is none that doth good, and sinneth not, and God is not, nor can be

pleased with sin, no not in his own people, but most of all hates it in them, it cannot be that any man in this life should fully come up to Christ's example in this; yet may we come on so far towards it, as that not only in our immediate addresses to God, but in the general course of our lives, we may come to please God. Thus Enoch and Noah walked with God, i. e. in their general course they walked so as to please God, and approve themselves in his sight: thus the meanest of actions, if done by us unto the Lord, as the servants of Christ, have a promise of acceptance and reward, Col. iii. 22, 23, 24.

Quest. II. *How may we come, in our measure, to be followers of Christ, in this to do always those things that please God?*

Ans. In order to this, there is something necessary, with reference, 1st, To our persons; 2dly, To our principles; 3dly, To our practices.

1st, With reference to our *persons*. And here it is necessary, 1. That there be an alteration of our natures by renewing grace, for *they that are in the flesh cannot please God*, Rom. viii. 8.

These wild vines must needs bring forth sour grapes, Isa. v. 4. The fruit that they bear (how specious and fair soever to the eye) is evil fruit, Matt. vii. 16. Where there is not a good treasure of grace in the heart, a man cannot in his actions bring forth good things, Matt. xii. 33.

Many enlightened sinners think by reading and praying, and forsaking some gross and

foul sins, to pacify God, and set all right.— Mistaken souls, let me undeceive you. You begin at the wrong end; your first and greatest care must be to get your hearts and natures changed, and renewed by the power of converting grace: you labour in vain at the streams, while the fountain of corruption in the heart remains in its strength: you must not think it is with you, as it is with a ruinous house, where the mending of here and there a little, will make up all again; but the old building must be quite taken down, and the foundation-stone laid a-new in a sound repentance from dead works, and thorough conversion unto God. Till this be done, you must know, that God hath no pleasure in you, neither will accept an offering at your hand, Mal. ii. 10, as he doth from those that are friends.

2. That there be the *acceptation* of your *persons* through faith in Jesus Christ. For in him alone it is that God is well pleased, Matt. iii. *last*. So that without faith interesting us in him, it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6.

For the better understanding both these particulars, know that there are two attributes of God, to which you must bear a conformity, or else you cannot please him.

(1.) The *holiness* of God: For he is not a God that hath pleasure in iniquity; he heareth no sinner: the foolish shall not stand in his sight: he hateth all the workers of iniquity, Ps. v. 4, 5. John ix. 31. God can ne

more take pleasure in the unsanctified, than we in swine or serpents.

(2.) The *justice* of God : For he *will by no means clear the guilty*, Ex. xxxiv. 7.— Could we have inherent holiness in us, in our unpardoned state ; yet justice could not but be infinitely offended, while guilt lieth unre-moved, as you may see in Christ ; for though he were perfectly holy, yet being under the guilt of our sins imputed to him, the severity of God's justice broke out against him.

Now, man being naturally an offence both to the holiness and justice of God, there must of necessity pass upon him, in order to his pleasing God, this two-fold change.

(1.) The *real change* of sanctification. I call this a real change ; because by this there is a real change ensuing, of new qualifications and dispositions, making him of proud, humble ; of carnal, spiritual and heavenly, &c.

(2.) The *relative change* of justification. I call this a relative change, because there is not a real change in a man's nature, but in his condition, making him to stand in a new relation to the law, with reference to which he was before guilty and condemned ; but now the law pronounces the same man clear and acquitted ; and this not for any righteousness infused in him, but for the satisfaction and payment of another laid down for him ; satisfaction there must be, and righteousness must be tendered, or else God cannot be at peace. We have nothing to pay, Luke vii. 42. Oh sinner ! away to Christ, for it ; hide thee in the cliffs of that rock, run

to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Appear not before God, but in the robe of Christ's righteousness. He sends you to Jesus, as he did them to Job, chap. xlii. 8. *Go to my servant Job, he shall pray for you, him will I accept.* Get out of yourselves: flee to Christ, labour to be found in him, else all your endeavours in rinsing and washing yourselves, will be to no effect.

2dly, With reference to our *principles*.— And here it is necessary that some *corrupt principles* be *unlearned*, and some *holy principles* be *received* and *retained*.

1st. Some *corrupt principles* must be *unlearned*. As, 1. *That it is enough if we serve God on the Lord's day, and we may serve ourselves all the rest of the week.*— Though God hath reserved one day in seven wholly for his immediate service, which is therefore in a peculiar sense called the *Lord's day*; yet we must know that every day is his, and that he hath not allowed us one hour nor inch of time, but only for his service. Indeed he hath service of more sorts than one, but we must know that the business of our ordinary affairs, if rightly done, is a serving of the Lord Christ, Col. iii. 24. God is as truly served by you in the working day's labor, as the Sabbath-day's rest, if you do it in a right manner, and to holy ends.

There is a generation whose religion is but a Sunday's religion, which they put on and off with their Sunday's clothes, and then they think God is fairly served for the week; although God knows, that little they do then is

but poorly done either. Never think God accepts it at thy hands, when thou livest six days to the world and thyself, for one that thou spendest for him. This shews thee to be under the unmortified power of self-love, and not to be the Lord's, for none of us liveth to himself, Rom. xiv. 7. You must remember that you are but to learn upon the Sabbath how to serve God all the week, and not to think when the Lord's day is ended, his work is done.

2. *That if God be served morning and evening, it is enough, though we serve ourselves the rest of the day.* God must be served every day, and all the day, Prov. xxiii. 17. You must be serving him not only in your fasts, but at your meals; not only on your knees, but in your callings.

Some think, that if they keep up religious duties they may do what they list at other times; that if they be intemperate, lascivious, unrighteous, it is but to make even again with God at night, and all will be well: like the whore in the Proverbs, that having made her offering, was presently ready for new wickedness, Prov. vii. 14, as if she had paid off the old score, and might now boldly run upon a new.

Others think, that though they may not serve the devil at any time, yet, giving God his dues morning and evening, they may serve themselves the rest of the time. But in vain do they lay claim to God, who live more to themselves than they do to him. This will be found horrible sacrilege, to put off God

but with the tenth. God is to be eyed and served in all that you do: and this is that I drive at, that we may not divide ourselves between God and the world, between his service and our own ends, and so put him off with a partial service; but that we may do all in obedience to him, and we may be entirely the Lord's; that he in all things may be glorified by us, and that we may not lose our reward.

2dly, Some *holy principles* must be *received* and *retained*: as,

Principle I. *That the pleasing of God is our only business, and our highest blessedness.* First, *Our only business.* What is it that we call or count our business?

1. That is a man's business which his *livelihood* and *subsistence* depends upon. The lawyer counts his law his business, and the tradesman counts his trade his business, because upon this their livelihood and subsistence depends. Brethren, our whole depends upon the pleasing of God. Do this, and do all; miss in this, and you mar all; please him, and you are made up forever; if he be not pleased, you are undone for ever. How careful is the selfish courtier to please his prince? How will he crouch and flatter? and if he can but divine what will gratify and please him, he thinks himself happy. And why? but because all his dependence is upon his prince's favor: much more do we depend upon the favor of God. *Blessed is the man whom he chooseth*, Ps. lxxv. 4. *In his favor is life*, Ps. xxx. 5. But wo to them that

have God against them, these are perfectly miserable. *Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them,* Jer. vi. 30. If the Lord do but say to a man, as he did to Moses, *Thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name,* happy is that man. But if he thus say, *I have no pleasure in thee,* you may cover the face of that man, as they did Haman's, and carry him away: miserable must his end be, if he continue.

2. That is a man's business which he hath his *stock* and *talents for*. If a man be entrusted as a steward or a factor, his business is to buy in the commodities that are useful.—Beloved, all our times, parts, interest, food, raiment, and whatever mercies, spiritual or temporal, are the stock wherewith God hath entrusted us, and all for his own use and service. And is it not a sad and fearful case that God should have so great a stock going, as lies in the hands of all the sons of men, and yet have (if I may so speak) so little profit of it? I mean, so little glory by it: that he should sow so much, and reap so little; siew so much, and gather so little? Is it not sad that men should have so much in vain? Hast thou health and wealth, and dost not use it for God? It is all in vain. Hast thou understanding, and yet improvest it but for contriving thine own affairs and worldly designs? Thy reason and understanding are become vain. Oh! how wilt thou answer it, that thou hast had so great a stock in thine hands, and made so little improvement of it? It had

been good for some men that they had never had a foot of land, or an hour's ease, if they had never had the understanding of men, because they have not used their talents for God, and for the ends for which they were put into their hands.

3. That is a man's business which his *capacities do call for*. It is a man's business, if in the capacity of a judge, to do justice, or of a servant, to do his master's will. Brethren, all your capacities do evidence it to be your business to please God; you are his friends, you are his servants, therefore you must please him well in all things, Tit. ii. 9, his children, and therefore must set yourselves to honor him, Mal. i. 6, his spouse, and therefore it is your business to please your husband, 1 Cor. vii. 34.

4. That is a man's business which he hath his *maintenance for*. If a man be maintained in the place of a school-master, it is his business to teach; if of a soldier, it is his business to fight. Beloved, do you not know at whose feeding you are? and do you think God keeps so many servants to be idle, or to mind their own designs and pleasures? God hath cut you out every one his work, every man his hands full: so much work is to be done within doors, and so much without doors: so much towards God, towards your neighbour, towards your own selves, that you have no time to be idle in. And you shall dearly reckon for it, if you will eat his bread, and will not do his work. And as pleasing God is our chiefest business,

Secondly, So it is also our *highest blessedness*: for man's happiness lies in God's favor, Ps. iv. 6. Our happiness is in attaining the end of our being, and therefore the great query amongst the philosophers still was, What was the end or happiness of man?— Now the true end of our being is that we may please God; *for his pleasure we are and were created*, Rev. iv. 11. And for this end also we are new created, that we should yield ourselves unto God, Rom. vi. 14, and being built up a spiritual house, should offer up to him spiritual sacrifice, acceptable through Christ, 1 Pet. iii. 5. This is the end of our redemption, that we should not serve ourselves, but him, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives, Luke i. 75, and that we should not henceforth live to ourselves, but to him that died for us, Rom. v. 15. 'Tis the end likewise of our justification, that, our consciences being purged, we should acceptably serve the living God. In a word, 'tis the end of our glorification, that being translated into heaven, we should perfectly please God, and serve him night and day in his temple, Rev. vii. 15, and xxii. 3, so that the pleasing of God is the whole end, or whole happiness of man, Eccl. xii. 13. And this will be clear; because we do then promote ourselves most when we please God best.— For by this you shall have this two-fold advantage.

(4.) You shall be the *favourites of God*. O glorious promotion! Haman thought himself no little man, when he was on Ahasueras?

right hand, and yet he was at length but preferred to the gallows, Est. v. 11, and vii. 10. But what shall be done to the man whom God delights to honor? O blessed is that man!—wo be to him that toucheth him; it had been better for him that a millstone had been hanged about his neck, and he drowned in the midst of the sea, than that he should offend such an one, Luke xvii. 2. God is infinitely careful of his favorites. The apple of his eye is touched when they are injured, Zech. ii. 8. Whosoever toucheth them shall not be innocent, Ps. cv. 15. God hath a blessing for those that shew them kindness, Gen. xii. 3. He will render vengeance upon the ungodly, for every hard speech they utter against them, Jude 15.

O man, doth not thy soul say, Happy is the people that is in such a case? Will not thy condition be most blessed, when God shall be thus infinitely tender of thee, to take all the kindnesses done to thee, as done to himself? Matt. xxv. 40, and all the injuries done to thee, as affronts to himself, Acts ix. 4. This is the happy case of his favorites.

(2.) Every thing you do shall be *found upon your account with God*. Brethren, are you believers, or are you not? Do you believe the immortality of the soul, and the life to come, or do you not? The ways of the most do declare them to be real infidels, though profess-ed Christians. If you think there be an eternal state to come, will it not be your highest wisdom to be providing for it, and laying up what possibly you can, that you may inherit

it in the other world? Will not every wise man, that knows he is shortly to be removed into another country, be careful to transport all that he can, that he may enjoy it at his coming? Beloved, if you believe indeed, that you must be for ever in another world, will it not be your best course to be doing that, the fruit whereof you shall enjoy for ever? Were not he a mad man, that having but a very short term upon a living, should yet go to building and planting there, when he had land of inheritance to build upon? Infinite is the mischief that comes of self-seeking and self-pleasing.

You are eternal losers by it: God will say, You have your reward, Matt. vi. 5. Something you may have in hand, but the eternal reward is lost. Brethren, I am ambitious for you, that what you do, you should do for ever, that all should meet you in the other world, and that there you should reap the everlasting fruit of what you are doing now. A wise builder will build for ever, and not only that which will last for a day, or for a year. O that you would be wise builders! Do all for God, and you shall have eternal advantage. Learn but this lesson, to set yourselves in all things to please God, and ye will be promoting and advancing yourselves in all that ever you do. Always lay up a treasure in heaven, still adding to the heap. And O what riches will you come to, when, by every day, and every hour, and every action, you are gainers? For God will not let the least thing that is done for him, not a cup of cold

water, go without an everlasting reward, Matt. x. 42, nor your labor be in vain, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Prin. II. *That when you have done all, if God be not pleased, you have done nothing.*—Settle it upon your hearts, that all is in vain that is not done for God: when you do not please God, you do not profit yourselves.—When men offer never so richly and freely, if not in such a manner as is pleasing to God, all is but a vain oblation, Isa. i. 13. If men will do more than ever God required, and be zealous in things that God hath not commanded, 'tis but in vain that they worship him, Matt. xv. 9. Beloved, so much time as you have lived to yourselves, you have lived in vain, because it was quite besides your end. Oh it is a heart-cutting consideration to a tender Christian to think of this; that when his life is so short, and time so little in all, yet he must be fain to cut off so much! Why, man, so many hours must thou cut off from thy days, and so many years from thy life, as thou hast lived not to God, but to thyself; they are all lost as to the ends of life and time. If on repentance thou be forgiven, thou art not rewarded for them.

Beloved, you must count that you have lived no longer than you have lived unto God, Phil. i. 21. *To me to live is Christ.* I should account I did not live, if I did not live to him: 'tis the only employment of my life to serve him. I should not tell what to do with my life, unless it were to spend it for him.

Christian, thus thou must reckon: so much

time as I have lived to Christ, so much have I lived ; and so much as I have lived to myself, so much I have lost. 'Tis not the man, but the beast that lives, while we live below our reason, which distinguishes the human life from that of brutes. Now, while we live not to God, we live utterly below our reason itself, which is sufficiently discovered, in that God is the author and the end of man. Doth not reason dictate that God should have the glory of his own work, and the vessel should be to the potter's use ? Doth any plant, vineyard to keep a flock, and not expect the fruit of milk ? 1 Cor. ix. 7. God hath made thee, O man, for himself, Prov. xvi. 4. And hast thou the face of a man, and dost not blush at this, to think that God should make and maintain thee in vain ? If thou hast one grain of ingenuity, thou wilt abhor the thought of this, that thou shouldst be in vain. Why, so much as thou art for thyself, thou art for nothing. It may be thou livest a very busy life ; but thou actest not for God, thou art all this while but busily doing nothing. Thou mayst sit down in the evening, and say, I have been all this day doing nothing. Thou wilt find a blank in God's book for that day, nothing upon thine account ; on this sad record such a day spent, and nothing done. God hath his day-book, and takes notice of all your carriages, how you rise, and how you go forth to your labours ; how you speak, how you eat, and whether you eye him and his glory, in all, or look no higher than yourselves, Luke v. 5. *We have been toiling all night,*

and caught nothing. May not this be the sad complaint of many a man? I have been toiling all my life, and yet I have done nothing, because what I did was not done unto the Lord. How would you take it of your servants, if, coming home in the evening, you should find every one of them minding their own business and pleasure, and your work left undone? Is it not sad, sirs, that so many hours and days should pass over us, and we no nearer our end than ever we were before? Your little children are busy from morning to night, and yet all the while have been doing nothing: and so are you when you are but seeking your carnal selves, and not serving and pleasing God in what you undertake.

Prin. III. That the favor of all the world can nothing stead you, if God be not pleased with, and by you. If there were any that could save you from his wrath, you need not be so solicitous to please him; but if he be not pleased, we are all undone. *Thou, even thou art to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?* Psal. lxxvi. 7, Isa. xliii. 13. When men have slight thoughts of God's anger, and the fear and dread of him is not upon their hearts, no wonder if they be not careful to please him: you must be convinced, that the displeasure of God is the most formidable thing in the world, or else you will never learn this great lesson. Beloved, if you should please men, and all the world should be on your side, what would this avail, while God is your enemy? If all men should bless you, and speak well of you,

what would this profit, when God shall rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you? It is not at man's bar, but God's that you must stand: It is not at men's votes that you must be cast or quitted. It will not go by most voices, *but God himself is the judge*, Psal. lxxv. in his breast it is, whether you shall live or die. If a man were upon a trial for his life, what would it avail him that all his fellow prisoners, and the whole croud about him, were for him, when the whole bench and jury were against him? If your lives and estates were in question, to whom would you go to make your friend? the judge or the people? Sirs, be convinced, that if God be against you, 'tis as bad as if God and all the world were against you, for all signifies nothing without him. Oh, whatever you do, study to get in, and keep in with him. I tell you, the time is coming when the breath of man will signify nothing; when their commendation will do you no good. O man! though all the world should give thee their hands, and subscribe thy certificate, it should signify nothing in God's account, or his court. Many build their hopes for heaven upon the good opinion that others have of them. But I tell thee, man, though thou couldst carry letters of commendation with thee when thou diest, and all the ministers of the gospel should give thee their *bene decessit*, all would be no more than a blank paper, and he would not save thee a jot the sooner, if he should find thee to have been

but a secret hypocrite, a rotten hearted professor all the while.

Prin. IV. *That God would not be pleased with you in any thing, except you make it your care to please him well in every thing.* You will be one day ashamed, except you have respect to all God's commandments, Psal. cxix. 6. You have not a good conscience, except it be your care in all things to live honestly, Heb. xiii. 18. If Naaman must be excused in one thing to bow in the house of Rimmon, that he might not displease his master, this is enough to spoil every thing, 2 Kings v. 18. Some will needs keep God's good-will and the world's too, and so will give both their turns; they will serve God at home, and conform to the world abroad; and it shall be a great thing indeed that they will not swallow, rather than lose the good-will of men, especially great men. These men have two faces, and two tongues; the one for the good, and the other for the bad company that they come into. Some held two first principles, the one the common fountain of all good, (which is God) and the other the cause of all evil; and they worshipped both, the good principle for love, and the evil for fear. Just such a religion are many among us now of. But let them know, whoever they are, that while they grasp all, they lose all: for God will never own time-servers, nor men-pleasers, for the servants of Christ, *Eph. vi. 6. Gal. i. 10.*

3dly. With reference to your *practices.* And here, as ever you desire to come to this

blessed life of doing always those things that please God, you must carefully follow these six rules.

Rule 4. *Look round about you to the whole latitude and compass of your duty. Great is the latitude of Christianity. The commandment is exceeding broad. Psal. cxix. 96.* And many professors do scarce look more than one way; but while they intensely mind one thing, they neglect another. It may be, while they are taken up with the care of religious duties, they forget relative duties, or they are careful of personal duties, but very remiss in the duties that they owe to the souls of their families; or they complain and mourn over their own sins, but lay not to heart others' sins: it may be they are more punctual in their more immediate duties towards God, but are very negligent in their duties towards men; or they will spend much time for their souls, but do little lay to heart the case of the church, and the misery of perishing souls that are round about them: possibly they keep the sabbath strictly, and pray and hear, and fear an oath; but in the mean time, make little conscience of breaking their promises, passing hasty and uncharitable censures, spending time vainly, being unprofitable in their discourse, close handed to godly uses; suffering sin to go unreproved; letting out their passion at every petty cross. Many will mind their duty to them that are within, and, in the mean time, are very short in their duties to them that are without. This is too common a case.

Where is the christian almost, that seriously bethinks himself, What might I do to win souls? It may be, you will go on in the company of the godly, where you may be edified; but when do you go to your poor neighbor, whom you see to live in a sinful state, and tell him of his danger, and labor to gain him to Christ? yea, so much is this great duty neglected, and out of fashion, that I am afraid many question whether it be a duty or no. As if you might let sin lie upon the soul of your brother, and yet be innocent, Lev. xix. 17. If it were but his ox or ass that lay ready to perish, you would make no question but it were your duty to help him out of the ditch: and do you think in earnest, that you owe more to these, than you do to his soul? Is it to ministers only, or to all believers, that scripture belongs? Prov. xi. 30. *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that winneth souls is wise.* Surely the lives of too many Christians do speak the same language that Cain spake with his mouth, *Am I my brother's keeper?* Gen. iv. 9. 'Tis true, God will have you keep every one within the bounds of your proper stations, but, so as to take occasions, yea, to seek occasions, as you are able, to be doing good to others. Do you not know how to get within your poor neighbors? carry an alms with you, do him a kindness, oblige him by your courteous and winning carriage. Then I shall look to see the kingdom of Christ flourish gloriously, when every one that professeth godlines shall arise and take hold of the skirt of his neigh-

bor. Oh, see your neglect in this. Do not think it enough to keep your own vineyard : let your friend and neighbors have no quiet for you, till you see them setting in good earnest to seek after heaven. Oh, if you might bring in but every one his man to Christ, what a blessed thing were this ! I lose myself in this argument, but I am content to do so, this duty being so miserably neglected.

Too many live as if religion lay all in praying, and hearing holy conference, and the like, forgetting that *pure religion and undefiled is this, To visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction*, James i. 27. The other should be so done, as that this should not be left undone. You make conscience of being just and true, and faithful ; but do you not forget to win upon others by your kindness and affableness ? as it were not written in your BIBLES, *be pitiful, be courteous, having compassion one of another*, 1 Pet. iii. 8. Say not, it is not my nature : what doth grace serve for, but to correct the evils of your temper ? Is not ours a religion of self-denial ? do not the rules of our religion enjoin us to be followers of whatsoever is lovely, and of good report, and may render religion amiable to the world, Phil. iv. 8.

Rule. II. *Use a wise fore-cast, that every duty may fall in its time and order, and every work may have its room.* It is not enough to do God's work, but it must be done in his order. That which in itself is good and necessary, may be so ill-timed, as to become a sin. It is a duty to tell your brother of his

sin ; but to rip up in your passion, or to be retorting upon him, when he is Christianly admonishing you, is a sin. Your worldly business must not shut out religion, nor religious duties take you so up as to neglect your callings, but every duty must have its place. But for the doing all in God's order, take these five directions.

Direct. 1. *Begin at home in provoking to good.* Why should God plead with you, *Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?* Rom. ii. 21. Be an example of thine own rule, else the hypocrite's charge will come in against thee, Matth. xxiii. 4. *They bind heavy burdens, but will not touch them with one of their fingers.* Observe God's order, Deut. vi. 6, 7. *These words which I command thee, shall be in thine heart ;* that must be our first care. And then having got our lesson well ourselves, we must then teach it to others ; *And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and tell of them what thou, &c.* At least, if thou hast not already attained it, be sure to learn with the first ; and when thou pressest a duty, intend thyself first, and speak most to thine own heart.

2. In reproving evil ; otherwise thou wilt be branded for an hypocrite, Matth. vii. 5. *First cast the beam out of thine own eye.* We may not think, as many do mistakingly, that we must not reprove another, when we are guilty, of the same sin. But we must, in such a case, be sure to cast the first stone at ourselves. Be soonest angry with thyself, and more severe to thine own sins, than any

others. 'Tis strange to see the great censoriousness of professors to others, and how tender they are of their own corruptions, and impatient of reproof. Reader, fear and avoid this sin.

Direct. 2. *Let God be first served.* Let God have the first of thy thoughts, the first of the day, the first of thy strength. How heavily is God displeas'd with the profane priests, because they will serve themselves first with sacrifices, before him! 1 Sam. ii. 45. 16. And it is the holy counsel that one gives, Hold the door of thy heart fast against the world in the morning, till thy heart hath been first in heaven, and seasoned and mortified from thence, against the temptations that thou art like to meet with, as soon as thou comest down below. Indeed, all must be done as God's service, but so as that his immediate service must be done first. It is the counsel of several heathens, That all undertakings should be begun with prayer. Saith Aratus, Let us begin with God. And the very Mahometans began their books always as men use to do their wills, In the name of God.

Direct. 3. *First cleanse the inside,* Matth. xxiii. 26. *Cleanse first that which is within the cup.* Though they are much out that live, as if all their work were within doors, yet remember that it lies chiefly here. 'Tis a most preposterous course in religion, to begin first with the outside, Jer. iv. 14. *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart!* When once this is done, reformation will soon follow in the life, but not

otherwise. Many are careful that all that appears to men should be beautiful, but their hearts are neglected. These carry upon them the marks of the hypocrite, Matth. xxiii. 27, 28. And what will it profit thee, O vain man, to have all kept secret from men, since God knows and rejects thee? and hath appointed a day wherein he will rip open thy pack, and anatomize thy heart before the world, 1 Cor. iv. 5. Eccl. xii. 14. Rom. ii. 16.

Direct. 4. *Eye those duties most, that are of most importance, Matth. xxiii. 23.* The hypocrite is very punctual in lesser matters, but neglects the weightiest things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith. He is for a religion that will cost him little: And therefore words being good cheap, he will be as forward in talk as any mighty zealot in the circumstantials of religion, and marvellous censorious of others that come not up to his mind, as men of wide principles, and large consciences; but in the mean time he is very negligent in secret duties, a great stranger to self-denial, and walking humbly with God. He strains wonderfully at a ceremony; but it may be, he will swallow the gains of unrighteousness, or the baits of intemperance fast enough. It may be, he will decry superstition, and never want a stone to fling at a profane churchman; but, in the mean time, walks loosely in his family, makes little conscience of his dealings, or will take up his cups as freely as another, so he be not drunk. Or, if he will not take a penny of his neighbor's estate, he is most unmerciful to his good name,

and will take up any report that is going. Brethren, you must make conscience of the least sin, and of the least duty. But it is a fearful sign, when men are zealous against lesser sins, and yet connive at greater, as these are, Matth. xxiii. 24.

Direct. 5. *Take the first opportunity when God gives a fit season for any duty.* Let not Satan beguile you, by telling you of another or a better time. It may be thou hast a purpose to reprove thy brother for his sin, but how long wilt thou be a purposing? Now God gives thee an opportunity. It may be thy backward heart saith, Not now, but another time: and so it is put off, till he or thyself are removed, or he is hardened, or at least thou art guilty of the sin that he commits in the mean while, because thou hast not done thy duty to prevent it. It is in thine heart to deal with thine unconverted friend or neighbor about his spiritual estate; but it may be while thou art delaying, death comes and snatches him away in his sins, or takes thee off, and so farewell for ever to any opportunity for doing the soul of thy brother any good. How often are our closet duties hindered or miserably disturbed, for want of care to lay hold on the first opportunity? We think another hour in the day may do as well; but then one thing or another unexpectedly falls in, and nothing is done, or nothing to purpose: Therefore beware of this cheat. A man scarce peeps into the world, but one briar or thorn, or another will catch him: Therefore, take opportunity by the fore-top. Our

Saviour would take his season for prayer before day, when his other work was pressing, Mark i. 35.

Rule III. *Do nothing of things sacred without God's command; nothing in things civil without God's allowance.* Offer not with strange fire. In God's worship you must see you be well able to answer that question, *Who hath required these things at your hands?*—Here the command must be observed, without adding or diminishing, Deut. xii. 32. Yet understanding this with two cautions.

(1.) Though men may not stamp their invented ceremonies with a moral signification, nor impose, nor use them, though with good intentions of edifying the people by devised means, Matt. xv. 9, as if Christ had not sufficiently provided for edifying his people without their devices: And though nothing may be used as a part of worship that God hath not commanded, Col. ii. 23, (for it is enough to make any thing rejected of the Lord of divine worship, if he shall say, I commanded it not, spake it not, neither came it into my mind, Jer. vii. 31, and xix. 5) yet nevertheless those things that are merely circumstantial, and are in their general kind necessary, and not intended as any part or means of worship, may be determined of by human prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which must always be observed, 1 Cor. xiv. 26. And for want of understanding, many have ignorantly condemned preaching by an hour-glass, in a high place, in

churches, by way of doctrine and use, &c. running from the one extreme to another.

(2.) We may not think that God's ordinance remaining for substance may be forsaken, because of some faults of the administrators, or in the way of their administrations. The administering of God's ordinances belongs not to the people, but to the minister: and if he fail in his duty by administering them in a way that is not, and is less edifying, it is my grief, but his sin. Hophni and Phinehas were corrupt in their lives, and brought in much corruption and rudeness into the service of God; yet Elkanah and Hannah, with others of the godly, did nevertheless attend God's worship and sanctuary, 1 Sam. i. 3.—Much corruption was crept in, both into the doctrine and worship, and lives of the administrators of the church of the Jews. Yet our Saviour (though he still cried down the corruptions, and would not join in them) never prohibited communion with them in God's worship, but enjoins it, Matt. v. 24. Mark iv. Luke v. 14, and practices it, both he, and his parents and apostles, Luke ii. 21, 22, 24, 39, 41, 46. Acts xxi. 23, 24, 26.

But now in things civil it is sufficient that you have the allowance of the word, though not the commands; always provided, that the general rules be here observed, to do all to the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31, and not to abuse our lawful liberty to the offence of others, Rom. xiv. 20. Now your actions being thus justifiable, as to the matter of them (without which it is impossible, had you never so

good intentions, to please God) the influence and virtue of holy ends into them will be effectual to turn all into religious duties, as the touch of the philosopher's stone turns the baser metal into gold.

Rule IV. *In every action let God be uppermost, but in religious actions let God be all.* Let none of your actions terminate in yourselves, but labour to be able in sincerity to give this account of any thing you set about, that this you do, because it is pleasing unto God, because this is his will concerning you. Set a mark upon this caution. Beware in those actions wherein self may bear a part, lest it should sweep stakes, and carry all.— You may, in your common actions, have an eye to your outward commodity, and comfortable being in the world: but this must not be the chief thing, much less the all that you design herein: for by looking no higher than self, you incur this double mischief. (1.) You lose so much from your own account. (2.) You usurp upon the great prerogatives of God. I fear we are not aware of the fearful evil that is in self-seeking; it is no less than justling God beside the throne, and setting ourselves in his room. It is God's great prerogative, and the proper worship that is due to him as God, that he should be the last end of all the operations of us his creatures, and that all our motions should terminate in him. Now when we eye our own commodity, and not God, and look to this more than unto God, we arrogate the divine prerogative to ourselves, and set ourselves above him, which

is no less than heinous idolatry. And if it be such an heinous sin to bow down to an image, which is but the giving God's outward worship to the creature; how much more to seek and honor ourselves before God, which is to give his inward worship, which of all is the principal, to the creature? Oh, how many that pass for good Christians, will be found heinous idolaters! because they have sought their own carnal ends, more than God and his glory. And many real Christians, though they mainly design God, and his glory; yet in many particular actions contract great guilt, by looking no higher than themselves in what they do. I know you cannot be always thinking of God, yet I would have you never to forget what you have been taught: In the entrance of every solemn action, to remember God, and make him your end. Lie down in the name of God every evening; go forth in his name every morning, resolving to undertake all for him; when you enter upon your callings, sit down at your meals, make any journey or visit, do it as unto the Lord, with design to please him therein. This you may come to with care and watchfulness.

Again, in religious actions let God be all. Here self (I mean carnal self) must be shut out, otherwise this dead fly will spoil the box of most precious ointment. 'Tis true, self will be crowding in, but you must knock it down carefully; otherwise if this be the predominant ingredient, all your duties will be but lost labour. What more pleasing to God than prayer? This is incense before him, Ps..

cxli. 2. What more delightful than alms? This is a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing unto him, Phil. iv. 18. How happy a testimony had Cornelius? *Thy prayers and alms are come up as a memorial before God,* Acts x. 4. Yet when self is predominant in those duties, prayers, alms, &c. are all lost, Matt. vi. 7, and xxiii. 5.

Rule V. *When you have done all, be careful to deny all,* Luke vii. 7. Or not deny God's mercy in enabling and assisting you. This must be with all thankfulness observed; but attributing nothing to yourselves, and giving God all the glory. Take the pattern of holy David, 1 Chron. xxix. 14. *But who am I, and what is my people, that we should offer so willingly? Of thine own have we given thee:* And of blessed Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 10. *Not I, but the grace of God which was with me:* And of good Nehemiah, who when he had done most eminent service for God, flies at last for pardoning mercy, Neh. xiii. 22. *Remember me, O God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.*

Rule VI. *Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,* Col. iii. 17. Having carefully set out for God in the morning, and directed your common actions to him as your end throughout the day, doing all in his sight, and with a desire to please him therein, bring all to Christ in the evening, and present all unto God by him, confidently expecting God's acceptance and reward for all that you have done. For this he hath promised, be your

actions never so mean, because they were done as his service, Col. iii. 22, 23, 24. Eph. vi. 6, 7, 8. If you neglect this, you lose all at last; for God will accept of no sacrifice but from the hand of the priest, and therefore you must look for no acceptance with God, nor any reward from him, but only through Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 1, 5. John xiv. 6. You must be sure therefore not only to make a formal mention of Christ's name, but to build all your hopes and success only upon him, and to come to God with an actual and lively dependence upon him.

Thus I have resolved the case propounded. I will but answer an objection, and so conclude.

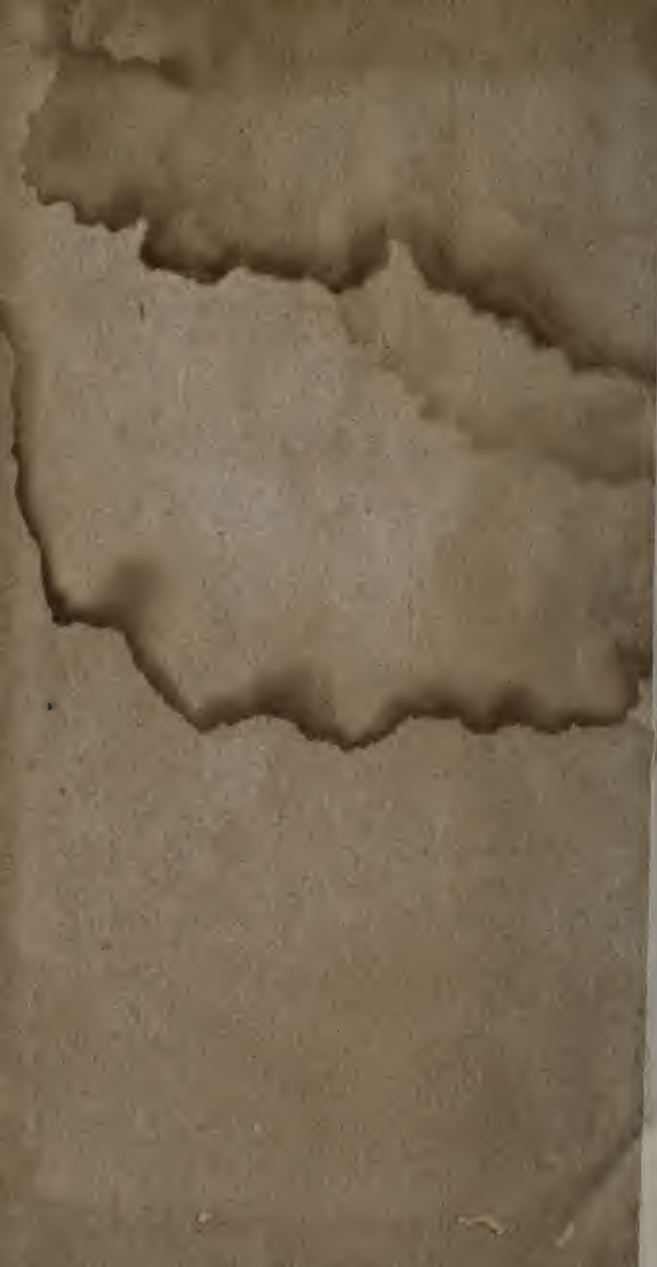
Obj. You bind heavy burdens. What! must we be always in the traces? Surely this severity of religion is more than needs.

Ans. 1. Burden, man! Why, it is thy happiness: if holiness and pleasing God be a burden, health is a burden, heaven and happiness are burdens.

Ans. 2. This is no other burden than what God himself hath bound upon your consciences, Rom. ix. 20. *Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?* Have I put upon you a devised and unnecessary strictness? or bound that burden upon you, which I will not touch with one of my fingers? 1 Cor. ix. 8. *Say I this as a man? or saith not the law the same also?* I pray you whose word is this? *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long,* Prov. xxiii. 17. *Do all to the glory of God,* 1 Cor. x. 31. Exercise thyself unto

God, 1 Tim. iv. 7. What have I pressed, but what the saints have practised? Phil. iii. 13, 14. *One thing I do, I press toward the mark.* Ps. xxvii. 4. *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.*— And Ps. cxix. 38. *Thy servant that is devoted to thy fear.* Gen. v. 22. *Enoch walked with God three hundred years.* What is this, but what the scripture hath foretold shall be?— *They shall walk up and down in the name of the Lord,* Zech. x. 12. *Then shall be upon the bells of the horses, and on every pot in Jerusalem, HOLINESS TO THE LORD,* Zech. xiv. 20, 21. Dispute not against God, but up and be doing. It is an ill sign when the heart rises against the strictness of the duty: You utterly mistake in thinking this life of strictness to be a bondage. Who have joy unspeakable and full of glory, who do know the peace that passeth all understanding, if not those that do thus walk with God?





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