

THE
SINCERE CONVERT:

DISCOVERING THE SMALL NUMBER OF
TRUE BELIEVERS,
AND THE GREAT DIFFICULTY OF
SAVING CONVERSION;

WHEREIN IS EXCELLENTLY AND PLAINLY OPENED THESE
CHOICE AND DIVINE PRINCIPLES:

1. THAT THERE IS A GOD, AND THIS GOD IS MOST GLORIOUS.
2. THAT GOD MADE MAN IN A BLESSED ESTATE.
3. MAN'S MISERY BY HIS FALL.
4. CHRIST THE ONLY REDEEMER BY PRICE.
5. THAT FEW ARE SAVED, AND THAT WITH DIFFICULTY.
6. THAT MAN'S PERDITION IS OF HIMSELF.

BY
THOMAS SHEPARD,
CAMBRIDGE, NEW ENGLAND

CORRECTED AND AMENDED BY THE AUTHOR.

“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life;
and few there be that find it.” -Matt 7:14

Boston:
Doctrinal Tract and Book Society.
1853

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

In these evil and perilous times, God hath not left us without some choice mercies. Our sins abound, and his mercies super-abound. The Lord might have justly spoken those words of death against us which of old he did against the Jews - I have taken away my peace from this people, loving kindness and mercies; which had he pulled from us, we had cause enough to mourn with Rachel, and to refuse comfort; for all our happiness lies wrapped up in peace, loving kindness, and mercy. But God is yet good unto Israel, (Ps. 73:1;) he command deliverance for Jacob, (Ps. 44:4;) he overrules all the powers of darkness, (Ps. 76:10,) and tells the sons of Belial (men of corrupt minds and cursed practice) that they shall proceed no further, but that their folly shall be made manifest unto all. (2 Tim. 3:8,9.) He makes all enemies, all devils, all creatures to further his own glory, and the good of his peculiar people. When times are naught and dangerous, he saith, Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast. (Isa. 26:10.) If troubles threaten life, he saith, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee; for I am the Lord thy God." (Isa. 43:3) When enemies are incensed, fears and sorrows multiplied, he saith, "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee, I will help thee; yea, I will up hold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold, all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded, they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish." (Isa. 40:10,11.) Such words of comfort and life doth God speak unto his. And among other mercies, he stirs up the spirits of his servants to write many precious truths and tracts, to further the everlasting good of his beloved ones. If the bottomless pit be opened, and smoke rise thence, to darken the air and obscure the way of the saints, (Rev. 5:2,) heaven also is opened, (Rev. 11:19,) and there are lightnings and voices, to enlighten their spirits and direct their paths. Had ever any age such lightnings as we have? Did ever any speak, since Christ and his apostles, as men now speak? We may truly and safely say of our divines and writes, The voice of God, and not of man: such abundance of the Spirit hath God poured into some men, that it is not they, but the Spirit of the Father that speaks in them.

What infinite cause hath this age to acknowledge the unspeakable mercy of God in affording us such plenty of spiritual tractates, full of divine, necessary, and conscience-searching truths, yea, precious, soul-comforting, and soul-improving truths! Such whereby head, heart, and soul-cheating errors are discovered and prevented; such as soundly difference true grace from all seemings and paintings. No time, no nation exceeds us herein. And shall we, that abound in truths, be penurious in praises? Consider, reader, whether spiritual truths be not worthy of thy choicest praises. Every divine truth is one of God's eternal thoughts; it is heaven born, and bears the image of God. Truth is the glory of the sacred Trinity. Hence the Spirit is called Truth, (John 16:13,) Christ is called Truth, (John 14:6,) and God himself is said to be the God of truth. (Deut. 32:4.) It is so delightful to him, that his eyes are always upon the truth. (Jer 5:3.) And when the only-wise God would have men make a purchase, he counsels them to buy the truth. And is it not

good counsel? Is it not a good purchase? Can you bestow your pains or lay out your money better? If you be dead in sins and trespasses, truth is the seed of a new life, of a heavenly birth. (James 1:18.) If you be in any bondage, truth can make you free. (John 8:32.) If compassed about with enemies, truth can shield thee. (PS. 91:4.) If you be full of filthy thoughts and lusts, or any impurities, the truth can sanctify you. (John 17:17.) If darkness and faintness possess your souls, truth is *lumen et pabulum animoe*- “the light and life of the soul.” (Ps. 119:105.)

Let us, then, advance our thoughts of truth, and rate it above all sublunary things, and buy it, though it cost us all. It is no simony, it is not too dear; you cannot overvalue truth. It is sister to the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. See how God himself estimates his word and truth. (Ps.138:2,) “Thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.” Whatsoever God is known by, beside his word, is beneath his word. Take the whole creation, which is God’s name in the greatest letters, it is nothing to his word and truth. Therefore Christ tells the Pharisees, it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail. If the least jot or tittle of the law be prized by God above all the world, let us take heed of undervaluing the great and glorious truths of the gospel, and settle it as a law upon our hearts that we can never overprize or yield sufficient praise for any truth. Men can praise God for the blessings of the field, the seas, the womb, and of their shops; but where is the man that praises God for his blessing of blessings. -for TRUTH- for good books, for heavenly treatises? Man seldom purposely lift up their hearts and voices to heaven, to praise God for the riches of knowledge bestowed upon them. In good books you have men’s labors and God’s truth. The tribute of thanks is due for both, that God enables man to so great labors, and that he conveys such precious treasures through earthen vessels. David thought it his duty to praise God for truth, (Ps. 138:2,) and hath left it on record for our imitation. He saw such excellency, and found so much sweet gain in truth, that he must break out in praises for it. Reader, give over thy old way of slighting and censuring men’s labors. Experience hath long since told thee, that no good comes that way. Now learn to turn thy prejudices into praises, and prove what will be the fruit of honoring and praising God for truths dispensed by his faithful servants. Let me tell thee, this is a chief way to keep truth still among us. If truths be not received with the love of them, and God honored for them, presently strong delusions come, and truth most suffer or fly. God hath made good that promise in Jeremy. He hath revealed unto us abundance of peace and truth; and we, through ingratitude, have forfeited both. Out peace is shaken; and who can promise himself, with Hezekiah, There shall be peace and truth in my days? Peace may fail thee, but let not truth. Every good Christian may and should say, with the good king, There shall be *truth* in my days, if not *peace* and *truth*. I will so far honor truth, as to receive the love of it. I will hold it fast by faith, hold it forth by practice, praise God daily for it, and venture all in defense if it. So did the martyrs, whose memory is sweet, and whose regard is great. It is better suffering for truth than with truth: yet if truth must suffer, or can die, better it is to die with truth than outlive it. But that truth may live, and we live by truth, let us magnify God much for truth, for his word and good books that spring thence. Some probably may say, It’s enough to praise God for his word. Other books are not *tanti*. Wilt thou praise God for the sea, and be unthankful for the rivers and springs? Wilt thou lift up thy voice for the great waters, and be silent for the silver drops and flowers? If the former rain effect thee, be not ungrateful for the latter. God would have man to value his servants, and praise him for their labors. But have they errors in them. Be it so. Shall we refuse to praise God for the flowers and the corn, because there be some weeds in the garden, and thistles in the field? Prejudice not thyself: buy, read, take thy delight. Here is a garden without weeds, a cornfield without cockle or darnel,

thorn or thistle. Art thou a *sincere convert*?² Here are truths suitable, solid, and wholesome. Thou mayest feed and feast without fear.

The author is one of singular piety, inward acquaintance with God, skilled in the deceits of men's hearts, able to enlighten the dark corners of the little world, and to give satisfaction to staggering spirits. His work needs not the purple of another's commendation to adorn it. But because custom, not necessity, (for it is truth's prerogative to travel without a passport,) - I say, because custom causeth truth to crave and carry epistle commendatory, know that the work is weighty, quick, and spiritual. And if thine eye be single in perusing it, thou shalt find many precious, soul-searching, soul-quickening, and soul-enriching truths in it; yea, be so warned and awakened, as that thou canst not but bless God for the man and matter, unless thou be possessed with a dumb devil.

To conclude: Christian reader, take heed of unthankfulness. Spiritual mercies should have the quickest and fullest praises. Such is this work; thou foresawest it not, thou contributest nothing to the birth of it. It is preventing mercy. By it, and other of the same nature, God hath made knowledge to abound; the waters of the sanctuary are daily increased, and grown deep. Let not the waters of the sanctuary put out the fires of the sanctuary. If there be no praise, there is no fire. If thy head be like a winter sun, full of light, and heart like a winter's earth, without fruit, fear lest thy light end in utter darkness, and the tree of knowledge deprive thee of the tree of life. The Lord grant thou mayest find such benefit by this work as that thy heart may be ravished with truth, and raised to praise God to purpose, and made to pray, Lord, still send forth thy light and truth, that they may lead us. So prays.

Thine in Christ,
W. GREENHILL.

INTRODUCTION.

The knowledge of divinity is necessary for all sorts of men- both to settle and establish the good, and to convert and fetch in the bad. God's principles pull down Satan's false principles set up in man's head, loved and believed with men's hearts, and defended by their tongues. Whilst strongholds remain unshaken, the Lord Jesus is kept off from conquering the soul.

Now, spiritual truths are either such as tend to enlarge the understanding, or such as may work chiefly upon the affections. I pass by (in this knowing age) the first of these, and, being among a people whose hearts are hard enough, I begin with the latter sort; for the understanding, although it may literally, yet it never savingly, entertains any truth, until the affections be herewith smitten and wrought upon.

I shall, therefore, here prosecute the unfolding of these divine principles:-

First, that there is one most glorious God.

Secondly, that this God made all mankind at first in Adam in a most glorious estate.

Fourthly, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only means of redemption of this estate.

Fifthly, that those that are saved out of this woeful estate by Christ are very few, and that these few are saved with much difficulty.

Sixthly, that the greatest cause why so many die and perish in this estate is from themselves: either,-

1. By reason of their bloody ignorance, they know not their misery; or,-
2. By reason of their carnal security, they feel not, they groan not under their sin and misery.
3. By reason of their carnal confidence, they seek to help themselves out of their misery by their own duties, when they see or feel it; or,-
4. By reason of their false faith, whereby they catch hold upon, and trust unto, the merits of Christ too soon, when they see and feel they cannot help themselves.

THE SINCERE CONVERT.

DISCOVERING THE SMALL NUMBER OF TRUE BELIVERS.

CHAPTER I

THAT THERE IS A GOD, AND THIS GOD IS MOST GLORIOUS.

Exodus 33:18, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory."

This is the first divine truth, and there are these two parts considerable in it: -

1. That there is a God.
2. That this God is most glorious.

I will begin with the first part, and prove, omitting many philosophical arguments, that there is a God - a true God; for every nation almost in this world, until Christ's coming, had a several god. Some worshipped the sun, some the moon, - called by Ezekiel the Queen of Heaven, which some made cakes unto,- some the whole heavens, some worshipped the fire, some the brute beasts, some Ball, and some Molech. The Romans, saith Varro, had six thousand gods; who, imprisoning the light of nature, were given up to sins against nature, either to worship idols of man's invention, as the ignorant, or God and angels in those idols, as the learned did. But these are all false gods.

I am now to provide that there is one true God, the Being of beings, or the first Being. Although the proving of this point seems needless, because everyman runs with the cry and faith, There is a God, yet few thoroughly believe this point. Many of the children of God, who are best able to know men's hearts, because they only study their hearts, feel this temptation, Is there a God? bitterly assaulting them sometimes. The devil will sometimes undermine, and seek to blow up, the strongest walls and bulwarks. The light of nature indeed shows that there is a God; but how many are there that, by foul sins against their conscience, blow out and extinguish almost all the light of nature! And hence, though they dare not conclude, because they have some light, though dim, if they saw their heart, they might see it secretly suspect and question whether there be a God. But grant that none questions this truth, yet we that are builders must not fall to a work without our main

props and pillars. It may appear, therefore, that there is a God from these grounds: -

First, from the works of God. (Rom. 1:20.) When we see a stately house, although we see not the man that built it, although also we know not the time when it was built, yet will we conclude thus: Surely some wise artificer hath been working here. Can we, when we behold the stately theater of heaven and earth, conclude other but that the finger, arms, and wisdom of God hath been here, although we see not him that is invisible, and although we know not the time when he began to build? Every creature in heaven and earth is a loud preacher of this truth. Who set those candles, those torches of heaven, on the table? Who hung out those lanterns in heaven to enlighten a dark world? Who can make the statue of a man, but one wiser than the stone out of which it was hewn? Could any frame a man but one wiser and greater than man? Who taught the birds to build their nest, and bees to set up and order their commonwealth? Who sends the sun post from one end of heaven to the other, carrying so many thousand blessings to so many thousands of people and kingdoms? What power of man or angels can make the least pile of grass, or put life into the least fly, if once dead? There is, therefore, a power above all created power, which is God.

Secondly, from the word of God. There is a majesty stirring, and such secrets revealed in the word, that, if men will not be willfully blind, they cannot but cry out, "The voice of God, and not the voice of man." Hence Calvin undertakes to prove the Scripture to be the word of God by reason, against all atheists under heaven. Hast thou not thought sometimes, at a sermon, the minister hath spoken to none but thee, and that some or other hast told the minister what thou hast said, what thou hast done, what thou hast thought? Now, that word which tells thee the thoughts of thy heart can be nothing else but the word of an all-seeing God, that searcheth the heart.

Again: that word which quickeneth the dead is certainly God's word; but the word of God ordinarily preached quickeneth the dead; it maketh the blind to see, the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the lame to walk, those that never felt their sins to load them to mourn, those that never could pray to breathe out utterable groans and sighs for their sins.

Thirdly, from the children of begotten God; for we may read men's foreheads, as soon as ever they are born, the sentence of death; and we may see by men's lives what hellish hearts they have. Now, there is a time that some of this monstrous brood of men are quite changed, and made all new; they have new minds, new opinions, new desires, new joys, new sorrows, new speeches, new prayers, new lives, and such a difference there is betwixt these and others, that they are hated by others, who loved them while they loved their sins. And whence came this strange change? Is it from themselves? No; for they hated this new life and these new men once themselves. Is it

because they would be credited thereby? No; it is to be hated of father, mother, friends, and maligned every where. Is it out of simplicity, or are their brains grown crazy? They were indeed once fools, and I can prove them all to be Solomon's fools; but even simple men have been made new. But lastly, is it now from a slavish fear of hell, which works this alteration? Nothing less; they abhor to live like slaves in Bridewell, to do all for fear of the whip.

Fourthly, from God's register, or notary, which is in every man; I mean, the conscience of man, which telleth them there is a God; and although they silence it sometimes, yet in time of thunder, or some great plague, as Pharaoh, or at the day of death, then they are near God's tribunal, when they acknowledge him clearly. The fearful terrors of conscience prove this, which, like a bailiff, arrests men for their debts; ergo, there is some creditor to set it on: sometimes, like a hangman, it torments men; ergo, there is some strange judge that gave it that command. Whence arise these dreadful terrors in men? Of themselves? No surely; all desire to be in peace, and so to live and sleep in a whole skin. Comes it from melancholy? No; for melancholy comes on by degrees; these terrors of conscience surprise the soul suddenly at a sermon, suddenly after the commission of some secret foul sin. Again: melancholy sadness may be cured by physic; but many physicians have given such men over to other physicians. Melancholy sadness may be borne, but a wounded spirit who can bear? Thus you see that there is a God.

Objection. Who ever saw God, that every one is thus bold to affirm that there is a God?

Answer. Indeed, his face never was seen by mortal man, but his back parts have been seen, are seen, and may be seen by all the world, as hath been proved.

Object. All things are brought to pass by second causes.

Ans 1. What though? Is there no master in the house, because the servants do all the work? This great God maintains state by doing all the creatures subjection; yet sometimes we may cry out in beholding some special pieces of his administration, Here is the finger of God.

2. What though there be such confusion in the world as that shillings stand for pence, and counters stand for pounds, the best men are bought and sold at a low rate, and worst men prized and preferred; yet if we had eyes to see and conceive, we should see a harmony in this discord of things. God is now like a wise carpenter, but hewing out his work. There is a lumber and confusion seemingly among us; let us stay till the day of judgment, and then we shall see infinite wisdom in fitting all this for his own glory, and for the good of his people.

Object. But if there be a God, why hears he not his people's prayers? Why doth he forget them when they have most need of him?

I answer, Noah's dove returns not presently with an olive branch of peace in his mouth. Prayer sometimes that speeds well returns not presently, for want of company enough to fetch away that abundance of mercy which God hath to give. The Lord ever gives them their asking in money worth, in the same thing or better. The Lord ever gives his importunate beggars their desires, either in pence by little and little, or by pounds; long he is many times before he gives, but payeth them well for their waiting.

This is a use of reproof to all atheist either in opinion or practice.

First. In opinion; such as either conclude or suspect there is no God. O, blasphemous thoughts! Are there any such men? Men! Nay, beasts; nay, devils; nay, worse than devils, for they believe and tremble. Yet the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God (Ps. 14:1.) Men that have little heads, little knowledge, without hearts, as scholars sometimes of weak brains, being guided only by their books, seeing how things come by second causes, yet cannot raise their dull thoughts to the beholding of a first cause. Great politicians are like children, always standing on their heads, and shaking their heels against heaven: these think religion to be but a piece of policy, to keep people in awe: profane persons desiring to go on in sin, without any rub or check for sin, blow out all the light of nature, wishing there were no God to punish, and therefore willing to suspect and scruple that not to be which indeed is. Those also that have sinned secretly, though not openly against nature, or the light of conscience. God smites men for incest, sodomy, self-pollution, with dismal blindness. Those also that are notorious worldlings, that look no higher than their barns, no farther than their shops; the world is a pearl in their eye; they cannot see a God.

Lastly. I suspect those men that never found out this thief, this sin, that was bred and born with them, nor saw it in their own hearts, but there it lies still in some dark corner of their souls, to cut their throats - these kind of men sometimes suspect there is no God. O, this is grievous sin! For if no God, no heaven, no hell, no martyrs, no prophets, no Scriptures. Christ was then a horrible liar, and an imposter. Other sins wrong and grieve God, and wound him, but this sin stabs the very heart of God; it strikes at the life, and is (as much as lies in sinful man) the death of God; for it saith, There is no God.

Secondly. This reproveth atheists in practice, which say there is a God, and question it not, but in works they deny him. He that plucks the king from his throne is as vile as he that saith he is no king. These men are almost as bad as atheists in opinion. And of such dust heaps we may find in every corner, that in their practice deny God; men that set up other gods in God's room; their wealth, their honor, their pleasure, their backs and bellies to be their gods; men that make bold to do against this true God which idolaters dare not do against their idol gods; and that is, continually to wrong this God;

men that seek not for all they want by prayer, nor return all back again to God by praise.

A second use is, for exhortation. O, labor to see and behold this God. Is there a God and wilt thou not give him a good look? O, pass by all the rivers, till thou come to the spring head; wade through all creatures, until thou art drowned, plunged and swallowed up with God. When thou tastest sweetness in the creature, or in God's ordinances, say, Where is sweetness itself, beauty itself? Where is the sea of these drops, the sun of these beams? O that men saw this God! it's Heaven to behold him; and yet what is less known than God? Methinks, when men hear there is a God about them, they should lie groveling in the dust, because of his glory. If men did see him, they would speak of him. Who speaks of God? Nay, men can not speak to God; but as beggars have learnt to cant, so many a man to pray. O, men see not God in prayer; therefore they can not speak to God by prayer. Men sin and God frowns, (which makes the devils to quake;) yet men's hearts shake not, because they see him not.

Use 3. O, make choice of this God as thy God. What though there be a God; if it be not thy God, what art thou better? Down with all thy idol gods, and set up this God. If there be any creature that ever did thee any good, that God set not a work for thy good, love that; think on that as thy God. If there be any thing that can give thee succor on thy death bed, or when thou art departed from this world, take that to be thy God. Thou mightest have been born in India, and never have heard the true God, but worshiped the devil for thy god. O, therefore, make choice for him alone to be thy God; give away thyself wholly and forever to him, and he will give away his whole self everlasting unto thee. Seek him weeping, and thou shalt find him. Bind thyself by the strongest oaths and bonds in covenant to be his, and he will enter into covenant with thee, and so be thine. (Jer 1:3,5.)

The fourth use is, a use of comfort to them that forsake all for this God. Thou hast not lost all for nought, thou hast not cast away substance for shadow, but shadows for somewhat. (Prov. 8:18.) When all comfort is gone, there is a God to comfort thee. When thou hast no rest here, there is a God to rest in; when thou art dead, he can quicken thee; when thou art weak, he is strong; and when friends are gone, he will be a sure one to thee.

Thus much of the first part of this doctrine, or divine truth, *That there is a God*. Now, it followeth to show you that this God is a *most glorious God*, and that in four things he is glorious.

1. In his essence. 2. In his attributes. 3. In his persons. 4. In his works.

1. He is glorious in his essence. Now, what this glory is no man or angel hath, doth, or ever shall know; their cockle shell can never comprehend this sea; he must have the wisdom of God, and so be a God, that

comprehendeth what it is, yet it may be apprehended that it is incomprehensible and glorious; which makes his glory to be the more admired, as we admire the luster of the sun the more in that it is so great we can not behold it.

2. God is glorious in his attributes, which are those divine perfections whereby he makes himself known unto us. Which attributes are not qualities in God, but natures. God's wisdom is God himself, and God's power is God himself, etc. Neither are they divers things in God, but they are divers only in regard of our understanding, and in regard of their different effects in different objects. God punishing the wicked is the justice of God; God compassionating the miserable is the mercy of God.

Now, the attributes of God, omitting curious divisions, are these: -

1. He is a Spirit, or spiritual God, (John 4:24;) therefore abhors all worship, and all duties performed without the Spirit; as to confess sins without shame or sorrow, and to say the Lord's prayer without understanding - to hear the word that thou mayest only know more, and not that thou mayest affect more - O, these carcasses or holy duties are most odious sacrifices before God.

2. He is a living God, whereby he liveth of himself, and gives life to all other things. Away, the, with thy dead heart to this principle of life to quicken thee, that his almighty power may pluck thee out of thy sepulcher, unloose thy grave clothes, that so thou mayest live.

3. He is an infinite God, whereby he is without limits of being. 2 Chron. 6:18.) Horrible, then, is the least sin that strikes an infinite, great God, and lamentable is the estate of all those with whom God is angry; thou hast infinite goodness to forsake thee, and infinite power and wrath to set against thee.

4. He is an eternal God, without beginning or end of being. (Ps. 80:1.) Great, therefore, is the folly of those men that prefer a little short pleasure before this eternal God; that, like Esau, sell away an everlasting inheritance for a little pottage - for a base lust and the pleasure or it.

5. He is an all-sufficient God. (Gen 17:1.) What lack you, therefore? You would fain have this God, and the love of this God, but you are loth to take the pains to find him, or to be at cost to purchase him with the loss of all? Here is infinite, eternal, present sweetness, goodness, grace, glory, and mercy to be found in this God. Why post you from mountain to hill, why spend you your money, your thoughts, time, endeavors, on things that satisfy not? Here is thy resting-place. Thy clothes may warm thee, but they can not feed thee; thy meat may feed thee, but can not heal thee; thy physic may heal thee, but can not maintain thee; thy money may maintain thee, but can not comfort thee when distresses of conscience and anguish of heart come upon thee. This God is joy in sadness, light in darkness, life in death, heaven in hell.

Here is all thine eye ever saw, thine heart ever desired, thy tongue ever asked, thy mind ever conceived. Here is all light in this sun, and all water in this sea, out of whom, as out of a crystal fountain, thou shalt drink down all the refined sweetness of all creatures in heaven and earth forever and ever. All the world is now seeking and tiring out themselves for rest; here only can it be found.

6. He is and omnipotent God, whereby he can do whatever he will. Yield, therefore, and stand not out in the sinful or subtle close maintenance of any one sin against this God so powerful, who can crush thee at his pleasure.

7. He is an all-seeing God. He knows what possibly can be or may be known: approve thyself, therefore, to this God only, in all thy ways. It is no matter what men say, censure, or think of thee. It is no matter what thy fellow-actors on this stage of the world imagine. God is the great Spectator that beholds thee in every place. God is thy Spy, and takes complete notice of all the actions of thy life; and they are in print in heaven, which that great Spectator and Judge will open at the great day, and read aloud in the ears of all the world. Fear to sin, therefore, in secret, unless thou canst find out some dark hole where the eye of god can not discern thee. Mourn for thy secret neglect of holy duties; mourn for thy secret hypocrisy, whoredom, profaneness, and, with shame in thy face, come before this God for pardon and mercy. Admire and wonder at his patience, that, having seen thee, hath not damned thee.

8. He is a true God; whereby he means to do as he saith. Let every child of God, therefore, know to his comfort, that whatever he hath under a promise, shall one day be all made good; and let all wicked men know, whatever threatening God hath denounced, whatsoever arrows are in the bowstring, will one day fly and hit, and strike deep, and the longer the Lord is a-drawing, the deeper wound will God's arrow (that is, God's threatening) make.

9. He is a holy God. Be not ashamed, therefore, of holiness, which if it ascend above the common strain of honesty, the blind and mad world accounts it madness. If the righteous (that is, those that be most holy) be scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (I Pet. 4:18.) Where? Not before saints nor angels, for holiness is their trade; not before the face of the man Christ Jesus, for holiness was his *meat and drink*; not before the face of a blessed God, for holiness is his nature; not in heaven, for no unclean thing crawls there; they shall never see God, Christ, saints, angels, or heaven to their comfort, that are not holy. Wear, therefore, that as they crown now, which will be thy glory in heaven; and if this be to be vile, be more vile.

10. He is a just and merciful God; just in himself, and so will punish all sin; merciful in the face of Christ, and so will punish no sin, having already borne our punishments for them. A just God against a hard-hearted sinner, a

merciful God towards a humble sinner. God is not all mercy and no justice, nor all justice and no mercy. Submit to him, his mercy embraceth thee. Resist him, his justice pursues thee. When a child of God is humbled indeed, commonly he makes God a hard-hearted, cruel God, loth to help; and saith, Can such a sinner be pardoned? A wicked man, that was never humbles, makes God a God of lies – one that (howsoever he speaks heavy words, yet he is a merciful God and) will not do as he saith, and he finds it no difficulty work to believe the greatest sin may be pardoned. Conceive, therefore, of him as you have heard.

Thirdly. God is glorious in his persons, which are three: Father begetting, Son begotten, and the Holy Ghost, the third person proceeding. Here the Father is called the Father of glory, (Eph.1.;) Christ is called the Lord of glory, (I Cor.2;) and the Spirit is called the Spirit of glory, (I Pet. 4.) The Father is glorious in his great work *election*; the Son is glorious in his great work *redemption*; the Holy Ghost is glorious in his work of *application*: the Father is glorious in choosing the house, the Son is glorious in buying the house, the Spirit is glorious in dwelling in the house – that is, the heart of a poor, lost sinner.

4. He is glorious in his works – in his works of creation, and in his works of providence and government. Wonder, therefore, that he should so vouchsafe to look upon such worms, such dunghills, such lepers as we are; to provide, protect, to slay his Son; to call, to strive, to wait, to give away himself and all that he is worth, to us. O, fear this God when you come before him. People come before God in prayer as before their fellows, or as before an idol. People tremble not at his voice in the word. A king or monarch will be served in state; yet how rudely, how slovenly do men go about every holy duty! Thus much of the first principle head, *That there is one most glorious God*. Now we are to proceed to the second.

CHAPTER II

THAT THIS GOD MADE ALL MANKIND AT FIRST IN A MOST GLORIOUS AND HAPPY ESTATE, LIKE UNTO HIMSELF.

For the opening of which assertion I have chosen this text, (Eccl 7:29,) *God made man righteous*, which clearly demonstrates, -

That God made all mankind at first in Adam, in a most glorious, happy, and righteous estate. Man, when he came first out of God's mint, shined most glorious. There is a marvelous glory in all creatures, (the servants and household stuff of man;) therefore, there was a greater glory in man himself, the end of them. God called a parliament, and gathers a council, when man was to be made; and said, "Come, let us make man in our own image," as though all the wisdom of the Trinity should be seen in the creation of man.

Wherein did the glory and blessedness of man appear?

In the impression of God's image upon him. (Gen. 1:26.) Can there be any greater glory for a Joseph, for a subject, than to be like his prince?

What was the image of God?

The schoolmen and fathers have many curious (yet some necessary) though difficult questions about this. I will omit all theirs, and tell you only what is the apostle's judgment, (Col. 3:20,) out of which this general description of God's image may be thus gathered: It is man's perfection of holiness, resembling God's admirable holiness, whereby only man pleaseth God.

For all other inferior creatures did carry the marks and footsteps of God's power, wisdom, goodness, whereby all these attributes were seen. One of the most perfect attributes, his holiness, he would have men only appear in, and be made manifest by man, his best inferior creature, as a king's wisdom and bounty appears in managing the affairs of all his kingdom; but his royal, princely, and most eminent perfections appear in the face and disposition of his Son, next under him. But more particularly this image appeared in these four particulars: -

1. In man's understanding. This was like unto God's. Now, God's image here chiefly consisted in this particular, viz.: As God saw himself, and beheld his own infinite, endless glory and excellency, so man was privy to God's excellency, and saw God most gloriously; as Moses, though a sinful

man, saw him face to face, much more Adam, a perfect man. God, loving man, could do no less than reveal himself to man.

2. In his affections. The image of God chiefly appeared in two things:

-

First. As God, seeing himself, loved himself, so Adam, seeing God, loved this God more than the world, more than himself. As iron put into the fire seems to be nothing but fire, so Adam, being beloved of God, was turned into a lump of love, to love God again.

Secondly. As God delighted in himself, so did Adam delight in God, took sweet repose in the bosom of God. Methinks I see Adam rapt up in continual ecstasies in having this God.

3. In his will. The image of God chiefly appeared in two things: -

First. As God only willed himself as his last end, so did Adam will God as his last end, not as man doth now.

Secondly. As God willed nothing but good, so did Adam will nothing, though not immutably, but good; for God's will was his

4. In his life, God's image did appear thus: that, even as God, if he had assume man's nature, would have lived outwardly, so did Adam; for God would have lived according to his own will, law, and rule: so did Adam. Adam's body was the lantern through which holiness, like a lamp burning in his heart, shined. This was God's image, by means of which, as it is said in the description, he pleased God, similitude being the ground of love; and hence God did most dearly love him, and highly honor him to be Lord over all creatures. No evil (continuing in that estate) could hurt him; here was no sorrow, no sickness, no tears, no fears, no death, no hell, nor ever should have been if there he had stood.

Objection. How was this estate ours?

Answer. As Christ's righteousness is a believer's by imputation, though he never performed it himself, so Adam's righteousness and image was imputed to us, and accounted ours; for Adam received our stock or patrimony to keep it for us, and to convey it to us. Hence, he proving bankrupt, we lost it. But we had it in his hands, as an orphan may have a great estate left him, though he never received one penny from him that was his guardian, that should have kept it for him, and conveyed it to him.

Here se the horrible nature of sin, that plucks man down by the ears from his throne, from his perfection, though never so great. Adam might have pleaded for himself, and have said, Although I have sinned, yet it is but one and the first fault. Lord, behold, I am thy first born. O, pity my poor posterity, who are forever undone if thou forgivest not. Yet see, one sin weighs him down and all his posterity, as we shall hear, into eternal ruin.

Hence learn how justly God may require perfect obedience to all the law of every man, and curse him if he can not perform it, because man was at

first made in such a glorious estate, where in he had power given him to please God perfectly. God may, therefore, require this debt of perfect obedience. Now man is broke, and in prison; in hell he must lie forever, if he can not pay justice every farthing, because God trusted him with a stock which if he had well improved, he might have paid all.

See what cause every man hath to lament his miserable estate he is now fallen into. For beggars' children to live vagrants and poor is not so lamentable as for a great prince's children to become such. One never in favor of the prince grieves not as he doth that was once in favor, but now cast out. Man is now rejected of God that was beloved of God. He is now a runagate up and down the earth that was once a prince and lord of all the world. This is one aggravation of the damned's sorrow. O, hopes, the means, the mercies that I once had! Can these, do these lament for the loss of their hopes and common mercies? Lord, what heart, then, have men that can not, do not, that will not lament the loss of such a special high favors, now gone, which once they had? It is said that those that saw the glory of the first temple wept when they saw the glory of the second, and how inferior it was to the first. You that either have the temple of God begun to repair in you, or not begun at all, O, think of the temple burnt, the glory of God now vanished and lost.

This speaks comfort to all God's people. If all Adam's posterity were perfectly righteous in him, then thou art of the blood royal, and in Christ art perfectly righteous in him much more, inasmuch as the righteousness of the second Adam exceeds the first, so art thou more happy, more holy in the second Adam than ever the first in himself was. He might lose all his righteousness; but the second Adam can not, hath not; so that, if Christ may be damned, the thou mayest; else not.

This likewise reproveth three sorts of people: -

1. Such as are ashamed of holiness. Lord, what times are we fallen into now? The image of God, which was once men's glory, is now their shame; and sin, which is men's shame, is now their glory. The world hath raised up many false reports of holy courses, calling folly and preciseness, pride, hypocrisy, and that, whatsoever shows men may make, they are as bad as the worst, if their sins were writ in their foreheads. Hence it cometh to pass that many a man, who is almost persuaded to be a new man, and to turn over a new leaf, dares not, will not, for shame of the world, enter upon religious courses. What will they think of me then? Saith he. Men are ashamed to refuse to drink healths, and hence maintain them lawful. Our gallants are ashamed to stay a mile behind the fashion; hence they will defend open and naked breasts and strange apparel, as things comely. O, time servers! That have some conscience to desire to be honest, and to be reputed so, yet conform themselves to all companies. If they hear others swear, they are

ashamed to reprove them; they are ashamed to enter the lists of holy discourse in bad company; and they will pretend discretion, and we must not cast pearls before swine; but the bottom of the business is, they are ashamed to be holy. O, fearful! Is it a shame to be like God? O, sinful wretches! It is a credit to be any thing but religious, and, with many, religion is a shame. I wonder with what face thou darest pray, or with what look thou wilt behold the Lord of glory at the last day, who art ashamed of him now, that will be admired of all men, angels, and devils then? Dost thou look for wages from Christ that art ashamed to own Christ, or to wear his livery?

2. It reproveth them that hate holiness, which is more than to be ashamed of it.

3. It reproveth them that content themselves with a certain measure of holiness. Perfect holiness was Adam's image, whereby he pleased God; and shall a little holiness content thee?

Now, there are these three sorts of them: -

1. The formalist, who contents himself with some holiness, as much as will credit him.

The form and name of religion is *honor*, honor sometimes; but the power and practice of it is *onus*, a burden; hence men take up the first, and shake off the second. And indeed the greatest part take up this course: if they have no goodness, they should be the shame, scorn, and table talk of the times; therefore every man will, for his honor's sake, have this form. Now, this form is according to the mold wherein he is cast. If his acquaintance be but civil, he will be like them; if they be more exact, as to pray, read, confer, he will not stay one inch behind them. If to be better than his companions, to bear the bell before them, will credit him, he will be so, whatever it cost him; but yet he will never be so exact in his course as to be hated for it, unless he perceives the hatred he contracts from some men shall be recompensed with the more love and credit by other men. He disguiseth himself according to the places or company he comes into. King Joash was a good man so long as Jehoiada the priest lived. If a little religion will serve to credit men, that shall serve for the time; if more in another place, you shall then have them commending good men, good sermons, good books, and drop forth two or three good sentences. What will they think of him then? They cover themselves over with these fig leaves of common honesty to cover their nakedness; they bait all their courses over with honesty, that they may catch, for they fish only for credit. One may trap these people thus: Follow them into their private houses, there is worldliness, passion, looseness; and to their private chambers, there they ordinarily neglect or snuffle over duties to their private vain thoughts. In this trying house you shall them see these stage players; their shop windows are shut; here no honesty is to be seen scarce, because their gain, their respect, comes not in at this door, where none

beholds them. Let either minister or any faithful friend search, try, discover, accuse, and condemn these men as rotten, though gilded, posts, as unsound, hollow-hearted wretches, their hearts will swell like toads, and hiss like snakes, and bark like dogs, against them that thus censure them, because they rob them of their God they served, their gain is gone.

2. The guilty, self-condemned sinner, that goes further than the formalist, and contents himself with so much holiness as will quiet him; and hence all the heathen have had some religion, because they had some conscience to trouble them. This man, if he hath lived in fouls sins, and began to be racked and troubled for them, he will them confess and forsake those sins. But how? As a dog doth his meat; not because he hates his carrion, but because he fears the cudgel. He performs holy duties, not because he will use them, but because he must use them; there is no quiet else. If conscience be still, he omits duties; if conscience cry and stir, he falls to duties, and so hath his good mood as conscience hath his fits. They boast and crow over hypocrites, because the holiness they have is not a bare show. No; but it is to stop thy conscience, and only to quiet the clamors of that. Thou dost bribe, and so quiet (the bailiff) thy conscience, by thy praying, hearing, and sorrowing; but God, thy Judge, hath heavy things to lay at thy charge, before whom thou shalt shortly with dread appear.

3. The pining and devout hypocrite, that, being pursued with the fear of hell, goes further, and labors for just so much holiness as will save him only, and carry him to heaven at last. Hence the young man in the gospel came with that great question to Christ, which many unsound hearts come with to ministers now - what he should do to inherit eternal life. These people set up such a man in their thoughts to be a very honest man, and one doubtless that shall be saved; and hence they will take him to be their copy and sampler, and labor to do as he doth, and to live just as he lives, and to hold opinions as he holds, and so hope to be saved. They will ask, very inquisitively, What is the least measure of grace, and the least grain of faith? And the best sermons are not such as humble them most, but such as flatter them best; wherein they may hear how well good desires are accepted of by God; which if they hear to be of that virtue to save them, God shall be served only with good desires, and the devil in their actions all their lives.

Thus they make any thing serve for God; they labor not after so much holiness as will honor Christ, but after just so much as will bear their charges to heaven, and save themselves. For this is one of the greatest differences betwixt a child of God and a hypocrite. In their obedience, the one takes up duties out of love to Christ, to have him; and hence he mourns daily, because Christ is no greater gainer by him; the other out of love to himself, merely to save his own soul; and hence he mourns for his sins, because they may damn him. Remember that place, therefore, I Cor 15. ult.

Lastly. Labor to get this image of God renewed again. Honest men will labor to pay their debts; this is God's debt. How do men labor to be in the fashion! Better to be out of the world than to be out of the fashion. To be like God is heaven's fashion, angels' fashion, and it will be in fashion one day, when the Lord Jesus shall appear; then, if thou hast the superscription and image of the devil, and not the image of God upon thee, God and Christ will never own thee at that day. Labor, therefore, to have God's image restored again, and Satan's wash out; seek not, as many do, to purchase such and such a grace first. But, -

1. Labor to mortify and subdue that sin which is opposite in thine heart to that grace. First put off the old man, and then put on the new. (Eph. 4.)

2. Labor for a melting, tender heart for the least sin. Gold is then only fit to receive the impression when it is tender and is melted; when thine heart is heated, therefore, at a sermon cry out, Lord, now strike, now imprint thine image upon me!

3. Labor to see the Lord Jesus in his glory. For as wicked men, looking upon the evil example of great ones in the world, that will bear them out, grow like them in villainy, so the very beholding the glorious grace in Christ, this great Lord of glory, transformeth men into this image. (2 Cor. 3:17,18.) As the glass, set full against the sun, receives not only the beams, as all other dark bodies do, but the image of the sun, so the understanding, with open face beholding Christ, is turned into the image and likeness of Christ. Men nowadays look only to be the best men's lives, and see how they walk, and rest here. O, look higher to this blessed face of God in Christ as thine own. As the application of the seal to the wax imprints the image strongly on the soul. I come now to the third principle head in order, which I shall insist upon, out of Rom. 3:23: "All have sinned and deprived of the glory of God."

CHAPTER 111.

THAT ALL MANKIND IS FALLEN BY SIN FROM THAT GLORIOUS ESTATE HE WAS MADE IN, INTO A MOST WOEFUL AND MISERABLE CONDITION.

The devil abusing the serpent, and man abusing his own free will, overthrew Adam, and in him all his posterity, by sin. (Gen. 3:1-3 etc.)

Now, man's misery appears in these two things: -

1. His misery in regard of sin.

2. His misery in regard of the consequences of sin.

1. His misery in regards of sin appears in these particulars: -

1. Every man living is born guilty of Adam's sin. Now, the justice and equity of God, in laying this sin to every man's charge, though none of Adam's posterity personally committed it, appears thus: -

First. If Adam standing, all mankind had stood, then it is equal, that he falling, all his posterity should fall. Our estates were ventures in this ship; therefore, if we should have been partakers of his gains, if he had continued safe, it is fit we should be partakers of his loss too.

But, secondly. We are all in Adam, as a whole country in a parliament man; the whole country doth what he doth. And although we made no particular choice of Adam to stand for us, yet the Lord made it for us; who, being goodness itself, bears more good will to man than he can or could to himself; and being wisdom itself, made the wisest choice, and took the wisest course for the good of man. For this made most for men's safety and quiet; for if he had stood, all fear of losing our happy estate had vanished; whereas, if everyman had been left to stand or fall for himself, a man would ever have been in fear of falling.

And again: this was the sure way to have all men's states preserved; for having the charge of the estates of all men that ever should be in the world, he was the more pressed to look the more about him, and so to be more watchful, that he be not robbed, and so undo and procure the curses of so many thousands against him. Adam was the head of mankind, and all mankind naturally are members of that head; and if the head invent and plot treason, and the head practice treason against the king or state, the whole body is found guilty, and the whole body must needs suffer. Adam was the poisoned root and cistern of all mankind: now, the branches and streams being in the root and spring originally, they therefore are tainted with the same poisoned principles. If these things satisfy not, God hath a day coming

wherein he will reveal his own righteous proceedings before men and angels. (Rom.2:4.)

O that men would consider this sin, and that the consideration of it could humble people's hearts! If any mourn for sin, it is for the most part for other foul actual sins; few for this sin which first made the breach, and begun the controversy betwixt God and man. Next unto the sin against the Holy Ghost, and contempt of the gospel, this is the greatest sin that crieth loudest in God's ears for vengeance, day and night, against a world of men. For now men's sins are against God in their base and low estates; but this sin was committed against Jehovah, when man was at the top of his preferment. Rebellion of a traitor on a dunghill is not so great as of a favorite in court. Little sins against light are made horrible. No sin, by any man committed, was ever against so much light as Adam had. This sin was the first that ever displeased God. Drunkenness deprives God of the glory of sobriety; whoring, of chastity; but this sin darkens the very sun, defaces all the image of God, the glory of man, and the glory of God in man; this is the first sin ever did thee mischief. This sin, like a captain, hath gathered all those troops and swarms of sins that now take hold upon thee. Thank this sin for a hard heart thou so much complainest of; thank this sin for that hellish darkness that overspreads thee. This hath raised Satan, death, judgment, hell, and heaven against thee.

O, consider these sins that are packed up in this evil. 1. Fearful apostasy from God like a devil. 2. Horrible rebellion against God in joining sides with the devil, and taking God's greatest enemies' part against God. 3. Woeful unbelief, in suspecting God's threats to be true. 4. Fearful blasphemy in conceiving the devil (God's enemy and man's murderer) to be more true in his temptations than God in his threatenings. 5. Horrible pride, in thinking to make this sin of eating the forbidden fruit to be a step and a stair to rise higher, and to be like God himself. 6. Fearful contempt of God, making bold to rush upon the sword of the threatening secretly, not fearing the plague denounced. 7. Horrible unthankfulness, when God had given him all but one tree, and yet he must be fingering that too. 8. Horrible theft, in taking that which was none of his own. 9. Horrible idolatry, in doting upon and loving the creature more than God the Creator, who is blessed forever.

You, therefore, that now say, No man can say, Black is your eye, you have lived civilly all your days, look upon this one grievous sin, take a full view of it, which thou hast never shed one tear for as yet, and see thy misery by it, and wonder at God's patience; he hath spared they who wast born branded with it, and hast lived guilty of it, and must perish forever for it, if the Lord from heaven pity thee not.

But here is not all. Consider, secondly, everyman is born stark dead in sin. (Eph. 2:1.) He is born empty of every inward principle of life, void of all

grace, and hath no more good in him (whatsoever he thinks) than a dead carrion hath. And he is under the power of sin, as a dead man is under the power of death, and can not perform any act of life; their bodies are living coffins to carry a dead soul up and down in.

It is true, (I confess,) many wicked man do many good actions, as praying, hearing, alms deeds; but it not from any inward principle of life. External motives, like plummetts on a dead (yet artificial) clock, set them a-running. Jehu was zealous, but it was only for a kingdom; the Pharisees gave alms only to be seen of men. If one write a will with a dead man's hand deceased, that will can not stand in any law; it was not his will, because it was not writ by him, by any inward principle of life of his own. Pride makes a man preach, pride makes a man hear, and pray sometimes. Self-love stirs up strange desires in men, so that we may say, This is none of God's act by his grace in the soul, but pride and self-love. Bring a dead man to the fire, and chafe him, and rub him, you may produce some heat by this external working upon him; but take him from the fire again. And he is soon cold; so many a man lives under a sound minister, under the lashes and knocks of a chiding, striving conscience, he hath some heat in him, some affections, some fears, some desires, some sorrows stirred; yet take him from the minister and his chafing conscience, and he grows cold again presently, because he wants an inward principle of life.

Which point might make us to take up a bitter lamentation for every natural man. It is said, (Ex. 12:30,) "That there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house wherein there was not found one dead." O Lord, in some towns and families, what a world of these are there! Dead husband, dead wife, dead servants, dead children, walking up and down with their sins, (as fame saith some men do after death,) with grave clothes about them; and God only knows whether ever they shall live again or not. How do men lament the loss of their dead friends! O, thou hast a precious soul in thy bosom stark dead; therefore lament thine estate, and consider it seriously.

First. A dead man can not stir, nor offer to stir; a wicked man can not speak one good word, or do any good action, if heaven itself did lie at the stake for doing it, nor offer to shake off his sins, nor think one good thought. Indeed, he may speak and thing of good things, but he can not have good speeches, nor good thoughts; as a holy man may think of evil things as of the sins of the times, the thought of those evil things is good, not evil, so *e contra*.

Secondly. A dead man fears no dangers, though never so great, though never so near. Let ministers bring a natural man tidings of the approach of the devouring plagues of God denounced, he fears them not.

Thirdly. A dead man can not be drawn to accept of the best offers. Let Christ come out of heaven, and fall about the neck of a natural man, and

with tears in his eyes beseech him to take his blood, himself, his kingdom, and leave his sins, he can not receive this offer.

Fourthly. A dead man is stark blind, and can see nothing, and stark deaf, and hears nothing, he can not taste any thing; so a natural man is stark blind, he sees no God, no Christ, no wrath of the almighty, no glory of heaven. He hears the voice of a man, but he hears not the voice of God in a sermon; "he savoreth not the things of God's Spirit."

Fifthly. A dead man is senseless, and feels nothing; so cast mountains of sin upon a wicked man, he feels no hurt until the flames of hell break out upon him.

Sixthly. A dead man is a speechless man; he can not speak unless it be like a parrot.

Seventhly. He is a breathless man: a natural man may say a prayer, or devise a prayer out of his memory and wit, or he may have a few short-winded wishes; but to pour out his souls in prayer, in the bosom of God, with groans unutterable, he can not. I wonder not to see so many families without family prayer. Why? They are dead men, and lie rotting their sins.

Eighthly. A dead man hath lost all beauty: so a mere natural man hath lost all glory; he is an ugly creature in the sight of God, good men, and angels, and shall one day be an abhorring to all flesh.

Ninthly. Dead men want nothing but casting into the grave: so there wants nothing but casting into hell for a natural man. So that, Abraham loved Sarah well while living, yet when she was dead, he seeks for a burying-place for her to carry her out of his sight. So God may let some fearful judgment loose, and say to it, Take this dead soul out of my sight, etc. It was a wonder that Lazarus, though lying but four days in the grave, should live again. O, wonder thou that ever God should let thee live, that hast been rotting in thy sin twenty, thirty, perhaps sixty years together.

III. Every natural man and woman is born full of all sin, (Rom. 1:29,) as full as a toad is of poison, as full as ever his skin can hold; mind, will, eyes, mouth, every limb of his body, and every piece of his soul, is full of sin; their hearts are bundles of sin; hence Solomon saith, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;" whole treasures of sin. "An evil man, (saith Christ,) out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth evil things;" nay, raging seas of sin. The tongue is a world of mischief. What is the heart then? "For out of the abundance of the heart the tongue speaketh:" so that, look about thee and see, whatever sin is broached, and runs out of any man's heart into his life through the whole world, all those sins are in thine heart; thy mind is a nest of all foul opinions, heresies, that ever were vented by any man; thy heart is a foul sink of all atheism, sodomy, blasphemy, murder, whoredom, adultery, witchcraft, buggery; so that, if thou hast any good thing in thee, it is but as a drop of rosewater in a bowl of poison; where fallen it is all corrupted.

It is true thou feelest not all these things stirring in thee at one time, no more than Hazael thought he was or should be such a bloodsucker, when he asked the prophet Elisha if he were a dog; but they are in thee like a nest of snakes in an old hedge. Although they break not out into thy life, they lie lurking in thy heart; they are there as a filthy puddle in a barrel, which runs not out, because thou happily wantest the temptation or occasion to broach and tap thine heart; or because of God's restraining grace by fear, shame, education, and good company, thou art restrained and bridled up, and therefore when one came to comfort that famous picture, pattern, and monument of God's justice by seven years' horror, and grievous distress of conscience, when one told him he never had committed such sins as Manasses, and therefore he was not the greatest sinner since the creation, as he conceived, he replied, that he should have been worse than ever Manasses was, if he had lived in his time, and been on his throne.

Mr. Bradford would never have looked upon any one's lewd life with one eye, but he would presently return within his own breast with the other eye, and say, "In this my vile breast remains that sin, which, without God's special grace, I should have committed as well as he." O, methinks this might pull down men's proud conceits of themselves, especially such as bear up and comfort themselves in their smooth, honest, civil life; such as through education have been washed from all foul sins; they were tainted with whoredom, swearing, drunkenness, or profaneness; and here they think themselves so safe, that God can not find in his heart to have a thought of damning them.

O, consider of this point, which may make thee pull thine hair from thine head, and turn thy clothes into sackcloth, and run up and down with amazement and paleness in thy face, and horror in thy conscience, and tears in thine eyes. What though thy life be smooth, what though thy outside, thy sepulcher, be painted? O, thou art full of rottenness, of sin, within. Guilty, not before men, as the sins of thy life make thee, but before God, of all the sins that swarm and roar in the whole world at this day, for God looks to the heart; guilty thou art therefore of heart whoredom, heart sodomy, heart blasphemy, heart drunkenness, heart buggery, heart oppression, heart idolatry; and these are the sins that terribly provoke the wrath of Almighty God against thee. (Isa. 57:17.) "For the iniquity of his covetousness," saith our translation, "I smote him;" but the Hebrew renders it better- "For the iniquity of his concupiscence" (which is the sin of his heart and nature) "I smote him." As a king is angry and musters up his army against rebels, not only which brings his soldiers out to fight, but who keeps soldiers in their trenches ready for a fight. These sins of thine heart are all ready armed to fight against God at the watchword or alarm of any temptation. Nay, I dare

affirm and will prove it, that these sins provoke God to anger, and are as bad, if not worse, than the sins of thy life. For, -

1. The sin if thine heart or nature is the cause, the womb that contains, breeds, brings forth, suckles all the litter, all the troop of sins that are in thy life; and therefore, giving life and being to all other, it is the greatest sin.

2. Sin is more abundantly in the heart than in the life. An actual sin is but a little breach made by the sea of sin in thine heart, where all sin, all poison, is met and mingles together. Every actual sin is but as a shred broken off from the great bottom of sin in the heart; and hence Christ saith, "Out of the abundance of the heart and mouth speaketh; and out of evil treasure of the heart we bring forth evil things." A man spending money (I mean sin in life) is nothing to his treasure of sin in the heart.

3. Sin is continually in the heart. Actual sins of the life fly out like sparks, and vanish; but this brand is always glowing within: the toad spits poison sometimes, but it retains and keeps a poisonous nature always. Hence the apostle calls it "sin that dwells in me," that is, which always lies and remains in me. So that, in regard of the sins of thy heart, thou dost rend in pieces and break, 1. All of the laws of God. 2. At one clap. 3. Every moment of thy life. O, methinks the thought of this might rend a heart of rock in pieces; to think I am always grieving God at all times, whatsoever I do.

4. Actual sins are only in the life and outward porch; sins of the heart are within the inward house. One enemy within the city is worse than many without; a traitor on the throne is worse than a traitor in the open field. The heart is Christ's throne. A swine in the best room is worse than in the outward house. More I might say; but thus, you see, sins of the life are not so bad, nor provoke God's wrath so fiercely against thee, as the sins of thine heart. Mourn, therefore, not so much that thou hast not been so bad as others are, but look upon thy black feet - look within thine own heart, and lament that, in regard of thy sins there, thou art as bad as many; mourn not so much merely that thou hast sinned, as that thou hast a nature so sinful, that it is thy nature to be proud, and thy nature to be vain and deceitful, and loathe not only thy sins, but thyself for thy sin, being brimful of unrighteousness. But here is not all. Consider fourthly.

IV. That whatever a natural man doth is sin; as the inside is full, so the outside is nothing else but sin, at least in the sight of holy God, though not in the sight of blind, sinful men. Indeed, he may do many things, which, for the matter of them, are good; as he may give alms, pray, fast, come to church: but as they come from him they are sin; as a man may speak good words, but we can not endure to hear him speak, because of his stinking breathe which defiles them. Some actions indeed, from their general nature, are indifferent, for all indifferences lie in generals; but every deliberate action, considered in individuo, with all its circumstances, as time, place, motive, end, is either

morally good or morally evil, as may be proved easily; morally good in good men, morally evil in unregenerate and bad men. For let us see particular actions of wicked men.

1. All their thoughts are only evil, and that continually. (Gen. 6:5.)
2. All their words are sins, (Ps 1:16;) their mouths are open sepulchers, which smell filthy when they are opened.
3. All their civil actions are sins, as their eating, drinking, buying, selling, sleeping, and ploughing. (Prov. 21:4.)
4. All their religious actions are sins, as coming to church, praying, (Prov. 15:8,9; 28:9,) fasting and mourning; roar and cry out of thyself till doomsday, they are sins. (Is. 58.)
5. All their most zealous actions are sins, as Jehu, who killed all Baal's priests: because his action was outwardly and materially good, therefore God rewarded him with temporal favors; but because he had a hawk's eye to get and settle a kingdom to himself by this means, and so was theologically evil, therefore God threatens to be revenged upon him. (Hosea 1:4.)
6. Their wisdom is sin. O, men are often commended for their wisdom, wit, and parts; yet those wits, and that wisdom of theirs, are sin. (Rom 8.) The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God.

Thus all they have or do are sins; for how can he do any good action whose person is filthy? "A corrupt tree can not bring forth good fruit: thou art out of Christ; therefore all thy good things, all thy kindnesses done unto the Lord, and for the Lord, as thou thinkest, are most odious to him. Let a woman seek to give all the content to her husband that may be, not out of any love to him, but only out of love to another man, he abhors all that she doth. Every wicked man wants an inward principle of love to God

Thus all they have or do are sins; for how can he do any good action whose person is filthy? "A corrupt tree can not bring forth good fruit:" thou art out of Christ; therefore all thy good things, all thy kindnesses done unto the Lord, and for the Lord, as thou thinkest, are most odious to him. Let a woman seek to give all the content to her husband that may be, not out of any love to him, but only out of love to another man, he abhors all that she doth. Every wicked man wants an inward principle of love to God and Christ, and therefore, though he seeks to honor God never so much, all that he doth being done out of love to himself, God abhors all that he performs. All the good things a wicked man doth are for himself, either for self-credit or self-ease, or self-content, or self-safety; he sleeps, prays, hears, speaks, professeth for himself alone; hence, acting always for himself, he committeth the highest degree of idolatry; he plucks God out of his throne, and makes himself a god, because he makes himself his last end in every action; for a man puts himself in the room of God as well by making himself his *finis ultimus*, as if he should make himself *primum principium*. Sin is a forsaking or departing from God.

Now, every natural man remaining always in a state of separation from God, because he always wants the bond of union, which is faith, is always sinning; God's curse lies upon him; therefore he brings out nothing but briars and thorns.

Objection. But wilt thou say, If our praying and hearing be sin, why should we do these duties? We must not sin.

Answer 1. Good duties are good in themselves, although, coming from thy vile heart, they are sins.

2. It is less sin to do them than to omit them; therefore, if thou wilt go to hell, go in the fairest path thou canst in thither.

3. Venture and try; it may be God may hear, not for thy prayer's sake, but for his name's sake. The unjust judge helped the poor widow, not because he loved her suit, but for her importunity; and so be sure thou shalt have nothing if thou dost not seek. What though thou art a dog, yet thou art alive, and art for the present under the table. Catch not at Christ, snatch not at his bread, but wait till God give thee him; it may be that thou mayest have him one day. O, wonder then at God's patience, that thou livest one day longer, who hast all thy lifetime, like a filthy toad, spit thy venom in the face of God, that he hat never been quit of thee. O, look upon that black bill that will one day be put against thee at the great day of account, where thou must answer with flames of fire about thine ears, not only for thy drunkenness, thy bloody oaths and whoring, but for all the actions of thy short life, and just so many actions so many sins.

Thou hast painted thy face over now with good duties and good desires; and a little honesty, amongst some men, is of that worth and rarity, that they think God is beholding to them, if he can get any good action from. But when thy painted face shall be brought before the fire of God's wrath, then thy vileness shall appear before men and angels. O, know it, that as thou dost nothing else but sin, so God heaps up wrath against the dreadful day of wrath.

Thus much for man's misery in regard of sin.

Now followeth his misery in regard of the consequents or miseries that follow upon sin. And these are, 1. Presence. 2. Future.

First. Man's present miseries, that already lie on him for sin, are these seven; that is,-

First. God is his dreadful enemy. (Ps. 5:5.)

Question. How may one know another to be his enemy?

Answer 1. By their looks. 2. By their threats. 3. By their blows. So God, -

1. Hides his face from every natural man, and will not look upon him. (Is.59:2.)

2. God threatens, nay, curseth every natural man. (Gal. 3:10.)

3. God gives them heavy, bloody lashes on their souls and bodies.

Never tell me, therefore, that God blesseth thee in thine outward estate; no greater sign of God's wrath than for the Lord to give thee thy swing, as a father never looks after a desperate son, but lets him run where he pleases. And if God be thine enemy, then every creature is so too, both in heaven and earth.

Secondly. God hath forsaken them, and they lost God. (Eph. 2:12.) It is said, that, in the grievous famine of Samaria, doves' dung was sold at a large price, because they wanted bread. O, men live and pine away without God, without bread, and therefore the dung of worldly contentments are esteemed so much of, thou hast lost the sight of God, and the favor of God, and the special protection of God, and the government of God. Cain's punishment lies upon thee in thy natural estate; thou art a runagate from the face of God, and from his face thou art hid. Many have grown mad to see their houses burnt, all their goods lost. O, but God, the greatest good, is lost. This loss made Saul cry out in distress of conscience, (I Sam. 28:15,) The Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me; the loss of the sweetness of whose presence, for a little while only, made the Lord Jesus Christ cry out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Whereas thou hast lost God all thy lifetime. O, thou hast a heart of brass, that canst mourn for his absence so long. The damned in hell have lost God, and know it, and so the plague of desperate horror lieth upon them; thou hast lost God here, but knowest it not, and the plague of a hard heart lieth upon thee, thou canst not mourn for this loss.

Thirdly. They are condemned men, condemned in the court of God's justice, by the law which cries, Treason, treason against the most high God, and condemned in the court of mercy, by the gospel, which cries, Murder, murder against the Son of God, (John 3:18;) so that every natural man is damned in heaven, and damned on earth. God is thy all-seeing, terrible Judge; conscience is thine accuser, a heavy witness; this world is thy jail; thy lusts are thy fetters. In this Bible is pronounced and writ thy doom, thy sentence. Death is thy hangman, and that fire that shall never go out thy torment. The Lord hath in his infinite patience reprieved thee for a time; O, take heed and get a pardon before the day of execution come.

Fourthly. Being condemned, take him, jailer; he is a bondsman to Satan, (Eph. 2:3;) for, His servants ye are whom ye obey, saith Christ. Now, every natural man doth the devil's drudgery, and carries the devil's pack; and howsoever he saith he defieth the devil, yet sins, and so doth his work. Satan hath overcome and conquered all men in Adam, and therefore they are under his bondage and dominion. And though he can not compel a man to sin against his will, yet he hath power,-

First. To present and allure man's heart by a sinful temptation.

Secondly. To follow him with it, if at first he be something shy of it.

Thirdly. To disquiet and rack him, if he will not yield, as might be made to appear in many instances.

Fourthly. Besides, he knows men's humors, as poor wandering, beggarly gentlemen do their friends in necessity, (yet in seeming courtesy,) he visits and applies himself unto them, and so gains them as his own. O, he is in a fearful slavery who is under Satan's dominion, who is,-

1. A secret enemy to thee.

2. A deceitful enemy to thee, that will make a man believe (as he did Evah, even in her integrity) that he is in a fair way, when his condition is miserable.

3. He is a cruel enemy or lord over them that be his slaves, (2 Cor. 4:3;) he gags them so they can not speak, (as that man that had a dumb devil,) neither for God, nor to God, in prayer; he starves them, so as no sermon shall ever do them good; he robs them of all they get in God's ordinances, within three hours after the market, the sermon is ended.

4. He is a strong enemy. (Luke 11:21.) So that if all the devils in hell are able to keep men from coming out of their sins, he will: so strong an enemy, that he keeps men from so much as sighing or groaning under their burden and bondage. (Luke 11:21.) When the strong man keeps the palace, his goods are in peace.

Fifthly. He is cast into utter darkness; as cruel jailers put their prisoners into the worst dungeons, so Stan doth natural men, (2 Cor. 4:3,4;) they see no God, no Christ; they see not the happiness of the saints in light; they see not those dreadful torments that should now in this day of grace awaken them and humble them. O, those by-paths which thousands wander from god in, they have no lamp to their feet to show them where they err. Thou art blind in thy natural estate, art born blind, and the devil hath blinded thine eyes more by sin, and God in justice had blinded them worse for sin, so that thou art in a corner of hell, because thou art in utter darkness, where thou hast not a glimpse of any saving truth.

Sixthly. They are bound hand and foot in this estate, and can not come out, (Rom. 5:6; 1 Cor. 2:14;) for all kinds of sins, like chains, have bound every part and faculty of man, so that he is sure for stirring; and those are very strong in him, they being as dear as his members, nay, as his life, (Col. 3:7;) so that when a man begins to forsake his vile courses, and purposeth to become a new man, devils fetch him back, world enticeth him, and locketh him up; and flesh saith, O, it is too strict a course; farewell, then, merry days and good fellowship. O, thou mayest wish and desire to come out sometime, but canst not put strength to thy desires, not endure to do it. Thou mayest hang down thy head like a bulrush for sin, but thou canst not repent of sin; thou mayest presume, but thou canst not believe; thou mayest come half way, and forsake some sins, but not all sins; thou mayest come and knock at heaven's gate, as

the foolish virgins did, but not enter in and pass through the gate; thou mayest see the land of Canaan, and take much pain to go into Canaan, and mayest taste of the bunches of grapes of the good land, but never enter into Canaan, into heaven, but thou lie bound, hand and foot, in this woful estate, and here thou must lie and rot like a dead carcass in his grave, until the Lord come and roll away the stone, and bid thee come out and live.

Lastly. They are ready every moment to drop into hell. God is a consuming fire against thee, and there is but one paper wall of thy body between thy soul and eternal flames. How soon may God stop thy breath! There is nothing but that between thee and hell; if that were gone, then farewell all. Thou art condemned, and the muffler is before thine eyes. God knows how soon the ladder may be turned; thou hangest but by one rotten twined thread of thy life, over the flames of hell every hour.

Thus much of man's present miseries.

Now followeth his future miseries, which are to come upon him hereafter.

I. They must die either by a sudden, sullen, or desperate death, (Ps. 89:48,) which though it is to a child of God a sweet sleep, yet to the wicked it is a fearful curse proceeding from God's wrath, whence, like a lion, he tears body and soul asunder; death cometh hissing upon him like a fiery dragon with the sting of vengeance in the mouth of it; it puts a period to all their worldly contentments, which then they must forsake, and carry nothing away with them but a rotten winding sheet. It is the beginning of all their woe; it is the captain that first strikes the stroke, and then armies of endless woes follow after. (Rev. 6:2.) O, thou hadst better be a toad, or a dog, than a man, for there's an end of their troubles when they are dead and gone; they fall not as men from a steep hill, not knowing where they shall fall: now repentance is too late, especially if thou hadst lived under means before; it is either cold repentance, when the body is weak, and the heart is sick, or a hypocritical repentance, only for fear of hell; and therefore thou sayest, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul." Nay, commonly then, men's hearts are most hard, and therefore men die like lambs, and cry not out; then it is hard plucking thy soul from the devil's hand, to whom thou hast given it all thy life by sin; and if thou dost get it back, dost thou think that God will take the devil's leavings? Now thy day is past, and darkness begins to overspread thy soul; now flocks of devils come into thy chamber, waiting for thy soul, to fly upon it as a mastiff dog when the door is opened. And this is the reason why most men die quietly that lived wickedly, because Satan then hath them as his own prey; like pirates, who let a ship pass that is empty of goods, they shoot commonly at them that are richly laden. The Christians, in some parts of the primitive church, took the sacrament every day, because they did look to die every day. But these times wherein we live are so poisoned and glutted with ease, that it

is a rare thing to see the man that looks death steadfastly in the face one hour together: but death will lay a bitter stroke on these one day.

II. After death they appear before the Lord to judgment, (Heb. 9:27;) their bodies indeed rot in their graves, but their souls return before the Lord to judgment. (Eccles. 12:7.) The general judgment is at the end of the world, when both body and soul appear before God, and all the world to an account. But there is a particular judgment that every man meets with after this life, immediately at the end of his life, where the soul is condemned only before the Lord.

You may perceive what this particular judgment is, thus, by these four conclusions: -

1. That every man should die the first day he was born, is clear; for “the wages of sin is death;” in justice, therefore, it should be paid of a sinful creature as soon as he is born.

2. That it should be thus with wicked men, but that Christ begs their lives for a season. (1 Tim. 4.) He is the Savior of all men; that is, not a Savior of eternal preservation out of hell, but a Savior of temporal reservation from dropping into hell.

3. That this space of time, thus begged by Christ, is that season wherein only a man can make his peace with a displeased God. (2 Cor. 6:2.)

4. That if men do not thus within this cut of time, when death hath dispatched them, judgment only remains for them; that is, then their doom is read, their date of repentance is out, then their sentence of everlasting death is passed upon them, that never can be recalled again. And this is judgment after death. “He that judged himself,” saith the apostle, (1 Cor. 11:31,) “shall not be judged of the Lord.” Now, wicked men will not judge and condemn themselves in this life; therefore, at the end of it, God will judge them. All natural men are lost in this life, but they may be found and recovered again; but a man’s loss by death is irrecoverable, because there is no means after death to restore them, there is no friend to persuade, no minister to preach, by which faith is wrought, and men get into Christ; there is no power of returning or repenting then; for night is come, and the day is past.

Again: the punishment is so heavy that they can only bear wrath, so that all their thoughts and affections are taken up with the burden. And, therefore, Dives cries out, “I am tormented.” O that the consideration of this point might awaken every secure sinner! What will become of thine immortal soul when thou art dead? Thou sayest, I know not; I hope well. I tell thee, therefore, that which may send thee mourning to thy house, and quaking to thy grave, if thou diest in this estate, thou shalt not die like a dog, nor yet like a toad; but after death comes judgment; then farewell friends when dying; and farewell God forever, when thou art dead.

Now, the Lord open your eyes to see the terrors of this particular judgment; which if you could see, (unless you were mad,) it would make you spend whole nights and days in seeking to set all even with God.

I will show you briefly the manner and nature of it in these particulars.

1. Thy soul shall be dragged out of thy body, as out of a foul prison, by the devil, the jailer, into some place within the bowels of the third heavens, and there thou shalt stand stripped of all friends, all comfort, all creatures before the presence of God, (Luke 9:27;) as at the assizes, first the jailer brings the prisoners out.

2. Then thy soul shall have a new light put into it, whereby it shall see the glorious presence of God, as prisoners brought with guilty eyes look with terror upon the judge. Now thou seest no God abroad in the world, but then thou shalt see the Almighty Jehovah, which sight shall strike thee with that hellish terror and dreadful horror, that thou shalt call to the mountains to cover thee - "O rocks, rocks, hide me from the face of the Lamb." (Rev. 6. ult.)

3. Then all the sins that ever thou hast or shalt commit shall come fresh to thy mind; as when the prisoner is come before the face of the judge, then his accusers bring in their evidence; thy sleepy conscience then will be instead of a thousand witnesses, and every sin then, with all the circumstances of it, shall be set in order, armed with God's wrath round about thee. (Ps. 1:21.) As letters writ with juice of oranges can not be read until it be brought unto the fire, and then they appear, so thou can not read that bloody bill of indictment thy conscience hath against thee now; but when thou shalt stand near unto God, a consuming fire, then what a heavy reckoning will appear! It may be thou hast left many sins now, and goest so far, and profitest so much, that no Christian can discern thee; nay, thou thinkest thyself in a safe estate; but yet there is one leak in thy ship that will sink thee; there is one secret, hidden sin in thine heart, which thou livest in, as all unsound people do, that will damn thee. I tell thee, as soon as ever thou art dead and gone, then thou shalt see where the knot did bind thee, where thy sin was that now hath spoiled thee forever, and then thou shalt grow mad and think - O that I never saw this sin I loved, lived in, plotted, perfected mine own eternal ruin by, until now, when it is too late to amend!

4. Then the Lord shall take his everlasting farewell of thee, and make thee know it too. Now God is departed from thee in this life, but he return in mercy to thee again; but when the Lord departs with all his patience, to wait for thee no more, nor shall Christ be offered thee any more, no Spirit to strive with thee any more, and so shall pass sentence, though haply not vocally, yet effectually upon thy soul, the Lord saying, "Depart thou cursed," thou shalt see indeed the glory of God that others find, but thy greater sorrow shalt never taste the same. (Luke 13:28.)

5. Then shall God surrender up thy forsaken soul into the hands of devils, who, being thy jailers, must keep thee till the great day of account; so that as thy friends are scrambling for thy goods, and worms for thy body, so devils shall scramble for thy soul. For as soon as ever a wicked man is dead, he is either in heaven or in hell. Not in heaven, for no unclean thing comes there. If in hell, then amongst devils there shall be thine eternal lodging, (1 Pet. 3:19;) and hence thy forlorn soul shall lie mourning for the time past, *now* it is too late to recall again; groaning under the intolerable torments of the wrath of God present, and amazed at the eternity of misery and sorrow that is to come; waiting for that fearful hour when the last trump shall blow, and then body and soul meet to bear that wrath, that fire that shall never go out. O, therefore, suspect and fear the worst of thyself now; thou hast seldom or never, or very little, troubled thy head about this matter, whether Christ will save thee or not, thou hast such strong hopes and confidence already that he will. Know that it is possible thou mayest be deceived; and if so, when thou shalt know thy doom after death, thou canst not get an hour more to make thy peace with God, although thou shouldest weep tears of blood. If either the muffler of ignorance shall be before thine eyes, - like a handkerchief about the face of one condemned, - or if thou art pinioned with any lust, or if thou makest thine own pardon, proclaimest (because thou art sorry a little for thy sins, and resolvest never to do the like again) peace to thy soul, thou art one that after death shalt appear before the Lord to judgment. Thou that art thus condemned now, dying so, shalt come to thy fearful judgment after death.

There shall be a general judgment of soul and body at the end of the world, wherein they shall be arraigned and condemned before the great tribunal seat of Jesus Christ. (Jude 14,15. 2 Cor. 5:10.) The hearing of judgment to come made Felix to tremble; nothing of more efficacy to awaken a secure sinner than sad thoughts of this fiery day.

But thou wilt ask me how it may be proved that there will be such a day.

I answer, God's justice calls for it. This world is the stage where God's patience and bounty act their parts, and hence every man will profess and conceive, because he feels it, that God is merciful. But God's justice is questioned; men think God be all mercy, and no justice; all honey, and no sting. Now, the wicked prosper in all their ways, are never punished, but live and die in peace; whereas the godly are daily afflicted and reviled. Therefore, because this attribute suffers a total eclipse almost, now, there must come a day wherein it must shine out before all the world in the glory of it. (Rom. 2:5.)

The second reason is from the glory of Christ. He was accused, arraigned, condemned by men; therefore he shall be the Judge of them.

(John 5:27.) For this is an ordinary piece God's providence towards his people; the same evil he casts them into now, he exalts them into the contrary good in his time. As the Lord hath a purpose to make Joseph ruler over all Egypt, but first he maketh him a slave, God had a meaning to make Christ Judge of men, therefore first he suffers him to be judged of men.

Quest. But when shall this judgment day be?

Ans. Though we can not tell the day and hour particularly, yet this we are sure of, that all the elect are called, for whose sake the world stands, (Is. 1:9,) when these pillars are taken away, then woe to the world; as when Lot was taken out of Sodom, then Sodom was burnt. Now, it is not probable that this time will come as yet; for first Antichrist must be consumed, and not only the scattered visible Jews, but the whole body of the Israelites, must first be called, and have a glorious church upon earth. (Ezek. 37.) This glorious church Scripture and reason will enforce, which when it is called shall not be expired as soon as it is born, but shall continue many a year.

Quest. But how shall this judgment be?

Ans. The apostle describes it. (1Thess. 4:16,17.)

1. Christ shall break out of the third heaven, and be seen in the air, before any dead arise; and this shall be with an admirable shout, as when a king cometh to triumph among his subjects, and over his enemies.

2. Then shall the voice of the archangel be heard. Now, this archangel is Jesus Christ himself, as the Scripture expounds, being in the clouds of heaven; he shall, with an audible, heaven-shaking shout, say, "Rise you dead, and come to judgment!"

even as he called to Lazarus, "Lazarus, arise!"

3. Then the trump shall blow; and even as at the giving of the law (Ex.19.) it is said the trumpet sounded, much more louder shall it now sound, when he comes to judge men that have broken the law.

4. Then shall the dead arise. The bodies of them that have died in the Lord shall rise first; then the others that live shall (like Enoch) be translated and changed. (1 Cor. 15.)

5. when thus the judge and justices are upon their bench at Christ's right hand, on their thrones, then shall the guilty prisoners be brought forth, and come out of their graves, like filthy toads, against this terrible storm. Then shall all the wicked, that ever were or ever shall be, stand quaking before this glorious Judge, with the same bodies, feet, hands, to receive their doom.

O, consider of this day, thou that livest in thy sins now, and yet art safe; there is a day coming wherein thou mayest and shalt be judged.

1. Consider *who* shall be thy Judge. Why, mercy, pity, goodness itself, even Jesus Christ, that many times held out his bowels of compassion toward thee. A child of God may say, Yonder is my brother, friend, husband; but

thou mayest say, Yonder is mine enemy. He may say at that day, Yonder is he that shed his blood to save me; thou mayest say, Yonder he comes whose heart I have pierced with my sins, whose blood I have despised. They may say, "O, come, Lord Jesus, and cover me under thy wings." But thou shalt cry out, "O rocks, fall upon me, and hide me from the face of the Lamb."

2. Consider the manner of his coming. (2 Thess. 1:7.) He shall come in flaming fire - the heavens shall be on a flame - the elements shall melt like scalding lead upon thee. When a house is on fire at midnight in a town, what a fearful cry is there made! When all the world shall cry, Fire! fire! and run up and down for shelter to hide themselves, but can not find it, but say, O, now the gloomy day of blood and fire is come; here's for my pride, here's for my oaths, and the wages for my drunkenness, security, and neglect of duties.

3. In regard of the heavy accusations that shall come against thee at that day. There is never a wicked man almost in the world, as fair a face as he carries, but he hath, at some time or other, committed some such secret villainy, that he would be ready to hang himself for shame if others did know of it; as secret whoredom, self-pollution, speculative wantonness, men with men, women with women, as the apostle speaks. (Rom. 1.) At this day all the world shall see and hear these privy pranks, then the books shall be opened. Men will not take up a foul business, nor end it in private; therefore there shall be a day of public hearing; things shall not be suddenly shuffled up, as carnal thoughts imagine, viz., that at this day, first Christ shall raise the dead, and then the separation shall be made, and then the sentence passed, and then suddenly the judgment day is done. No, no; it must take up some large quantity of time, that all the world may see the secret sins of wicked men in the world; and therefore it may be made evident from all Scripture and reason, that this day Christ's kingly office in judging the world will last happily longer than his private administration now (wherein he is less glorious) in governing the world. Tremble, thou time server; tremble, thou hypocrite; tremble, thou that livest in any secret sin under the all-seeing eye of this Judge; thine own conscience indeed shall be a sufficient witness against thee, to discover all thy sins at thy particular judgment; but all the world shall openly see thine hidden, close courses of darkness, to thine everlasting shame at this day.

4. In regard of the fearful sentence that then shall be passed upon thee; "Depart, thou cursed creature, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Thou shalt then cry out, "O, mercy, Lord! O, a little mercy!" "No," will the Lord Jesus say, "I did indeed once offer it to you, but you refused; therefore depart." Then thou shalt plead again, "Lord, if I must depart, yet bless me before I go." "No, no; depart, thou cursed." "O, but, Lord, if I must depart cursed, let me go into some good place." "No; depart, thou cursed, into hell fire." "O Lord, that's a torment I can not bear; but if it

must be so, Lord, let me come out again quickly.” “No; depart thou cursed, into everlasting fire.” “O Lord, if this be thy pleasure, that here I must abide, let me have good company with me.” “No; depart, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” This shall be thy sentence; the hearing of which may make the rocks to rent; so that, go on in thy sin and prosper, despise and scoff as God’s ministers and prosper, abhor the power and practice of religion, as a too precise course, and prosper; yet know it, there will be a day come when thou shalt meet with a dreadful Judge, a doleful sentence. Now is thy day of sinning; but God will have shortly his day of condemning.

5. When the judgment day is done, then the fearful wrath of God shall be poured out, and piled upon their bodies and souls, and the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle it, and here thou shalt lie burning, and none shall ever quench it. This is the execution of a sinner after judgment. (Rev. 21:8.)

Now, this wrath of God consists in these things: -

1. Thy soul shall be banished from the face and blessed sweet presence of God and Christ, and thou shalt never see the face of God more. It is said (Acts 20) that “they wept sore, because they should see Paul’s face no more.” O, thou shalt never see the face of God, Christ, saints, and angels more. O, heavy doom, to famish and pine away forever without one bit of bread to comfort thee, one smile of God to refresh thee! Men that have their sores running upon them must be shut up from the presence of men sound and whole. O, thy sins, like plague sores, run upon thee; therefore thou must be shut out like a dog from the presence of God and all his people. (2 Thess. 1:9.)

2. God shall set himself like a consuming infinite fire against thee, and tread thee under his feet, who hast by sin trod him and his glory under foot all thy life. A man may devise exquisite torments for another, and great power may make a little stick to lay on heavy strokes; but great power stirred up to strike from great fury and wrath makes the stroke deadly. I tell thee, all the wisdom of God shall then be set against thee to devise torments for thee. (Micah 2:4.) There was never such wrath felt or conceived as the Lord hath devised against thee that livest and diest in the natural estate; hence it is called “wrath to come.” (1 Thess. 1. ult.) The torment which wisdom shall devise the almighty power of god shall inflict upon thee, so as there was never such power seen in making the world as in holding a poor creature under this wrath, that holds up the soul in being with one hand, and beats it with the other, ever burning like fire against a creature, and yet that creature never burnt up. (Rom. 9:22.) Think not this cruelty; it is justice. What cares God for a vile wretch, whom nothing can make good while it lives? If we have been long in hewing a block, and we can make no meet vessel of it, put it to

no good use for ourselves, we cast it into the fire. God heweth thee by sermons, sickness, losses, and crosses, sudden death, mercies, and miseries; yet nothing makes thee better. What should God do with thee but cast thee hence? O, consider of this wrath before you feel it. I had rather have all the world burning about my ears than to have one blasting frown from the blessed face of an infinite and dreadful God. Thou canst not endure the torments of a little kitchen fire on the tip of thy finger, not one half hour together. How wilt thou bear the fury of this infinite, endless, consuming fire in body and soul throughout all eternity?

3. The never dying worm of a guilty conscience shall torment thee, as if thou hadst swallowed down a living poisonous snake, which shall lie gnawing and biting thine heart for sin past, day and night. And this worm shall torment by showing the cause of thy misery; that is, that thou didst never care for him that would have saved thee; by showing thee also thy sins against the law, by showing thee thy sloth, whereby thy happiness is lost. Then shall thy conscience gnaw to think, So many nights I went to bed without prayer, and so many days and hours I spent in feasting and foolish sporting. O, if I had pent half that time, now misspent, in praying, in mourning, in meditation, yonder in heaven had I been. By showing thee also the means that thou once hadst to avoid this misery. Such a minister I heard once, that told me of my particular sins, as if he had been told of me; such a friend persuaded me once to turn over a new leaf; I remember so many knocks God gave at this iron heart of mine, so many mercies the Lord sent; but, O, no means could prevail with me. Lastly, by showing thee how easily thou mightest have avoided all these miseries. O, once I was almost persuaded to be a Christian; but I suffered my heart to grow dead, and fell to loose company, and so lost all. The Lord Jesus came unto my door and knocked; and, if I had done that for Christ which I did for the devil many a time to open at his knocks, I had been saved. A thousand such bites will this worm give at thine heart, which shall make thee cry out, O, time, time! O, sermons, sermons! O, my hopes and my helps are now lost that once I had to save my lost soul!

4. Thou shalt take up thy lodging forever with devils, and they shall be thy companions. Him thou hast served here, with him must thou dwell there. It scares men out of their wits almost to see the devils, as they think, when they be alone; but what horror shall fill thy soul when thou shalt be banished from angels' society, and come into the fellowship of devils forever!

5. Thou shalt be filled with final despair. If a man be grievously sick, it comforts him to think it will not last long. But if the physician tell him he must live all his lifetime in this extremity, he thinks the poorest beggar in a better estate than himself. O, to think, when thou hast been millions of years in thy sorrows, then thou art no nearer thy end of bearing thy misery than at the first coming in! O, I might once have had mercy and Christ, but no hope

now ever to have one glimpse of his face, or one good look from him any more.

6. Thou shalt vomit out blasphemous oaths and curses in the face of God the Father forever, and curse God that never elected thee, and curse the Lord Jesus that never shed one drop of blood to redeem thee, and curse God the Holy Ghost that passed by thee and never called thee. (Rev. 16:9.) And here thou shalt lie, and weep, and gnash thy teeth in spite against God and thyself, and roar, and stamp, and grow mad, that there thou must lie blaspheming, with God's wrath like a pile of fire on thy soul burning, and floods, nay, seas, nay, more, seas of tears, (for thou shalt forever lie weeping,) shall never quench it. And here, which way soever thou lookest, thou shalt see matter of everlasting grief. Look up to heaven, and there thou shalt see (O!) that God is forever gone. Look about thee, thou shalt see devils quaking, cursing God, and thousands, nay, millions, of sinful, damned creatures crying and roaring out with doleful shriekings, O, the day that ever I was born! Look within thee; there is a guilty conscience gnawing. Look to time past; O, those golden days of grace and sweet seasons of mercy are quite lost and gone! Look to time to come; there thou shalt behold evils, troops and swarms or sorrows, and woes, and raging waves, and billows of wrath come roaring upon thee. Look to time present; O, not one hour or moment of ease or refreshing, but all curses meet together, and feeding upon one poor lost immortal soul that never can be recovered again! No God, no Christ, no Spirit to comfort thee, no minister to preach unto thee, no friend to wipe away thy continual tears, no sun to shine upon thee, not a bit of bread, not one drop of water to cool thy tongue.

This is the misery of every natural man. Now, do not thou shift it from thyself, and say, God is merciful. True, but it is to very few, as shall be proved. It is a thousand to one if ever thou be one of that small number whom God hath picked out to escape this wrath to come. If thou dost not get the Lord Jesus to bear this wrath, farewell God, Christ, and god's mercy forever. If Christ had shed seas of blood, set thine heart at rest; there is not one drop of it for thee, until thou comest to see, and fell, and groan under this miserable estate. I tell thee, Christ is so far from saving thee, that he is thine enemy. If Christ were here, and should say, Here is my blood for thee, if thou wilt but lie down and mourn under the burden of thy misery, and yet for all his speeches, thy dry eyes weep not, thy stout heart yields not, thy hard heart mourns not, as to say, O, I am a sinful, lost condemned, cursed, dead creature; what shall I do? dost not think but he will turn away his face from thee, and say, O, thou stony, hard-hearted creature, wouldest thou have me save thee from thy misery, and yet thou wilt not groan, sigh, and mourn for deliverance to me, out of thy misery? If thou likest thine estate so well, and prizest me so little, perish in thy misery forever.

O, labor to be humbled day and night under this thy woful estate. Thou art guilty of Adam's grievous sin: will this break thine heart? No. Thou art dead in sin, and top-full of all sin: will this break thine heart? No. Whatsoever thou doest, hast done, shalt do, remaining in this estate, is sin: will this break thine heart? No. God is thine enemy, thou hast lost him: will this break thine heart? No. Thou art condemned to die eternally; Satan is thy jailer; thou art bound hand and foot in the bolts of thy sins, and cast into utter darkness, and ready every moment to drop into hell: will this break thine heart? No. Thou must die, and after that appear before the Lord to judgment, and then bear God's everlasting, insupportable wrath, which rends and rocks, and burns down to the bottom of hell. Will this break thine heart, man? No. Then farewell Christ forever; never look to see a Christ, until thou dost come to feel thy misery out of Christ. Labor therefore for this, and the Lord will reveal the brazen serpent, when thou art in thine own sense and feeling, stung to death with fiery serpents.

CHAPTER IV

THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY MEANS OF REDEMPTION AND DELIVERANCE OUT OF THIS ESTATE.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood,” (Eph. 1:7,) which plainly demonstrates that “Jesus Christ is the only means of man’s redemption and deliverance out of his bondage and miserable estate.”

And this is the doctrine I shall now insist upon.

When the Israelites were in bondage and misery, he sends Moses to deliver them. When they were in Babylon, he stirred up Cyrus to open the prison gates to them; but when all mankind is under spiritual misery, he sends the Lord Jesus, God and man, to redeem him. (Acts 4:12.)

Question. How doth Christ redeem men out of this misery?

Answer. By paying a price for them. (1 Cor. 6: ult.) God’s mercy will be manifested in saving some, and his justice must be satisfied by having satisfaction or price made and paid for man’s sin. Hence Christ satisfieth God’s justice, -

First. By standing in the room of all them whom mercy decreeth to save. A surety in the room of a debtor. (Heb. 7:22.) As the first Adam stood in the room of all mankind fallen, so Christ standeth in the room of all men rising, or to be restored again.

Secondly. By taking from them in whom room he stood the eternal guilt of all their sins, and by assuming the guilt of all those sins unto himself. (2 Cor. 5:22.) Hence Luther said Christ was the greatest sinner by imputation.

Thirdly. By bearing the curse and wrath of God kindled against sin. God is holy, and when he seeth sin sticking only by imputation to his own Son, he will not spare him, but his wrath and curse must he bear. (Gal. 3:13.) Christ drinks up the cup of all the elect at one draught, which they should have been sipping and drinking, and tormented with, millions of years.

Fourthly. By bringing into the presence of God perfect righteousness, (Rom. 5:21;) for this also God’s justice required perfection, conformity to the law, as well as (perfect satisfaction) suffering for the wrong offered to the Lawgiver. Justice thus requiring these four things, Christ satisfies justice by performing them, and so pays the price.

1. Christ is a Redeemer by strong hand. The first redemption by price is finished in Christ’s person, at his resurrection; the second is begun by the Spirit in man’s vocation, and ended at the day of judgment; as money is first

paid for a captive in turkey, and then because he can not come to his own prince himself, he is fetched away by strong hand.

Here is encouragement to the vilest sinner, and comfort to the self-succorless and lost sinner, who have spent all their money, their time, and endeavors upon those duties and strivings that have been but poor physicians to them. O, look up here to the Lord Jesus, who can do that cure for thee in a moment which all creatures can not do in many years. What bolts, what strong fetters, what unruly lusts, temptations, and miseries art thou locked into? Behold, the Deliverer is come out of Sion, having satisfied justice, and paid a price to ransom poor captives, (Luke 4:18. ;) with the keys of heaven, hell, and thy unruly heart in his hand, to fetch thee out with great mercy and strong hand. Who knows but thou poor prisoner of hell, thou poor captive of the devil, thou poor shackled sinner, mayest be one whom he is come for? O, look up to him, sigh to heaven for deliverance from him, and be glad and rejoice at his coming!

This strikes terror to them, that though there is a means of deliverance, yet they lie in their misery, never groan, never sigh to the Lord Jesus for deliverance; nay, that rejoice in their bondage, an dance to hell in their bolts; nay, that are weary of deliverance; that sit in the stocks when they are at prayers; that come out of the church, when the tedious sermons run somewhat beyond the hour, like prisoners out of jail, that despise the Lord Jesus, when he offers to open the doors, and so let them out of that miserable estate. O, poor creatures! is there a means of deliverance, and dost thou neglect, nay, despise it? Know it, that this will cut thine heart one day, when thou art hanging in thy gibbets in hell, to see others standing at God's right hand, redeemed by Christ: thou mightest have had share in their honor; for there was a Deliverer come to save thee, but thou wouldest have none of him. O, thou wilt lie yelling in those everlasting burnings, and tear thy hair, and curse thyself: From hence might I have been delivered, but I would not. Hath Christ delivered thee from hell, and hath he not delivered thee from thine alehouse? Hath Christ delivered thee from Satan's society, when he hath not delivered thee from thy loose company yet? Hath Christ delivered thee from burning, when thy fagots, thy sins, grow in thee? Is Christ's blood thine, that makest no more account of it, nor feelest no more virtue from it, than in the blood of a chicken? Art thou redeemed? Dost thou hope by Christ to be saved, that didst never see, nor feel, nor sigh under thy bondage? O, the devils will keep holiday (as it were) in hell, in respect of thee, who shalt mourn under God's wrath and lament. O, there was a means to deliver us out of it, but thou shalt mourn forever for thy misery. And this will be a bodkin at thine heart one day, to think there was a Deliverer, but I, wretch, would none of him. Here, likewise, is matter of reproof to such as seek to come out of this misery from and by themselves. If they be ignorant, they hope to be

saved by their good meaning and prayers. If civil, by paying all they owe, and doing as they would be done by, and by doing nobody any harm. If they be troubled about their estates, then they lick themselves whole by mourning, repenting, and reforming. O, poor stubble, canst thou stand before this consuming fire without sin? Canst thou make thyself a Christ for thyself? Canst thou bear and come from under an infinite wrath? Canst thou bring in perfect righteousness into the presence of God? This Christ must do, else he could not satisfy and redeem. And if thou canst not do thus, and hast no Christ, desire and pray that heaven and earth shake till thou hast worn thy tongue to the stumps; endeavor as much as thou canst, and others commend thee for a diligent Christian; mourn in some wilderness till doomsday; dig thy grave there with thy nails; weep buckets full of hourly tears, till thou canst weep no more; fast and pray till thy skin and bones cleave together; promise and purpose with full resolution to be better; nay, reform thy head, heart, life, and tongue, and some, nay, all sins; live like an angel; shine like a sun; walk up and down the world like a distressed pilgrim going to another country, so that all Christians commend and admire thee; die ten thousand deaths; lie at the fireback in hell so many millions of years as there be piles of grass on the earth, or sands upon the sea shore, or stars in heaven, or motes in the sun; I tell thee, not one spark of God's wrath against thy sin shall be, can be, quenched by all these duties, nor by any of these sorrows, or tears; for these are not the blood of Christ. Nay, if all the angels and saints in heaven and earth should pray for thee, these can not deliver thee, for they are not the blood of Christ. Nay, God, as Creator, having made a law, will not forgive one sin without the blood of Christ; nay, Christ's blood will not do it neither, if thou dost join never so little that thou hast or dost unto Jesus Christ, and makest thyself or any of thy duties copartners with Christ in that great work of saving thee. Cry out, therefore, as that blessed martyr did, None but Christ, none but Christ.

Take heed of neglecting or rejecting so great salvation by Jesus Christ. Take heed of spilling this potion, that only can cure thee.

But thou wilt say, This means of redemption is only appointed for some: it is not intended for all, therefore not for me; therefore how can I reject Christ?

It is true, Christ spent not his breath to pray for all; (John 17:9,) "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine;" much less his blood for all; therefore he was never intended as a Redeemer of all; but that he is not intended as a Deliverer of thee, how doth this follow? How dost thou know this?

But secondly, I say thought Christ be not intended for all, yet he is offered unto all, and therefore unto thee; and the ground is this chiefly: -

The universal offer of Christ raiseth not from Christ's priestly office immediately, but from his kingly office, whereby the Father having given him all power and dominion in heaven and earth, he hereupon commands all men to stoop unto him, and likewise bids all his disciples, and all their successors, to go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven. (Matt. 28:18,19.) For Christ doth not immediately offer himself to all men as a Savior, whereby they may be encouraged to serve him as a king; but first as a king commanding them to cast away their weapons, and stoop unto his scepter, and depend upon his free mercy, acknowledging, if ever he save me, I will bless him; if he damn me, his name is righteous in so dealing with me.

But that I may fasten this exhortation, I will show these four things: -

I. The Lord Jesus Christ is offered to every particular person; which I shall show thus: What hast thou to say against it, that thou dost doubt of it? It may be thou wilt plead, -

O, I am so ignorant of myself, God, Christ, or his will, that surely the Lord offers no Christ to me.

Yes, but he doth, though thou liest in utter darkness. Our blessed Savior glorified his Father for revealing the mystery of the gospel to simple men, neglecting those that carried the chief reputation of wisdom in the world. The parts of none are so low as they are beneath the gracious regard of Christ. God bestoweth the best fruits of his love upon mean and weak persons here, that he might confound the pride and flesh the more. Where it pleaseth him to make his choice, and to exalt his mercy, he passeth by no degree of wit, though never so incapable.

But thou wilt say, I am an enemy to God, and have a heart so stubborn, and loth to yield, I have vexed him to the very heart by my transgressions.

Yet he beseecheth thee to be reconciled. Put case, thou hast been a sinner, and rebellious against God; yet so long as thou art not found amongst malicious opposers, and underminers of his truth, never give way to despairing thoughts; thou hast a merciful Savior.

But I have despised the means of reconciliation, and rejected mercy.

Yet God calls thee to return: "thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet turn again to me, saith the Lord." (Jer. 3:1.) Cast thyself into the arms of Christ, and if thou perish, perish there; if thou dost not, thou art sure to perish. If mercy be to be had any where, it is by seeking to Christ, not by turning from him. Herein appears Christ's love to thee, that he hath given thee a heart in some degree sensible; he might have given thee up to hardness, security, and profaneness - of all the spiritual judgments the greatest. But he that died for his enemies will in no wise refuse those the desire of whose soul is toward him. When the prodigal set himself to return to his father, his father stays not for him, but meets him in the way. If our sins displease us,

they shall never hurt us; but we shall be esteemed of God to be that which we desire and labor to be. (Ps. 145:19.)

But can the Lord offer Christ to me, so poor, that have no strength, no faith, no grace, nor sense of my poverty?

Yes, even thee; why should we except ourselves, when Christ doth not except us? “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden.” We are therefore poor, because we know not our riches. we can never be in such a condition where in there will be just cause of utter despair. He that sits in darkness, and seeth no light, no light of comfort, no light of God’s countenance, yet let him trust in the name of the Lord. Weaknesses do not debar us from mercy; nay, they incline God the more. The husband is bound to bear with the wife, as being the weaker vessel; and shall we think God will exempt himself from his own rule, and not bear with his weak spouse?

But is this offer made to me, that can not love, prize, nor desire the Lord Jesus?

Yes; to thee. Christ knows how to pity us in this case. We are weak, but we are his. A father looks not so much at the blemishes of his child as at his own nature in him; so Christ finds matter of love from any thing of his own in us. A Christian’s carriage toward Christ may in many things be very offensive, and cause much strangeness; yet, so long as he resolves not upon any known evil, Christ will own him, and he Christ.

O, but I have fallen from God oft, since he hath enlightened me; and doth he tender Christ to me?

Thou must know that Christ hath married every believing soul to himself, and that, where the work of grace is begun, sin loses strength by every new fall. If there be a spring of sin in thee, there is a spring of mercy in God, and a fountain daily opened to wash thy uncleanness in. Adam (indeed) lost all by once sinning; but we are encouraged by the Son to go to the Father every day for the sins of that day.

If I was willing to receive Christ, I might have Christ offered to me; but will the Lord offer him to such a one as desires not to have Christ?

Yes; saith the savior, “I would have gathered you as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and you would not.” We must know a creating power can not only bring something out of nothing, but contrary out of contrary; of unwilling, God can make us a willing people. There is a promise of pouring clean water upon us, and Christ hath taken upon him to purge his spouse, and make her fit for himself.

What hast thou now plead against this strange kindness of the Lord in offering Christ to thee? Thou wilt say, it may be, -

O, I fear time is past! I might once have had Christ, but now mine heart is sealed down with hardness, blindness, unbelief. O, time is now gone!

No; not so. See Isaiah 65:1-3: "All the day long God holdeth out his hands to a backsliding and rebellious people." Thy day of grace, thy day of means, thy day of life, thy day of God's striving with thee and stirring of thee, still lasts.

But if God be so willing to save, and so prodigal of his Christ, why doth he not give me Christ, or draw me to Christ?

I answer, What command dost thou look for to draw thee to Christ but this word, Come? O, come thou poor, forlorn, lost, blind, cursed nothing; I will save thee; I will enrich thee; I will forgive thee; I will enlighten thee; I will bless thee; I will be all things unto thee, do all things for thee. May not this win and melt the heart of a devil?

II. Upon what condition may Christ be had?

Make an exchange of what thou are or hast with Christ for what Christ is or hath; and so taking him, (like the wise merchant the pearl,) thou shalt have salvation with him.

Now, this exchange lieth in these four things chiefly: -

First. Give away thyself to him, head, heart, tongue, body, soul, and he will give away himself unto thee, (Cant.6:3;) yea, he will stand in thy room in heaven, that thou mayest triumph and say, I am already in heaven, glorified in him; I see God's blessed face in Christ; I have conquered death, hell, and the devil in him.

Secondly. Give away all thy sins to Christ, confess them, leave them, cast them upon the Lord Jesus, so as to receive power from him to forsake them, and he will be made sin for thee to take them away from thee. (I John 1:9.)

Thirdly. Give away thine honor, pleasure, profit, life, for him; he will give away his crown and honor, life and all, to thee. (Luke 18.) Let nothing be sweet unto thee but him, and nothing shall be sweet unto him but thee.

Fourthly. Give away thy rags, forsake thine own righteousness, for him; he will give away all his robes and righteousness to thee. (Phil. 3:8,9.) Thou shalt stand as glorious in the sight of God, howsoever thou art a poor snake in thyself, as an angel, nay, as all the angels, because clothed with his Son Christ Jesus his righteousness.

Now, tell me, will you Have Christ? He is offered to you. Yes, you will all say; yea, with all mine heart. But will you have him upon these terms, upon these four conditions?

Now, because men will flatter themselves and say, Yes, -

III. I will show you four sorts of people that reject Christ thus offered.

First. The slighting unbeliever, that, when he hears of an offer of Christ, and should wonder at the love of the Lord in doing this, he makes nothing of it, but goes from the church, and says, We must give the ministers the wall in the pulpit, and, poor men, they must have somewhat to say and

preach for their living; there was a plain good sermon to-day; the man seems to mean well, but I think he can be no great scholar; and so makes no more the offer of Christ than the offer of a straw at their feet. If a good bargain be offered them, they will forget all their business to accomplish that; yet they make light of this offer. (Matt. 22:5.)

Secondly. The desperate unbeliever, that, seeing his sins to be so great, and feeling his heart so hard, and finding but little good from God, since he sought for help, like Cain fleeth from the presence of the Lord; like a mad lion he breaks his chains of restraining grace, and runneth roaring after his prey, after his cups, queans, lusts, etc., and so will not honor Christ with such a great cure of such great sins, that he shall never have the credit of it, nor will be holding to him for such a kindness.

Thirdly. The presumptuous unbeliever, that, seeing what sins he hath committed, and, it may be, having a little touch and some sorrow for his sins, catcheth at Christ, hoping to be saved by him before ever he come to be loaden with sin as the greatest evil, or God's wrath kindled against him as his greatest curse, and so, catching at Christ, hopes he hat Christ, and, hoping he hath Christ already, shuts out Christ for the future, and so rejects him. (Micah 3:11.) You shall have these men and women complain never of the want, but only of the weakness, of their faith, and they will not be beaten off from thence; let them hear never so much of their misery, nor see never so much of their sin, yet they will not be beaten off from trusting to Christ.

Fourthly. The tottering, doubtful unbeliever; one that is in a question whether he had best have Christ or no. He sees some good in Christ that he would gladly have him for, as, namely, Then farewell merry meetings, pastimes, cards and dice, pleasure and sinful games; and hence they totter this way and that way, not knowing whether they had best have Christ or no. (James 1:6,7.) These people reject Jesus Christ.

IV. And now come and see the greatness of this sin.

1. It is a most bloody sin; it is a trampling under foot the blood of the Son of God. (Heb. 10:21)

2. It is a most dishonoring sin; for as by the first act of faith a man glorifieth God by obeying all the law at an instant in Christ, so by rejecting him thou dost break all those laws of God in an instant, and so doth dishonor him.

3. It is a most ungrateful sin; it is despising God's greatest love, which the Lord takes most heavily.

4. It is a most inexcusable sin; for what have you to cast against Jesus Christ? O, my sins are so great, thou wilt say, But take Christ, his blood will wash thee from all thy sins.

O, but my heart is hard, and my mind blind.

Yea, but take me, and I will break thine heart, open thine eyes. A new heart is God's gift, and he hath promised to create it in us.

O, but then I must forsake all my pleasures.

Thou shalt have them fully, continually, infinitely in Christ.

O, but I can not take Christ.

O, but Christ can give thee a hand to receive him, as well as give away himself.

5. It is a most heavy sin. What sin will gripe so in hell as this?(John 3:19.) God the Father shall strike the devils for breaking the law of creation; but God the Son shall strike thee, and the Comforter himself shall set himself against thee, for despising the means and offers of redemption. The devils might never have had mercy, but thou shalt think with anguish, and vexation, and madness of heart, I might have had a Christ: he was offered unto me. Mercy wooed this stubborn, proud heart to yield. But, O, rock of adamant that I was! it did not affect me. O, fly speedily to this city of refuge, lest the pursuer of blood overtake thee.

Away, then, out of yourselves, to the Lord Jesus. Heaven and earth leave thee, and forsaken thee: now, there is but one more that can do thee good, and deliver thy soul from endless sorrow: go to him, and take hold on him, not with the hand of presumption and love to thyself, to save thyself, but with the hand of faith, and love to him, to honor him.

I am well enough already: what tell you me of Christ?

This is the damning sin of these times: when men have Christ offered unto them, foretelling them else of wrath to come, they say they are well; hence; feeling no judgment here, they fear no wrath hereafter; hence being well, they feel no need of Christ; hence, till they die, they never seek out for a Saviour. Men will not come into the ark already made for them before the flood arise. The world makes so much of those it nurseth up, that they are unwilling to come to heaven, when they are called to come home.

But it may be Christ hath not redeemed me, nor shed blood for me; therefore why should I go to him?

It may be, it is true; may be not; yet do thou venture, as those, (Joel 2.,) "Who knows but the Lord may return?" It is true, God hath elected but few, and so the Son hath shed his blood, and died but for a few; yet this is no excuse for thee to lie down and say, What should I seek out of myself for succor? Thou must in this case venture and try, as may men amongst us do now, who, hearing of one good living fallen, twenty of them will go and seek for it, although they know only one shall have it. Therefore say as those lepers in Samaria, If I stay here in my sins, I die; if I go out to the camp of the Syrians, we may live; we can but die, however: if I go out to Christ, I may get mercy; however, I can but die, and it is better to die at Christ's feet than in thine own puddle. Content not

yourselves therefore with your bare reformation, and amending your lives; this is but to cross the debt in thine own book; it remaineth uncanceled in the creditor's book still: but go, take, offer up this eternal sacrifice before the eyes of God the Father, and cry guilty

at his bar, and look for mercy from him; sigh under thy bondage, that as Moses was sent unto the Israelites, so may Christ be sent into they soul. Rest not therefore in the sight or sense of a helpless condition, saying, I can not help myself, unless Christ doth: sigh unto the Lord Jesus in heaven for succor, and admire the Lord forever, that when there was no help, and when he might have raised out of the stones children to praise him, yet he should send his Son out of his bosom to save thee. So much for this particular.

The fifth divine principle follows to be handled.

CHAPTER V

THAT THOSE THAT ARE SAVED ARE VERY FEW; AND THAT THOSE THAT ARE SAVED ARE SAVED WITH VERY MUCH DIFFICULTY.

“Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Matt. 7:14.)

Here are two parts: -

1. The paucity of them that shall be saved: few find the way thither.
2. The difficulty of being saved: strait and narrow is the way and gate unto life.

Hence arise two doctrines: -

1. That the number of them that shall be saved is very small. (Luke 13:24.) The devil hath his drove, and swarms to go to hell, as fast as bees to their hive. Christ hath his flock, and that is but a little flock; hence God’s children are called jewels, (Mal. 3:17,) which commonly are kept secret, in respect of other lumber in the house; hence they are called strangers and pilgrims, which are very few in respect of the inhabitants of the country through which they pass; hence they are called the sons of God, (1 John 3:2;) of the blood royal, which are few in respect of common subjects.

But see the truth of this point in these two things: -

1. Look at all ages, and we shall find but a handful saved. As soon as ever the Lord began to keep house, and there were but two families in it, there was a bloody Cain living, and a good Abel slain. And as the world increased in number, so in wickedness. Gen. 6:12, it is said, “All flesh had corrupted their ways,” and amongst so many thousand men, not one righteous but Noah and his family, and yet in the ark there crept in a cursed Cham.

Afterwards, as Abraham’s posterity increased, so we see their sin abounded. When his posterity was in Egypt, where, one would think, if ever men were good, now it would appear, being so heavily afflicted by Pharaoh, being by so many miracles miraculously delivered by the hand of Moses, yet most of these God was wroth with, (Heb. 3:12,) and only two of them, Caleb and Joshua, went into Canaan, a type of heaven. Look into Solomon’s time, what glorious times? what great profession was there then? Yet, after his death, ten tribes fell to the odious sin of idolatry, following the command of Jeroboam, their king. Look further into Isaiah’s time, when there were multitudes of sacrifices and prayers, (Is. 1:11;) yet then there was but a remnant; nay, a very little remnant, that should be saved. And look to the time of Christ’s coming in the flesh, (for I picked out the best time of all,)

when one would think, by such sermons he preached, such miracles he wrought, such a life as he led, all the Jews would have entertained him; yet it is said, "He came unto his own, and they received him not." So few, that Christ himself admires at one good Nathaniel, "Behold an Israelite in whom there is no guile." In the apostles' time, many, indeed, were converted, but few comparatively, and amongst the best churches many bad, as that at Philippi. (Phil. 3:18.) Many had a name to live, but were dead, and few only kept their garments unspotted. And presently, after the apostles' time, "Many grievous wolves came and devoured the sheep;" and so, in succeeding ages, (Rev. 12:9,) all the earth wondered at the whore in scarlet.

And in Luther's time, when the light began to arise again, he saw so many carnal gospellers, that he breaks out in one sermon into these speeches: "God grant I may never live to see those bloody days that are coming upon an ungodly world." Latimer heard so much profaneness in his time, that he thought verily doomsday was just at hand. And have not our ears heard censuring those in the Palatinate, where (as it is reported) many have fallen from the glorious gospel to Popery, as fast as leaves fall in autumn? Who would have thought that there lurked such hearts under such a show of detesting Popery as was among them before? And at Christ's coming, shall he find faith on the earth?

2. Let us look into all the places and persons, and see how few shall be saved. The world is now split into four parts, Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; and the three biggest parts are drowned in a deluge of profaneness and superstition; they do not so much as profess Christ; you may see the sentence of death written on these men's foreheads. (Jer. 10. ult.) But let us look upon the best part of the world, and that is Europe; how few shall be saved there! First, the Grecian church, howsoever, now in these days, their good patriarch of Constantinople is about a general reformation among them, and hath done much good, yet are they for the present, and have been for the most part of them, without the saving means of knowledge. They content themselves with their old superstitions, having little or no preaching at all. And for the other parts, as Italy, Spain, France, Germany, for the most part they are Popish; and see the end of these men. (2 Thess. 2:9-12.) And now amongst them that carry the badge of honesty, I will not speak what mine ears have heard and my heart believes concerning other churches: I will come into our own church of England, which is the most flourishing church in the world; never had church such preachers, such means; yet have we not some chapels and churches stand as dark lanterns without light, where people are led blind, or idle, or licentious ministers, and so both fall in the ditch?

Nay, even amongst them that have the means of grace, but few shall be saved. It may be sometimes amongst ninety-nine in a parish, Christ sends a minister to call some one lost sheep among them. (Matt. 13.) Three grounds were bad where the seed was sown, and only one good. It is a strange speech of Chrysostom in his fourth sermon

to the people of Antioch, where he was much beloved, and did much good - How many do you think, saith he, shall be saved in this city? It will be a hard speech to you, but I will speak it; though here be so many thousands of you, yet there can not be found a hundred that shall be saved, and I doubt of them too; for what villainy is there among youth! what sloth in old men! and so he goes on. So say I, Never tell me we are baptized, and are Christians, and trust to Christ; let us but separate the goats from the sheep, and exclude none but such as the Scriptures doth, and sets a cross upon their doors, with, Lord, have mercy upon them, and we shall see only a few in the city shall be saved.

1. Cast out all the profane people among us, as drunkards, swearers, whores, liars, which the Scripture brands for black sheep, and condemns them in a hundred places.

2. Set by all civil men that are but wolves chained up, tame devils, swine in a fair meadow, that pay all they owe, and do nobody any harm, yet do none any great good; that plead for themselves, and say, Who can say, Black is mine eye? These are righteous men, whom Christ never came to call. "For he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

3. Cast by all hypocrites, that like stageplayers, in the sight of others, act the part of kings and honest men; then, look upon them in their tyring house, they are but base varlets.

4. Formal professors and carnal gospelers, that have a thing like faith, and like sorrow, and like true repentance, and like good desires, but yet they be but pictures; they deceive others and themselves too. (2 Tim. 3:5.)

Set by these four sorts, how few are to be saved, even among them that are hatched in the bosom of the church!

First. Here, then, is a use of encouragement. Be not discouraged by the name of singularity. What! do you think yourself wiser than others? and shall none be saved but such as are so precise as ministers prate? Are you wiser than others, that you think none shall go to heaven but yourself? I tell you, if you would be saved, you must be singular men, not out of faction, but out of conscience. (Acts 24:16.)

Secondly. Here is matter of terror to all those that be of opinion that few shall be saved; and therefore, when they are convinced of the danger of sin by the word, they fly to this shelter: If I be damned, it will be woe to many more beside me then; as though most should not be damned. O, yes, the most of them that live in the church shall perish; and this made a hermit which Theodoret mentions to live fifteen years in a cell in a desolate

wilderness, with nothing but bread and water, and yet doubted, after all his sorrow, whether he should be saved or not. O, God's wrath is heavy, which thou shalt one day bear.

Thirdly. this ministereth exhortation to all confident people, that think they believe, they doubt not but to be saved, and hence do not much fear death. O, leant hence to suspect and fear your estates, and fear it so much that thou canst not be quiet until thou hast got some assurance thou shalt be saved. When Christ told his disciples that one of them should betray him, they all said, "Master, is it I?" But if he had said eleven of them should betray him, all except one, would they not all conclude, Surely, it is I? If the Lord had said, Only few shall be damned, every man might fear, It may be it is I; but now he says most shell, every man may cry out and say, Surely it is I. No humble heart is driven to and fro with many stinging fears this way; yet there is a generation of presumptuous, brazen-faced, bold people, that confidently think of themselves, as the Jews of the Pharisees, (being holy and strict,) that if God saved but two in the world, they shall make one.

The child of God is, indeed, bold as a lion; but he hath God's spirit and promise, assuring him of his eternal welfare. But I speak of divers that have no sound ground to prove this point, (which they pertinaciously defend,) that they shall be saved. This confident humor rageth most of all in our old professors at large, who think, that is a jest indeed, that having been of a good belief so long, that they now should be so far behindhand as to begin the work, and lay the foundation anew. And not only among these, but among divers sorts of people whom the devil never troubles, because he is sure of them already, and therefore cries peace in their ears, whose consciences never trouble them, because they hath shut its eyes; and hence they sleep, and sleeping dream that God is merciful unto them, and will be so; yet never see they are deceived, until they awake with the flames of hell about their ears; and the world troubles them not; they have their hearts' desire here, because they are friends to it, and so enemies to God. And ministers never trouble them, for they have none such as are fit for that work near them; or if they have, they can sit and sleep in church, and choose whether they believe him. And their friends never trouble them, because they are afraid to displease them. And God himself never troubles them, because that time is to come hereafter. This one truth, well pondered and thought on, may damp thine heart, and make thy conscience fly in thy face, and say, "Thou art the man;" it may be that there are better in hell than thyself, that art so confident; and therefore tell me, what hast thou for thyself, that thou shalt be saved? In what thing hast thou gone beyond them that "think they are rich and want nothing, who yet are poor, blind, miserable, and naked?"

Thou wilt say, haply, first, I have left my sins I once lived in, and am now no drunkard, no swearer, no liar, &c.

I answer, Thou mayest be washed from thy mire, (pollution of the world,) and yet be a swine in God's account, (2 Pet 2:20;) thou mayest live a blameless, innocent, honest, smooth life, and yet be a miserable creature still. (Phil. 3:6.)

But I pray, and that often.

This thou mayest do, and yet never be saved. (Isa. 1:11.) To what purpose is your multitude of sacrifices? Nay, thou mayest pray with much affection, with a good heart, as thou thinkest, yet a thousand miles off from being saved. (Prove. 1:28.)

But I fast sometimes, as well as pray.

So did the scribes and Pharisees, even twice a week, which could not be public, but private fasts. And yet this righteousness could never save them.

But I hear the word of God, and like the best preachers.

This thou mayest do too, and yet never be saved. Nay, thou mayest so hear, as to receive much joy and comfort in hearing, nay, to believe and catch hold on Christ, and so day and think he is thine, and yet not be saved; as the stony ground did, (Matt. 13,) who heard the word with joy, and for a season believed.

I read the Scriptures often.

This you may do too, and yet never be saved; as the Pharisees, who were so perfect in reading the Bible, that Christ needed but only say, "It hath been said of old time;" for they knew the text and place well enough without intimation.

But I am grieved and sorrowful, and repent of my sins past. Judas did thus, (Matt. 27:3;) he repents himself with a legal repentance for fear of hell, and with a natural sorrow for dealing so unkindly with Christ, in betraying not only blood, but innocent blood. True humiliation is ever accompanied with hearty reformation.

O, but I love good men and their company.

So did the five foolish virgins love the company, and (at the time of extremity) the very oil and grace of the wise; yet they were locked out of the gates of mercy.

But God hath given me more knowledge than others, or than I myself once had.

This thou mayest have, and be able to teach others, and think so thyself too, and yet never be saved.

But I keep the Lord's day strictly.

So did the Jews, whom yet Christ condemned, and were never saved. I have very many good desires and endeavors to get to heaven. These thou

and thousands may have, and yet miss of heaven. Many may seek to enter in at that narrow gate, and not be able.

True, thou wilt say, Many men do many duties, but without any life or zeal; I am zealous.

So thou mayest be, and yet never be saved, as Jehu. Paul was zealous when he was a Pharisee, and if he was so for a false religion, and a bad cause, why, much more mayest thou be for a good cause; so zealous as not only to cry out against profaneness in the wicked, but civil honesty of others, and hypocrisy of others, yea, even of the coldness of the best of God's people; thou mayest be the fore horse in the team, and the ringleader of good exercises amongst the best men, (as Joash, a wicked king, was the first that complained of the negligence of his best officers in not repairing the temple,) and so stir the up unto it; nay, thou mayest be so forward as to be persecuted, and not yield one inch, nor shrink in the wetting, but mayest manfully and courageously stand it out in the time of persecution, as the thorny ground did: so zealous thou mayest be, as to like the best preachers, that search men's consciences best, as the whole country of Judea came flocking to John's ministry, and delighted to hear him for a season; nay, thou mayest be zealous as to take sweet delight in doing all of these things. (Is.58:2,3,) "They delighted in approaching near unto God," yet come short of heaven.

But thou wilt say, True, many a man rides post that breaks his neck at last; may a man be zealous, but his fire is soon quenched, and his zeal is soon spent; they hold not out; whereas I am constant, and persevere in godly courses.

So did that young man; yet he was a graceless man. (Matt. 19:20,) "All these things have I done from my youth; what lack I yet?"

It is true, hypocrites may persevere; but they know themselves to be naught all the while, and so deceive others; but I am persuaded that I am in God's favor, and in a safe and happy estate, since I do all with a good heart for God.

This thou mayest think of thyself, and yet be deceived and damned, and go to the devil at last. "There is a way," saith Solomon, "That seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof is the way of death." For he is a hypocrite not only that makes a seeming outward show of what he hath not, but also that hath a true show of what indeed there is not. The first sort of hypocrites deceive others only; the latter, having some inward yet common work, deceive themselves too. (James 1:26,) "If any man seem to be religious," (so many are, and so deceive the world;) but it is added, "deceiving his own soul." Nay, thou mayest go so fairly, and live so honestly, that all the best Christians about thee may think well of thee and never suspect thee, and so mayest pass

through the world, and die with a deluded comfort that thou shalt go to heaven and be canonized for a saint in thy funeral sermon, and never know thou art counterfeit till the Lord brings thee to thy strict and last examination, and so thou receivest that dreadful sentence, "Go, ye cursed." So it was with the five foolish virgins, that were never discovered by the wise, nor by themselves, until the gate of grace was shut upon them. If thou hast, therefore, no better evidences to show for thyself, that thine estate is good, than these, I will not give a pin's point for all they flattering false hopes of being saved. But it may be thou hast never yet come so far as to this pitch; and if not, Lord, what will become of thee? Suspect thyself much, and when, in this shipwreck of souls, thou seest so many thousands sink, cry out, and concluded, It is a wonder of wonders, and a thousand and a thousand to one, if ever thou comest safe to shore.

O, strive, then, to be one of them that shall be saved, though it cost thee thy blood and the loss of all that thou hast; labor to go beyond all those that go so far yet perish at the last. Do not say that, seeing so few shall be saved, therefore this discourageth me from seeking, because all my labor may be in vain. Consider that

Christ here makes another and a better use of it. (Luke 3:24.) Seeing that "many shall seek and not enter, therefore," saith he, "strive to enter in at the strait gate." Venture, at least, and try what the Lord will do for thee.

Wherein doth the child of God, and so how may I, go beyond these hypocrites that go so far?

In three things principally.

First. No unregenerate man, though he go never so far, let him do never so much, but he lives in some one sin or other, secret or open, little or great. Judas went far, but he was covetous. Herod went far, but he loved his Herodias. Every dog hath his kennel; every swine hath his swill, and every wicked man his lust. For no unregenerate man hath fruition of God to content him, and there is no man's heart but it must have some good to content it; which good is to be found only in the fountain of all good, and that is God, or in the cistern, and that is in the creatures. Hence, a man having lost full content in God, seeks for and feeds upon contentment in the creature which he makes a god to him; and here lies his lust or sin, which he must needs live in. Hence, ask those men that go very far, and take their penny for good silver, and commend themselves for their good desires - I say, ask them if they have no sin. Yes, say they; who can live without sin? And so they give way to sin, and therefore live in sin. Nay, commonly, all the duties, prayers, care, and zeal of the best hypocrites are to hide a lust, as the whore in

Proverbs, that wipes her mouth, and goes to the temple, and pays her vows; or to feed a lust, as Jehu his zeal against Baal was to get a kingdom. There remains a root of bitterness in the best hypocrites, which, howsoever it be lopped off sometimes by sickness or horror of conscience, and a man hath purposes never to commit again, yet there it secretly lurks; and, though it seemeth to be bound and conquered by the word, or by prayer, or by outward crosses, or while the hand of God is upon a man, yet the inward strength and power of it remains still; and therefore, when temptations, like strong Philistines, are upon this man again, he breaks all vows, promises, bonds of God, and will save the life of his sin.

Secondly. No unregenerate man or woman ever came to be poor in spirit, and so to be carried out of all duties unto Christ. If it were possible for them to forsake and break loose forever from all sin, yet here they stick, as the scribes and Pharisees; and so, like zealous Paul before his conversion, they fasted and prayed, and kept the Sabbath, but they rested in their legal righteousness, and in the performance of these and the like duties. Take the best hypocrite, that hath the most strong persuasions of God's love to him, and ask him why he hopes to be saved. He will answer, I pray, read, hear, love good men, cry out of the sins of the time. And tell him again that a hypocrite may climb these stairs and go as far, he will reply, True, indeed; but they do not what they do with a sound heart, but to be seen of men. Mark, now, how these men feel a good heart in themselves and in all things they do; and therefore feel not want of all good, which is poverty of spirit; and therefore here they fall short. (Is. 66:2.) There were divers hypocrites forward for the worship of God in the temple; but God loathes these, because no poor in spirit; to them only, it is said, the Lord will look. I have seen many professors very forward for all good duties, but as ignorant of Christ, when they are sifted, as blocks. And if a man (as few do) know not Christ, to whom he must go and be carried if ever he be saved. I have heard of a man that, being condemned to die, thought to escape the gallows, and to save himself from hanging, by a certain gift he said he had of whistling. So men seek to save themselves by their gifts of knowledge, gifts of memory, gifts of prayer; and when they see they must die for their sins, this is the ruin of many a soul, that, though he forsake Egypt and his sins and flesh pots there, and will never be so as he hath been, yet he never cometh into Canaan, but loseth himself and his soul in a wilderness of many duties, and there perisheth.

Thirdly. If any unregenerate man comes unto Christ, he never gets into Christ, that is, never takes his eternal rest and lodging in Jesus Christ only. (Heb. 4:4.) Judas followed Christ for the bag; he would have the bag and Christ too. the young man came unto Christ to be his disciple; but he would have Christ and the world too. They will not content themselves with Christ

alone, nor with the world alone, but make their markets out of both, like whorish wives, that will please their husbands and others too. Men in distress of conscience, if they have comfort from Christ, they are contented; if they have salvation from hell by Christ, they are contented; but Christ himself contents them not. Thus for a hypocrite goes not. So much for the first doctrine observed out of the text. I come now to the second.

Doctrine 2. That those that are saved are saved with much difficulty; or it is a wonderful hard thing to be saved.

The gate is strait, and therefore a man must sweat and strive to enter; both the entrance is difficult, and the progress of salvation too. Jesus Christ is not got with a wet finger. It is not wishing and desiring to be saved will bring men to heaven; hell's mouth is full of good wishes. It is not shedding a tear at a sermon, or blubbering now and then in a corner, and saying over thy prayers, and crying God mercy for thy sins, will save thee. It is not, Lord, have mercy upon us, will do thee good. It is not coming constantly to church. These are easy matters. But it is tough work, a wonderful hard matter, to be saved. (1 Pet.4:18.) Hence the way to heaven is compared to a race, where a man must put forth all his strength, and stretch every limb, and all to get forward. Hence a Christian's life is compared to wrestling. (Eph. 6:12.) All the policy and power of hell buckle together against a Christian; therefore he must look to himself, or else he falls. Hence it is compared to fighting. (2 Tim. 4:7.) A man must fight against the devil, the world, himself, who shoot poisoned bullets in the soul, where a man must kill or be killed. God hath not lined the way to Christ with velvet, nor strewn it with rushes. he will never feed a slothful humor in man, who will be saved if Christ and heaven would drop into their mouths, and if any would bear their charges thither. If Christ might be bought for a few cold wishes and lazy desires, he would be of small reckoning amongst men, who would say, Lightly come, lightly go. Indeed, Christ's yoke is easy in itself; and when a man is got into Christ, nothing is so sweet; but for a carnal, dull heart, it is hard to draw in it; for

There are four strait gates which everyone must pas through before he can enter into heaven.

1. There is the strait gate of humiliation. God saveth none but first he humbleth them. Now, it is hard to pass through the gates and flames of hell; for a heart as stiff as a stake to bow; as hard as a stone to bleed for the least prick; not to mourn for one sin, but all sins; and not for a fit, but all a man's lifetime. O, it is hard for a man to suffer himself to be loaden with sin, and pressed to death for sin, so as never to love sin more, but to spit in the face of that which he once loved as dearly as his life. It is easy to drop a tear or two, and be sermon sick; but to have a heart rent for sin and from sin, this is true humiliation; and this is hard.

2. The strait gate of faith. (Eph. 1:19.) It is an easy matter to presume, but hard to believe in Christ. It is easy for a man that was never humbled to believe and say, It is but believing; but it is a hard matter for a man humbled, when he sees all his sins in order before him, the devil and conscience roaring upon him, and crying out against him, and God frowning upon him, now to call God Father, is a hard work. Judas had rather be hanged than believe. It is hard to see a Christ as a rock to stand upon, when we are overwhelmed with sorrow of heart for sin. It is hard to prize Christ above ten thousand worlds of pearl; it is hard to desire Christ, and nothing but Christ; hard to follow Christ all the day long, and never be quiet till he is got in thine arms, and then with Simeon to say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace."

3. The strait gate of repentance. It is an easy matter for a man to confess himself to be a sinner, and to cry to God forgiveness until the next time; but to have a bitter sorrow, and so to turn from all sin, and to return to God, and all the ways of God, which is true repentance indeed, this is hard.

4. The strait gate of opposition of devils, the world, and a man's own self, who knock a man down when he begins to look toward Christ and heaven.

Hence learn, that every easy way to heaven is a false way, although ministers should preach it out of their pulpits, and angels should publish it out of heaven.

Now, there are nine easy ways to heaven, (as men think,) all which lead to hell.

1. The common broad way, wherein a whole parish may go abroad in it; tell these they shall be damned, their answer is, Then woe to many more besides me.

2. The way of civil education, whereby many wild natures are by little and little tamed, and like wolves are chained up easily while they are young.

3. Balaam's way of good wishes, whereby many people will confess their ignorance, forgetfulness, and that they can not make such shows as others do, but they thank God their hearts are as good, and God for his part accepts (say they) the will for the deed. And, "My son, give me thy heart;" the heart is all in all, and so long they hope to do well enough. Poor deluded creatures thus think to break through armies of sins, devils, temptations, and to break open the very gates of heaven with a few good wishes; they think to come to their journey's end without legs, because their heart are good to God.

4. The way of formality, whereby men rest in the performance of most or of all external duties without inward life. (Mark 1:14.) Every man must have some religion, some fig leaves to hide their nakedness. Now, this religion must be either true religion or the false one; if the true, he must either

take up the power of it, - but that he will not, because it is burdensome, - or the form of it; and this being easy men embrace it as their God, and will rather loose their lives than their religion thus taken up. This form of religion is the easiest religion in the world; partly because it easeth of trouble of conscience, quieting that: Thou hast sinned, saith conscience, and God is offended; take a book, and pray, keep thy conscience better, charmed down with the form of religion, as the devil is driven away (as they say) with holy water; partly, also, because the form of religion credits a man, partly because it is easy in itself; it is a light carriage, being but the shadow and picture of the substance of religion; as now, what an easy matter it is to come to church! They hear (at least outwardly) very attentively and hour and more, and then to turn a proof, and to turn down a leaf: here is the form. But now to spend Saturday night, and all the whole Sabbath day morning, in trimming the lamp, and in getting the oil in the heart to meet the bridegroom the next day, and so meet him in the word, and there to tremble at the voice of God, and suck the breast while it is open; and when the word is done, to go aside privately, and there to chew upon the word, there to lament with tears all the vain thoughts in duties, deadness in hearing, this is hard, because this is the power of godliness, and this men will not take up: so for private prayer; what an easy matter is it for a man to say over a few prayers out of some devout book, or to repeat some old prayer, got by heart since a child, or to have two or three short-winded wishes for God's mercy in the morning and at night! this form is easy. But now to prepare the heart by serious meditation of God and man's self, before he prays, then to come to God with a bleeding, hunger-starved heart, not only with a desire, but with a warrant, I must have such or such a mercy, and there to wrestle with God, although it be an hour to two together for a blessing, this is too hard; men think none do thus, and therefore they will not.

Fifthly. The way of presumption, whereby men, having seen their sins, catch hold easily upon God's mercy, and snatch comforts before they are reached out unto them. There is no word of comfort, in the book of God, intended for such as regard iniquity in their hearts, though they do not act it in their lives. Their only comfort is, that the sentence of damnation is not yet executed upon them.

Sixthly. The way of sloth, whereby men lie still, and say, God must do all. If the Lord would set up a pulpit at the alehouse door, it may be they would hear oftener. If God will always thunder, they will always pray; if strike them now and then with sickness, God shall be paid with good words and promises enough, that they will run to hell as fast as they can; and, if God will not catch them, they will not return.

Seventhly. The way of carelessness, when men, feeling many difficulties, pass through some of them, but not all, and what they can not get

now, they feed themselves with a false hope they shall hereafter; they are content to be called precisians, and fools, and crazy brains, but they want brokenness of heart, and they will pray (it may be) for it, and pass by that difficulty; but to keep the wound always open, this they will not do; to be always sighing for help, and never to give themselves rest till their hearts are humbled, that they will not: "These have a name to live, yet are dead."

Eighthly. The way of moderation, or honest discretion, (Rev. 3:16,) which, indeed, is nothing but lukewarmness of the soul; and that is, when a man contrives, and cuts out such a way to heaven as he may be hated of none, but please all, and so do any thing for a quiet life, and so sleep in a whole skin. The Lord saith, "He that will live godly must suffer persecution." No, not so, Lord. Surely, (think they,) if men were discreet and wise, it would prevent a great deal of trouble and opposition in good course; this man will commend those that are most zealous, if they were but wise; if he meet with a black-mouthed swearer, he will not reprove him, lest he be displeased with him; if he meet with an honest man, he will yield to all he saith, that so he may commend him; and when he meets them both together, they shall be both alike welcome (whatever he thinks) to his house and table, because he would fain be at peace with all men.

Ninthly and lastly. Their way of self-love, whereby a man, fearing terribly he shall be damned, useth diligently all means whereby he shall be save. Here is the strongest difficulty of all, to row against the stream, and to hate a man's self, and then to follow Christ fully.

I come now to the sixth general head, proposed in order to be considered.

CHAPTER VI

THAT THE GRAND CAUSE OF MAN'S ENTERNAL RUIN, OR WHY SO MANY ARE DAMNED, AND SO FEW SAVED BY CHRIST, IS FROM THEMSELVES.

“Why will ye die?” (Ezek. 33:11.) The great cause why so many people die, and perish everlastingly, is because they will; every man that perisheth is his own butcherer or murderer. (Matt. 22:27. Hosea 9.) This is the point we propose to persecute at present.

Question. The question here will be, how men plot and perfect their own ruin.

Answer. By these four principal means, which are the four great rocks that most men are split upon; and great necessity lieth upon every man to know them; for when a powder plot is discovered, the danger is almost past. I say, there are these four causes of man's eternal overthrow, which I shall handle largely, and make use of every particular reason, when it is open and finished.

First. By reason of that bloody black ignorance of men, whereby thousands remain woefully ignorant of their spiritual estate, not knowing how the case stands between God and their souls, but thinking themselves to be well enough already, they never seek to come out of their misery till they perish in it.

Secondly. By reason of man's carnal security, putting the evil day from them, whereby they feel not their fearful thralldom, and so never groan to come out of the slavish bondage of sin and Satan.

Thirdly. By reason of man's carnal confidence, whereby they shift to save themselves by their own duties and performances, when they feel it.

Fourthly. By reason of man's bold presumption, whereby men scramble to save themselves by their own seeming faith, when they see an insufficiency in duties, and an unworthiness in themselves for God to save them.

I will begin with the first reasons, and discover the first train whereby men blow up themselves, which is this: they know not this misery, nor that fearful, accursed, forlorn state wherein they lie, but think and say they shall do as well as others; and therefore, when any friend persuadeth them to come out of it, and shows them the danger of remaining in such a condition, what is their answer? I pray you save your breath to cool your broth. Every vat shall stand on his own bottom. Let me alone; I hope I have a soul to save as well as

you, and shall be as careful of it as you shall or can be. You shall not answer for my soul. I hope I shall do as well as the precisest of you all.

Hence, likewise if the minister come home to them, they go home hearts full of outcries against the man, and their tongue dipped in gall against the sermon. God be merciful unto us if all this be true! Here's harsh doctrine enough to make a man run out of his wits, and to drive me to despair. Thus they know not their misery, and not knowing, (they are lost and condemned creatures under the everlasting wrath of God,) they never seek, pray, strive, or follow the means whereby they may come out of it, and so perish in it, and never know it till they awake with the flames of hell about their ears. They will acknowledge, indeed, many of them, that all men are born in a most miserable estate; but they never apply particularly that general truth to themselves, saying I am the man; I am now under God's wrath, and may be snatched away by death every hour; and then I am undone and lost forever.

Now, there are two sorts of people that are ignorant of this their misery.

First. The common sort of profane, blockish, ignorant people.

Secondly. The finer sort of unsound, hollow professors, that have a peacock's pride, that think themselves fair and in very good estate, though they have but one feather on their crest to boast of.

I will begin with the first sort, and show you the reasons why they are ignorant of the misery; that is, for these four reasons: -

First. Sometimes because they want the saving means of knowledge. There is no faithful minister, no compassionate Lot, to tell them of fire and brimstone from heave for their crying sings; there is no Noah to forewarn them of a flood; there is no messenger to bring them tidings of those armies of God's devouring plagues and wrath that are approaching near unto them; they have no pilot - poor forsaken creatures - to show them their rock; they have either no minister at all to teach them, either because the parish is too poor, or the church living too great to maintain a faithful man, (the strongest asses carrying the greatest burdens commonly.) O, woful physician! Sometimes they be profane, and can not heal themselves; and sometimes they be ignorant, and know not what to preach, unless they should follow the steps of Mr. Latimer's Frier; or, at the best, they shoot off a few popguns against gross sins; or if they do show men their misery, they lick them whole again with some comfortable, ill-applied sentences, (but I hope better things of you, my breather,) the man's patron may haply storm else. Or else they say commonly, Thou hast sinned; comfort thyself, but despair not; Christ hath suffered; and thus skin over the wound, and let it fester within, for want of cutting it deeper. I say, therefore, because they want a faithful watchman to cry, Fire, fire in that sleepy estate of sin and darkness wherein they lie,

therefore whole towns, parishes, generations of men are burnt up, and perish miserably. (Lam. 2:14.)

Secondly. Because they have no leisure to consider of their misery, when they have the mans of revealing it unto the,. As Felix. (Acts 24:25.) Many a man hath many a bitter pill given him at a sermon, but he hath no leisure to chew upon it. One man is taken up with suits in law, and another almost eaten up with suretyship, and carking cares how to pay his debts, and provide for his own; another hath a great charge and few friends, and he saith the world is hard, and hence, like a mole roots in the earth, week days and Sabbath days. The world thus calling them on one side and lusts on another, and the devil on the other side, they have no leisure to consider of death, devil, God, nor themselves, hell, nor heaven. The minister cries and knocks without, but there is such a noise and lumber of tumultuous lusts and vain thoughts in their hearts and heads, that all good thoughts are sad, unwelcome guests, and are knocked down presently.

Thirdly. Because if they have leisure, they are afraid to know it. Hence people cry out of ministers, that they damn all, and will hear them no more, and they not be such fools as to believe all that such say: the reason is, they are afraid to know the worst of themselves; they are afraid to be cut, and therefore can not endure the chirurgeon; they think to be troubled in mind, as others are, is the very high road to despair; and therefore, if they do hear a tale, how one, after hearing of a sermon, grew distracted, or downed or hanged himself, it shall be an item and a warning to them as long as they live, for troubling their hearts about such matters. Men of guilty consciences (hence) fly from the face of God, as prisoners from the judge, as debtors from the creditor. But if the Lord of hosts can catch you, you must and shall feel with horror of heart that which you fear a little now.

Fourthly. Because, if the be free from this foolish fear, they can not see their misery, by reason that they look upon their estates through false glasses, and by virtue of many false principles in their minds, they cheat themselves.

Which false principles are these principally; I will but name them.

First. They conceive God, that made them, will no be so cruel as to damn them.

Secondly. Because they feel no misery, (but are very well,) therefore they fear none.

Thirdly. Because God blesseth them in their outward estates, in their corn, children, calling friends, &c., would God bless them so, if he did not love them?

Fourthly. Because they think sin to no great evil, - fore all are sinners, - so this can no mischief them.

Fifthly. Because they think God's mercy is above all his works, though sin be vile, yet conceiving God to be all mercy, all honey, and no justice, they think they are well.

Sixthly. Because they think Christ died for all sinners, and they confess themselves to be great ones.

Seventhly. Because they hope well, and so think to have well.

Eighthly. Because they do as most do, who, never crying out of their sins while they lived, and dying like lambs at last, they doubt not, for their parts, but, doing as such do, they shall die happily, as others have done.

Ninthly. Because their desires and hearts are good, as they think.

Tenthly. Because they do as well as God will give them grace, and so God is in the fault only if they perish.

These are the reasons and grounds upon which profane people are deceived.

Now, it followeth to show the grounds on which the finer sort miscarry.

Secondly. Hollow professors cheat and cozen their own souls. It is in our church as it is in an old wood, where there are many tall trees; yet cut them and search them deeply, they prove pathless, sapless, hollow, unsound creatures. These men twist their own ruin with a finder thread, and can juggle better than the common sort, and cast mists before their own eyes, and so cheat their own souls. It is a minister's first work to turn men from darkness into this light, (Acts 26:18.) and the Spirit's first work to convince men of sin. (John 16:9.) And therefore it is people's main work to know the worst at first of themselves.

Now, the cause of these men's mistaking is threefold.

First. The spiritual madness and drunkenness of their understanding.

Secondly. The false, bastard peace begot and nourished in the conscience.

Thirdly. The sly and secret distempers of the will.

First. There are these seven drunken distempers in the understanding or mind of man, whereby he cometh to be most miserably deceived.

First. The understanding's arrogance. You shall never see a man mean and vile in his own eyes, deceived, (Ps. 25:9;) but a proud man or woman is often cheated. Hence proud Haman thought surely he was the man whom the king would honor, when, in truth, it was intended for poor Mordecai. For pride having once overspread the mind, it ever hath this property - it makes a penny stand for a pound, a spark is blown up to a flame, it makes a great matter of a little seeming grace; and therefore the proud Pharisee, when he came to reckon with himself, he takes his poor counter, - that is, "I am not as other men, nor as this publican," - and sets it down for one thousand pounds; that is, he esteems of himself as a very rich man for it; so many a man, because he hath some good thing in himself, as he is pitiful to the poor, he is a

true man though a poor man; he was never given to wine or women; he magnifieth himself for this title, and so deceives and overreckons himself. There are your Bristow stones like diamonds, and many cheaters cozen country folks with them that desire to be fine, and know not what diamonds are; so many men are desirous to be honest, and to be reputed so, not knowing what true graze means. Therefore Bristow stones are pearls in their eyes. A little seeming graze shines so bright in their eyes, that they are half bewitched by it to think highly of themselves, although they be but glittering, seeming jewels in a swine's snout. A cab of doves' dung was sold in Samaria's time of famine at a great rate; a man living in such a place, where all about him are either ignorant, or profane, or civil, a little moral honest (dung is respect of true grace) goes a great way, and is esteemed highly of, and he is as honest a man as ever lived. To a man that looks through a red glass, all things appear red; a man looking upon himself through some fair spectacles, through some one good thing which he hath in himself, appears far to him. It is said, (Luke 20. ult.,) "The Pharisees devoured widows' houses. Might not this racking of rents make them question their estates? No. Why? They for pretense made long prayers: so many men are drunk now and then, but they are sorry; they can not but sin, but their desires are good; they talk idly, but they live honestly; they do ill sometimes, but they mean well. Thus, when some good things are seen in themselves, pride puffs them up with an overweening conceit of it, and so they cozen their souls.

Secondly. The understanding's obstinacy; whereby the mind, having been long rooted in this opinion that I am in a good estate, will not suffer this conceit to be plucked out of it. Now, your old rooted, yet rotten professors, having grown long in a good conceit of themselves, will not believe that they have been fools all their lifetime, and therefore now must pull down and lay the foundation again; and hence you shall have many say of a faithful minister, that doeth convince and condemn them and their estate to be most woful, What shall such an upstart teach me? Doth he think to make me dance after his pipe, and to think that all my good prayers, my faith, my charity, have been so long abominable and vile before God? No silver can bribe a man to cast away his old traditional opinions and conceits, whereby he cheats himself, till Christ's blood do it. (1 Pet. 1:18.) And hence the woman of Samaria objected this against Jesus Christ, that their old "fathers worshiped in the mountain," and therefore it was as good a place as Jerusalem, the place of God's true worship. (John 4:20.) Men grow crooked and aged with good opinions of themselves, and can seldom or never be set straight again. Hence such kind of people, though they would fain be taken for honest, religious Christians, yet will never suspect their estates to be bad themselves, neither can they endure that any other should search or suspect them to yet rotten at the heart: and are not those wares and commodities much to be suspected,

nay, concluded to be stark naught, which the seller will needs put upon the chapman without seeing or looking on them first? It is a strong argument we produce against the Papist's religion to be suspected to be bad, because they obtrude their opinions on their followers, to be believed without any hesitation or dispute about them, either before or after they have embraced them: certainly thy old faith, thy old prayers, thy old honesty, or form of piety, are counterfeit wares, that can not endure searching: because though wilt not be driven from this conceit, I am a good estate, I have been so long of this good mind, and therefore will not begin to doubt now. It is to be feared that such kind of people, as I have much observed, are either notoriously ignorant, or have some time or other fallen into some horrible secret, grievous sins, as whoredom, oppression, or the like, the guilt of which, lying yet secretly on them, makes them fly from the light of God's truth, which should find them out, quarreling both against it and the ministers that preach it. (Rom. 2:8.) And therefore, as it is with thieves when they have any stolen goods brought within doors, they will not be searched or suspected, but say, they are as honest men as themselves that come to search; for they fear, if they be found out, that they shall be troubled before the judge, and may hardly escape with their lives: so many old professors, when the minister comes to search them, they clap to the doors upon the man and truth too, and say, they hope to be saved as well as the best of them all: the reason is, they are guilty; they are loth to be troubled and cast down by seeing the worst of themselves, and think it is hard for them to go to heaven and be saved, if they have been in a wrong way all their lifetime. An honest heart will cry after the best means, "Lord, search me," (John 3:20,) and open all the doors to the entertainment of the straitest, strictest truths.

Thirdly. The understanding's obscurity, or ignorance of the infinite exactness, glorious purity, and absolute perfection of the law of God; whence it cometh to pass that this burning lamp, or bright sun of God's law, being set and obscured in their minds, rotten glowworms of their own righteousness, doing gloriously in their eyes, in the dark nighttime of dismal darkness, by doing of which they think to please God, and their estates are very good. "I was alive," saith Paul, (Rom. 7:9,) "without the law;" and he gives the reason of it, because sin did but sleep in him, like a cutthroat in a house where all is quiet. Before the law came, he saw not that deadly secret score of corruption, and that litter of rebellion that was lurking in his heart, and therefore though highly of himself for his own righteousness. The gospel is a glass to show men the face of God in Christ. (2 Cor. 2. ult.) The law is that glass that showeth a man his own face, and what he himself is. Now, if this glass be taken away, and not set before a deformed heart, how can a man but think himself fair? And this is the reason why civil men, formalists, almost every one, think better of themselves than indeed they are, because they reckon without their host;

that is, they judge of the number, nature, and greatness of their sins by their own books, by their own reason; they look not God's debt book, God's exact laws over, and compare themselves therewith; if they did, it would amaze the stoutest heart, and pluck down men's plumes, and make them say, Is there any mercy so great as to pass by such sins, and to put up such wrongs, and to forgive such sins and debts, one of which alone may undo me, much more so many?

Fourthly. The understanding's security or sleepiness, whereby men never reflect upon their own actions, nor compare them with the rule; although they have knowledge of the law of God, yet it is with them as it is with men that have a fair glass before them, but never beholding themselves in the glass, they never see their spots. This is the woe of most unregenerate men; they want a reflecting power, and light to judge of themselves by. (Jer. 8:6.) You shall have them think on a sermon, Here is for such a one, and such a one is touched here; when it may be the same sermon principally speaks of them; but they never say, This concerneth me; I was found out through the goodness of the Lord to-day, and surely the man spake unto none but unto me, as if somebody had told him what I have done. And hence you shall find out many lame Christians, that will yield to all the truths delivered in a sermon, and commend it too, but go away and shake off all truths that serve to convince them. And hence many men, when they examine themselves in general, whether they have grace or no, whether they love Christ or no, they think yes, that they do with all their hearts; yet they neither have this grace nor any other, whatever they think, because they want a reflecting light to judge of generals by their own particular courses. For tell these men that he that loves on another truly, will often think of him, speak of him, rejoice in his company, will not wrong him willingly in the least thing; now, ask them, if they love Christ thus. If they have any reflecting light, they will see where they have one thought of Christ, they have a thousand on other things. Rejoice! Nay, they are weary of his company in word, in prayer. And that they do not only wrong him, but make a light matter of it when it is done. All are sinners, and no man can live without sin. Like a sleepy man, (fire burning in his bed straw,) he cries not out, when others happily lament his estate, that see afar off, but can not help him. (Is. 62:25) A man that is to be hanged the next day may dream over night he shall be a king. Why? Because he is asleep, he reflects not on himself. Thou mayest go to the devil, and be damned, and yet ever think and dream that all is well with thee. Thou hast no reflecting light to judge of thyself. Pray therefore that the Lord would turn your eyes inward, and do not let the devil and delusion shut you out of your own house, from seeing what court is kept there every day.

Fifthly. The understanding's impiety, whereby it lessens and vilifies the glorious grace of God in another; whence it comes to pass, that this deluded

soul, seeing none much better than himself, concludes, If any be saved, I shall no doubt be one. (Is. 26:10,11.) Men will not behold the majesty of God in the lives of his people; many a man being too light, yet desirous to go and pass for current, weighs himself with the best people, and thinks, What have they that I have not? What do they that I do not? And if he see they go beyond him, then he turns his own balance with his finger, and makes them too light, that so he himself may pass for weight.

And this vilifying of them and their grace, judging them to be of no other metal then other men, appears in three particulars.

First. They raise up false reports of God's people, and nourish a kennel of evil suspicions of them; if they know any sin committed by them, they will conclude they be all such; if they see no offensive sin in any of them, they are then reputed a pack of hypocrites; if they are not so uncharitable, (having no grounds,) they prophesy they will hereafter be as bad as others, though they carry a fair flourish now.

Secondly. If they judge well of them, then they compare themselves to them, by taking a scantling only by their outside, and by what they see in them; and so, like children, seeing stars a great way off, think them no bigger nor brighter than winking candles. They stand afar off from seeing the inside of a child of God; they see not the glory of God filling that temple; they see not the sweet influence they receive from heaven, and that fellowship they have with their God; and hence they judge but meanly of them, because the outside of a Christian is the worst part of him, and his glory shines chiefly within.

Thirdly. If they see God's people do excel them, that they have better lives, better hearts, and better knowledge, yet they will not conclude that they have no grace, because it hath not that stamp, that honest men's money hath. But this prank they play; they think such and such good men have a greater measure and a higher degree of grace than themselves, yet they dare be hold to think and say their hearts are as upright, though they be not so perfect as others are; and so vilify the grace that shines in the best men, by making his gold to differ from their own copper, not essentially, but gradually, and hence they deceive themselves miserably; not but that one (star or) sincere Christian differs from another in glory; I speak of those men only that never were fixed in so high a sphere as true honesty dwells, yet falsely father this bad conclusion, that they are upright for their measure, that they have not the like measure of grace received as others have.

Sixthly. The understanding's idolatry, whereby the mind sets up and bows down to a false image of grace; that is, the mind, being ignorant of the height and excellency of true grace, takes a false scantling of it, and so imagines and fancies, within itself, such a measure of common grace to be true grace, which the soul easily having attained unto conceives it is in the

estate of grace, and so deceives itself miserably. (Rom. 10:3) And the mind comes to set up her image thus: -

First. The mind is haunted and pursued with troublesome fears of hell; conscience tells him he has sinned, and the law tells him he shall die, and Death appears, and tells him he must shortly meet with him; and if he be taken away in his sins, then comes a black day of reckoning for all his privy pranks, a day of blood, horror, judgment, and fire, where no creature can comfort him. Hence saith he, Lord, keep my soul from these miseries: he hopeth it shall not prove so evil with him, but fears it will.

Secondly. Hereupon he desireth peace and ease, and some assurance of freedom from these evils. For it is a hell above ground ever to be on the rack of tormenting fears.

Thirdly. That he may have ease, he will not swagger his trouble away, nor drown it in the bottom of the cup, nor throw it away with his dice, nor play it away at cards, but desires some grace, (and commonly it is the least measure of it too.) Hereupon he desires to hear such sermons and read such books as may best satisfy him concerning the least measure of grace; for, sin only troubling him, grace only can comfort him soundly. And so, grace, which is meat and drink to a holy heart, is but physic to this kind of men, to ease them of their fears and troubles.

Hereupon, being ignorant of the height of true grace, he fancieth to himself such a measure of common grace to be true grace. As, if he feels himself ignorant of that which troubles him, So much knowledge will I then get, saith he. If some foul sins in his practice trouble him, these he will cast away, and so reforms. If omission of good duties molest him, he will hear better, and buy some good prayer book, and pray oftener. And if he be persuaded such a man is a very honest man, then he will strive to do as he doth; and now he is quieted.

When he hath attained unto this pitch of his own, now he thinks himself a young beginner, and a good one too; so that if he dieth, he thinks he shall do well; if he liveth, he thinks and hopes he shall grow better; and when he is come to his own pitch, he here sets down his staff, as fully satisfied. And now, if he be pressed to get into the estate of grace, his answer is, That is not to be done now: he thanks God that care is past. The truth is (beloved) it is too high for him; his own legs could never carry him thither, all his grace coming by his own working, not by Almighty God's power. Let a man have false weights, he is cheated grievously with light gold. Why? Because his weights are too light, so these men have too light weights to judge of the weight of true grace; therefore light, clipped, cracked pieces cheat them. Hence you shall have those men commend pithless, sapless men, for very honest men as ever break bread. Why? They are just answerable to their weights. Hence I have not much wondered at them who maintain that a man may fall away

from true grace; the reason lieth here: They set up to themselves such a common work of grace to be true grace, from which no wonder that a man may fall. Hence Bellarmine saith, That which is true grace, *veritate essantiae*, only, may be lost; not that grace which is true, *veritate firmæ soliditatis*, which latter, being rightly understood, may be called special grace, as the other common grace. Hence also you shall have many professors hearing a hundred sermons never moved to grow better. Hence likewise you shall see our common preachers comfort every one, almost, that they see troubled in mind, because they think presently, they have true grace, now they begin to be sorrowful for their sins. It is just according to their own light weights.

For the Lord's sake take heed of this deceit. True grace (I tell you) it is a rare pearl, a glorious sun clouded from the eyes of all but them that have it, (Rev. 2:17;) a strange, admirable, almighty work of God upon the soul, which no created power can produce; as far different, in the least measure of it, from the highest degree of common grace, as a devil is from an angel; for it is Christ living, breathing, reigning, fighting, conquering in the soul. Down, therefore, with you idol grace, your idol honesty; true grace never aims at a pitch; it aspires only to perfection. (Phil 3:12,13.) And therefore Chrysostom calls St. Paul *insatiabilis Dei cultor* - a greedy, insatiable worshiper of the Lord Almighty.

Seventhly. The understanding's error is another cause of man's ruin. And that is seen principally in these five things, these five errors or false conceits: -

First. In judging some trouble of mind, some light sorrow for sin, to be true repentance; and so, thinking they do repent, hope they shall be saved. For sin is like sweet poison; while a man is drinking it down by committing it, there is much pleasure in it; but after the committing of it, there is a sting in it, (Prov. 23:31,32;) then the time cometh when this poison works, making the heart swell with grief; sorry they are at the heart, they say, for it; and the eyes drop, and the man that committed sin with great delight now cries out with grief in the bitterness of his soul, O that I, beast that I am, had never committed it! Lord, mercy, mercy! (Prov. 5:3,4,11,12.) Nay, it may be they will fast, and humble and afflict their souls voluntarily for sin; and now they think they have repented, (Is. 58:3,) and hereupon when they hear that all that sin shall die, they grant this is true indeed, except a man repent, and so they think they have done already. This is true; at what time soever a sinner repents, the Lord will blot out his iniquity: but this repentance is not when a man is troubled somewhat in mind for sin, but when he cometh to mourn for sin as his greatest evil, and if he should see all his goods and estate on a light fire before him; and that not for some sins, but all sins, little and great; and that not for a time, for a fit and away, (a land flood of sorrow,) but always like a spring never dry, but ever running all a man's lifetime.

Secondly. In judging the striving of conscience against sin to be the striving of the flesh against the spirit; and hence come these speeches from carnal black mouths; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. And hence men think, they, being thus compounded of flesh and spirit, are regenerate, and in no worse estate than the children of God themselves. AS sometime I once spake with a man, that did verily think that Pilate was an honest man, because he was so unwilling to crucify Christ; which unwillingness did arise only from the restraint of conscience against the fact. So, many men judge honestly, yet simply, upon such a ground of themselves: they say, they strive against their sins, but, Lord be merciful unto them, they say, the flesh is frail. And hence Arminius gives a diverse interpretation of the seventh chapter to the Romans from ordinary divines; concerning which Paul speaks in the person of an unregenerate man, because he observed divers graceless persons (as he saith himself) having fallen, and falling commonly into sins against conscience, to bring that chapter in their own defense and comfort, because they did that which they allowed not, (ver. 15,) and so it was not they, but sin that dwelled in them.

And so many among us know they should be better, and strive that they may grow better, but, through the power of sin, can not; conscience tells them they must not sin, their hearts and lusts say they must sin; and here, forsooth, is flesh and spirit. O, no, here is conscience and lust only by the ears together; which striving, Herod, Balaam, Pilate, or the vilest reprobate in the world may have. Such a war argueth not any grace in the heart, but rather more strength of corruption, and more power of sin in the heart; as it is no wonder if a horse run away when he is loose; but when his bit and his bridle are in his mouth, now to be wild, argueth he is altogether untamed and subdued. Take heed, therefore, of judging your estate to be good, because of some backwardness of your hearts to commit some sins, though little sins; for thy sins may be, and it is most certain are, more powerful in thee than in others that have not the like strugglings, because they have not such checks as thou hast to restrain thee. Know, therefore, that the striving of thy conscience against sin only against sin because it is a troubling or a damning sin. The striving of the spirit against the flesh is from a deadly hatred of sin. (Rom. 7:15.) But thy striving of conscience against sin is only from a fear of the danger of sin. For Balaam had a mind to curse the Israelites, for his money's sake; but if he might have had a house full of silver and gold, (which is a goodly thing in a covetous eye,) it is said, he durst not curse them.

Thirdly. In judging the sincerity of the heart, by some good affection in the heart. Hence many a deluded soul reasons the case out thus with himself: Either I must be a profane man, or a hypocrite, or an upright man. Not profane, I thank God; for I am not given to whoring, drinking, oppression, swearing; nor hypocrite, for I hate these shows, I can not endure to appear

better without than I am within; therefore I am upright. Why? O, because my heart is good; my affections and desires within me are better than my life without; and whatever others judge of me, I know mine own heart, and the heart is all that God desires. And thus they fool themselves. (Prov. 28:26.) This is one of the greatest causes and grounds of mistake amongst men that think best of themselves: they are not able to put a difference between the good desires and strong affections that arise from the love of Jesus Christ.

Self-love will make a man seek his own good and safety; hence it will pull a man out of his bed betimes in the morning, and call him up to pray; it will take him and carry him into his chamber toward evening, and there privately make him seek, and pray, and tug hard for pardon, for Christ, for mercy: Lord, evermore give us of this bread! But the love of Christ makes a man desire Christ and his honor for himself, and all other things for Christ. It is true, the desires of sons in Christ by faith are accepted ever; but the desires of servants, men that work only for their wages out of Christ, are not.

Fourthly. In judging of God's love to them, by aiming sometimes at the glory of God. Is this possible, that a man should aim at God's glory, and yet perish? Yes, and ordinarily too: a man may be liberal to the poor, maintain the ministry, be forward and stand for good things, whence he may not doubt but that God loves him: but here is the difference -- though a wicked man may make God's glory in some particular things his end, yet he never makes it, in his general course, his utmost and last end. A subtle apprentice may do all his master's work, but he may take the gain to himself, or divide it betwixt his master and himself, and so may be but a knave, as observant as he seems to se: so a subtle heart (yet a villainous heart) may forsake all the world, as Judas did, may bind himself apprentice to all the duties God requires outwardly at his hands, and so do good works; but what is hi last end? It is that he might gain respect or place, or that Christ may have some part of the glory, and he another. Simon Manus would give any money sometimes that he could pray so well, know so much, and do as others do; and yet his last end is for himself: but "how can you believe, if you seek not that glory that comes from God?" saith Christ. There is many seek the honor of Christ; but do you seek his honor only? Is it your last end, where you rest and seek no more but that? If thou wouldest know whether thou makest Christ's glory thy last end, observe this rule: -

If thou art more grieved for the eclipse of thine own honor, and for thine own losses, than for the loss of God's honor, it is an evident sign thou lovest it not, desirest it not as thy chiefest good, as the last end, for thy *summum bonum*, and therefore dost not seek God's honor in the prime and chiefest place. Sin troubled Paul more than all the plagues and miseries of the world. Indeed, if thy name be dashed with disgrace, and thy will be crossed, thy heart is grieved and disquieted: but the Lord may lose his honor daily by

own sins, and those that be round about thee, but not a tear, not a sigh, not a groan to behold such a spectacle: as sure as the Lord lives, thou seekest not the Lord's name or honor as thy greatest good.

Fifthly. In judging the power of sin to be but infirmity; for if any thing trouble an unregenerate man, and makes him call his estate into question, it is sin, either in the being or power of it. Now, sin in the being ought not, must not, make a man question his estate, because the best have that left in them that will humble them, and make them live by faith; therefore the power of sin only can justly thus trouble a man. Now, if a man do judge of this to be only but infirmity, which the best are compassed about withal, he can not but lie down securely and think himself well. And if this error be settled in one that lives in no one known sin, it is very difficult to remove; for let the minister cast the sparks of hell in their faces, and denounce the terror of God against them, they are never stirred. Why? Because they think, Here is for you that live in sin, but as for themselves, although they have sins, yet they strive against them, and so can not leave them; for we must have sin as long as we live here, they say. Now, mark it, there is no surer sign of a man under the bloody reign and dominion of his lusts and sins, that this -- that is, to give way to sin, (though never so little and common,) nor to be greatly troubled for sin, (for they may be a little troubled,) because they can not overcome sin. I deny not but the best do sin daily; yet this is the disposition of Paul, and every child of God -- he mourneth not the less, but the more for sins; though he can not quite subdue them, cast them out, and overcome them. As a prisoner mourns the more that he is bound with such fetters he can not break, so doth every one truly sensible of his woful captivity by sin. This is the great difference between a raging sin a man will part withal, and a sin of infirmity a man can not part withal: a sin of infirmity is such a sin as a man would, but can not part with it, and hence he mourns the more for it; a raging sin is such a sin as a man, haply by virtue of his lashing conscience, would sometimes part withal, but can not, and hence mourns the less for it, and gives way to it. Now, for the Lord's sake, take heed of this deceit; for I tell you, those sins you can not part withal, if you groan not day and night under them, (saying, O Lord, help me, for I am weary of myself and my life,) will certainly undo you. You say, you can not but speak idly, and think vainly, and do ill, as all do sometimes; I tell you, those sins be everlasting chains to hold you fast in the power of the devil, until the judgment of the great day.

And thus much of the understanding's corruption, whereby man are commonly deluded. Now followeth the second.

Secondly. In regard of the false, bastard peace begot in the conscience. Why should the camp tremble when scouts are asleep? or give a false report when the enemies are near them? Most men think they are in a safe estate, because they were never in a troubled estate; or if they have been troubled,

because they have got some peace and comfort after it. Now, this false peace is begot in the heart by these four means: -

1. By Satan.
2. By false teachers.
3. By a false spirit.
4. By a false application of true promises.

I. By Satan, whose kingdom shall fall if it should be divided, and be always in combustion; hence he laboreth for peace. (Luke 11:24,) "When the strong man keepeth the palace, his goods are in peace;" that is, when Satan, armed with abundance of shifts and carnal reasonings, posseseth men's souls, they are at peace. Now, look as masters give their servants peace, even so the devil.

1. By removing all things that may trouble them; and, -
2. By giving them all things that may quiet and comfort them, as meat, drink, rest, lodging, &c., so doth Satan deal with his slaves and servants.

First. By removing those sins which trouble the conscience; for a man may live in a sin, and yet never be troubled for that sin; for sin against the light of conscience only troubles the conscience. As children that are tumbling and playing in the dust, they are not troubled with all the dust, nay, they take pleasure to wallow in it; but only with that (whether it be small or great) that lights in their eyes. And hence that young man came boasting to Christ that he had kept all the commandments from his youth; but went away sorrowful, because that dust, that sin he lived in with delight before, fell into his eyes, and therefore he was troubled. Now, mark the plot of the devil, when he can make a man live, and wallow, and delight in his shins, and so serve him; and yet will not suffer him to live in any sin against conscience, whereby he should be troubled, and so seek to come out of this woful estate, he is sure this man is his own; and now a poor deluded man himself goes up and down, not doubting but he shall be saved. Why? Because their conscience (they thank God) is clear, and they know of no one sin they live in, they know nothing of themselves that may make them so much as suspect their estate is bad. Matt. 9:13,) "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance;" that is, such a one as in his own opinion is fish-whole; every sin being a child of God's sickness, he is never without some kind of sorrow; but some sins only being a natural man's sickness, they being removed, he recovers out of his former sorrow, and grows well again, and thinks himself sound: the Lord Jesus never came to save such, therefore Satan keeps possession of them. For the Lord's sake, look to this subtlety: many think themselves in a good estate, because they know not the particular sin they live in; whereas Satan may have stronger possession of such as are bound with his invisible fetters and chains, when those that have their pinching bolts on them may sooner escape.

Secondly. By giving the soul liberty to recreate itself in any sinful course, where-in the eye of conscience may not be pricked and wounded. Servants, when they are put always to work, and never can go abroad, are weary both of work and master; that master pleaseth them that giveth hem the most liberty. To be pent up all day long in doing God's work, watching, praying, fighting against every sin, this is a burden, this is too strict; and because that they can not endure it, they think the Lord looks not for it at their hands. Now, Satan gives men liberty in their sinful courses; and this liberty begets peace, and this peace makes them think well of themselves. (2 Poet. 2:19.) There are many rotten professors in these days, that, indeed, will not open their mouths against the sincere-hearted people of God; yet they walk loosely, and take too much liberty in their speeches, liberty in their thoughts, liberty in their desires and delights, liberty in their company, in their pastimes, and that sometimes under a pretense of Christian liberty; and never trouble themselves with these needless controversies: To what end, or in what manner, do I use these things? Whereas the righteous man feareth always, considering there is a snare for him in every lawful liberty: May not I sin in my mirth, in my speaking, in my sleeping? O, this liberty that the devil gives, and the world takes, besots most men with a foolish opinion that all is well with them.

Thirdly. By giving the soul good diet, meat and drink enough, what dish he likes best. Let a master give liberty, yet his servant in not pleased, unless he have meat, and drink, and food: so there is no wicked man under heaven, but as he takes too much liberty in the use of the lawful things, so he feedeth his heart with some unlawful secret lust, though all the time he live in it, it may be it is unknown to him. (Luke 16.) Dives had his dish, his good things, and so sang himself asleep, and bade his soul take his ease and rest; yea, observe this: diet is poisoned in itself, but ever commended to the soul as wholesome, good, and lawful. They christen sin with a new name, as popes are at their election; if he be bad, they call him sometimes Pius; if a coward, Leo, etc. So covetousness is good husbandry; company-keeping, good neighborhood; lying to save credit from cracking, but a handsome excuse; and hence the soul goes peaceably on, and believes he is in a good estate.

Fourthly. By giving the soul rest and sleep, that is, cessation sometimes from the act of sin; hence they are hardly persuaded that they live in sin, because they cease sometimes from the act of sin; as no man doth always swear, nor is he always drunk, nor always angry. They think only their falls, in these or the like sins, as slips and falls which the best men may have sometimes, and yet be a dear child of God. O, Satan will not always set men at his work; for if men should always have their cups in their hands, and their queans in their arms; if a covetous man should always root in earth, and never pray, never have good thoughts, never keep any Sabbath; if a man should

always speak idly, and never good word drop from him, a man's conscience would never be quiet, but shaking him up for what he doth; but by giving him respite for sinning for a time, Satan getteth stronger possession afterward; as Matt. 12:43. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, it returns worse. Samson's strength always remained, and so doth sin's strength in a natural man, but it never appears until temptation come.

Fifthly. By giving the soul fair promise of heaven and eternal life, fastening them upon the heart. Most men are confident their estate is good; and though God kills them, yet will they trust in him, and can not be beaten from this. Why? O, Satan bewitcheth them; for as he told Evah by the serpent, she should not die, so doth he insinuate his persuasions to the soul, though it live in sin, he shall not die, but do well enough as the precisest. Satan gives thus good words, but woful wages -- the eternal flashes of hell.

II. By false teachers, who, partly by their loose examples, partly by their flattering doctrines in public, and their large charity in private, daubing up every one, (especially he that is a good friend unto them,) for honest and religious people; and if they be but a little troubled, applying comfort presently, and so healing them that should be wounded, and not telling them roundly of their Herodias, as John Baptist did Herod. Hereupon they judge themselves honest, because the minister will give them the beggarly passport; and so they go out of the world, and die like lambs, woefully cheated. (Matt. 24:11.) Look abroad in the world and see what is the reason so many feed their hearts with confidence they shall be saved, yet their lives condemn them, and their hearts acquit them. The reason is, such and such a minister will go to the alehouse, and he never prays in his family, and he is none of these precise, hot people, and yet as honest a man as ever lives, and a good divine, too. Ahab was miserably cheated by four hundred false prophets. Whilist the minister is of a loose life himself, he will wink at others and their faults, lest in reprovng others he should condemn himself, and others should say unto him, "Physician, heal thyself." Thieves of the same company will not steal from one another, lest they trouble thereby themselves. And hence they give others false cards to sail by, false rules to live by; their unconscionable large charity is like a gulf that swalloweth ships, (souls I mean,) tossed with tempest and not comforted. (Is. 54:7,8.) And hence all being fish that cometh to their net, all men think so of themselves.

III. A false spirit. This is a third cause that begets a false peace. As there is a true "Spirit that witnesseth to our spirits that we are the sons of God," (Rom. 8:15,) so there is a false spirit, just like the true one, witnessing that they are the sons of God. (1 John 4:1.) We are bid to try the spirit. Now, if these spirits were not like God's true Spirit, what need trial? As, what need one try whether dirt be gold, which are so unlike each other? And this

spirit I take to be set down, Matt 24:23. Now, look as the true Spirit witnesseth, so the false spirit, being like it, witnesseth also.

First. The Spirit of God humbles the soul; so before men have the witness of the false spirit, they are mightily cast down and dejected in spirit, and hereupon they pray for ease, and purpose to lead new lives, and cast away the weapons, and submit. (Ps. 66:3.)

Secondly. The Spirit of God in the gospel reveals Jesus Christ and his willingness to save; so the false spirit discovereth Christ's excellency, and willingness to receive him, if he will but come in. It fareth with the soul as with surveyors of lands, that take an exact compass of other men's grounds, of which they shall never enjoy a foot. So did Balaam. (Num. 24:5,6.) This false spirit showeth them the glory of heaven and God's people.

Thirdly. Hereupon the soul cometh to be affected, and to taste the goodness and sweetness of Jesus Christ, as those did, (Heb6;) and the souls breaks out into passionate admiration: O that ever there should be any hope for such a vile wretch as I am, and have been! and so joys exceedingly, like a man half way rapt up into heaven.

Fourthly. Hereupon the soul, being comforted after it was wounded, now calleth God my God, and Christ my sweet Savior; and now it doubts not but it shall be saved. Why? Because I have received much comfort after much sorrow and doubting, (Hos. 8:2,3;) and yet remains a deluded, miserable creature still. But here mark the difference between the witness of each spirit. The false spirit makes a man believe he is in the state of grace, and shall be saved, because he hath tasted of Christ, and so hath been comforted, and that abundantly. But the true Spirit persuades a man his estate is good and safe, because he hath not only tasted, but bought this Christ, as the wise merchant in the gospel, that rejoiced he had found the pearl, but yet stays not here, sells away all, and buys the pearl. Like two chapmen that come to buy wine; the one tastes it, and goeth away in a drunken fit, and so concludes it is his; so a man doth, that hath the false spirit; but the true-spirited man doth not only taste, but buys the wine, although he doth not drink it all down when he cometh to taste it; yet he having been incited by tasting to buy it, now he calls it his own. So a child of God tasting a little of God, and a little of Christ, and a little of the promises at his first conversion, although he tastes not all the sweetness that is in God, yet he forsakes all for God, for Christ, and so takes them lawfully as his own. Again: the false spirit, having given a man comfort and peace, suffers a man to rest in that state; but the true Spirit, having made the soul taste the love of the Lord, stirreth up the soul to do and work mightily for the Lord. Now the soul crieth out, What shall I do for Christ, that hath done wonders for me? If every hair on my head were a tongue to speak of his goodness, it were too little. (Neh. 8:10,) "The joy of the Lord is our strength." (Ps. 51:12,)

“Uphold me with thy free spirit;” or, as the Chaldean paraphrase hath it, thy “kingly spirit;” the spirit of adoption in God’s child is no underling, suffering men to lie down, and cry, My desires are good, but flesh is frail. No, it is a kingly spirit, that reigns where it liveth.

IV. False applying of a true promise is the last cause of false peace. And when a man hath God’s Spirit within, and God’s hand and promise (as he thinks) for his estate, now he thinks all safe. This did the Jews; they said, “We have Abraham to our Father;” and so reputed themselves safe, God having made them promise, “I will be a God of thee and of thy seed.” But here is a difference between a child of God’s application of them and a wicked man’s. The first applieth them so to him, as that he liveth upon them, and nothing but them; and to whom doth the duty belong, but to the child that lives upon it? The other lives upon his lusts, and creatures, and yet catcheth hold on the promise.

By these four means is begot a bastard, false peace.

Thus much of the second cause of man’s deceiving himself-- false peace in the conscience.

Now followeth the third.

III. The corruptions and distempers of the will, which is the third cause why men deceive themselves; which are many. I will only name three.

First. When the will is resolved to go on in a sinful course, and then sets the understanding a-work to defend it. Whence it fareth with the soul as with a man that cometh to search for stolen goods, who, having received a bribe beforehand, searcheth everywhere but where it is, and so the man is never found out to be what he is. So a man having tasted the sweetness of a sinful course, (which pleasure bribes him,) he is contented to search into every corner of his heart, and try himself, as many do, except where his darling lust lies; he sits upon that, and covers it willingly from his own eyes, as Rachel did upon stolen gods, and so never finds out himself. (John 3:20,) A man that hath a mind to sleep quietly, will cause the curtains to be drawn, and will let some light come in, but shuts out all that, or so much as may hinder him from sleeping; so a man, having a mind to sleep in some particular sinful course at his ease, will search himself, and let some light come into his mind.

And hence many a profane persons, that know much, (their opinions are orthodox, their discourse savory,) yet do they know little of themselves, and of those sins and lusts that haunt them, which they must part with; because this light troubleth them, it hinders them from sleeping in their secure estate, and therefore they draw the curtain here. Hence many men, that live in those sins of the grossest usury, finding the gain, and tasting the sweet of that sin, will read all books, go to all those ministers they suppose that hold it lawful, and so pick up and gather reasons to defend the lawfulness of the sin, and so, because they would not have it to be a sin, find out reasons whereby

they think it no sin; but the bottom is this -- their will hath got the bribe, and now the understanding plays the lawyer; and hence men live in the most crying sins, and are sure to perish, because they will not know they are in an error.

Secondly. When the will sets the understanding a-work to extenuate and lessen sin; for many, when they see their sins, yet make is small by looking at the false end of their optic glass; they think such small matters never make any breach between the Lord and their souls. Hence they say, The best man sins seven times a day; and who can say, My heart is clean? What is the reason that a child of God hath little peace, many times after commission of small sins? O, it is because they see the horrible nature of the least sin; small wrongs against so dear, so great a friend as the Lord is, it cuts their hearts; yet a carnal heart is never troubled for great sins, because they make a light matter of them.

Thirdly. Willful ignorance of the horrible wrath of God. Hence men rush on in sin as the horse into battle. Hence men never fear their estates, because they know not God's wrath hanging over them, Coldest snakes, when they are frozen with cold, never sting nor hurt; one may carry a nest of them in his bosom; but bring them to the fire, then they hiss and sting: so makes men cry out of themselves, Then I am undone! O, I am a lost creature! But being not thus heated, sin never makes a man cry out of himself.

These are the causes why men are ignorant of their woful, miserable estate; which ignorance is the first rock, or the first powder plot.

Yet there are three more dangerous, because more secret.

Now followeth the second reason of man's ruin. By reason of man's carnal security, whereby men can not be affected with, nor so much as have hearts to desire to come out of their misery, yet if the heart be hard or sleepy, and not affected, loaded, wounded, humbled, and made to groan under it, he will never greatly care to come out of it. (Is. 29:9,10.) Now, this is the estate of many a soul; he doth know his misery, but by reason of the sleepy, secure, senseless spirit of slumber, he never feels it, nor mourns under it, and so comes not out of it.

Now the reasons of this security are these: -

Because God pours not out the full measure of his wrath upon men, because he kindles not the pile of wrath that lies upon men, it is reserved, and concealed, not revealed from Heaven; and so long, let God frown, ministers threaten, and smaller judgments drop, yet they will never seek shelter in Jesus Christ, but sleep in their sins, until God rain down floods of horror, blood, fire; until God's arrows stick in men's hearts, they will never seek out of themselves unto Jesus Christ. (Eccl. 8:11.) So long as God's plagues were upon Pharaoh, he giveth fair words, and Moses must be sent to pray for him; but when God's hand is taken away, now Pharaoh's heart is hardened: so long

as God's sword is in his scabbard, men have such stout hearts that they will never yield; God must wound, and cut deep, and stab, and thrust to the very heart, else men will never yield, never awaken, till God's fists be about men's ears, and he is dragging them to the stake; men will never awake and cry for a pardon and deliverance of their woful estate.

Secondly. Because if they do in part feel, and so fear God's wrath, they put away the evil day far from them; they hope they shall do better hereafter, and repent some other time, and therefore they say, Soul, eat, drink, follow thy sport, cups, queans; thou hast a treasure of time which shall not be spent in many years, (Is. 22:12,13;) that look as it is with the wax, let it be of never so pliable a disposition, and the fire never so hot, yet if it be not brought near the fire, and be held in the fire, it never melts, but still remains hard; so it is here. Let a man or woman have never so gentle or pliable a nature, and let God's wrath be never so hot and dreadful in their judgments, yet if they make not the day of wrath present to them, if they see it not ready every moment to light upon their hearts, they are never melted, but they remain hard hearted, secure, sleepy wretches, and never groan to come out of their woful estate; and this is the reason why many men, that have guilty consciences, though they have many secret wishes and purposes to be better, yet never cry out of themselves, nor ever seek earnestly for mercy, till they lie upon their death beds; and then, O the promises they ply God with! Try me, Lord, and restore me once more to my health and life again, and thou shalt see how thankful I will be! Because that now they apprehend wrath and misery near unto them. (Heb. 3:13.)

Thirdly. Because they think they can bear God's wrath, though they do conceive it near at hand, even at the very doors; men think not that hell is so hot, nor the devil so black, nor God so terrible as indeed he is. And hence we shall observe the prophets present God's wrath as a thing intolerable before the eyes of the people, that thereby they might quench all those cursed conceits of being able to bear God's wrath. (Nahum 1:9.) And hence we shall have many men desperately conclude they will have their swing in sin, and if they perish, they hope they shall be able to bear it; it is but a damning they think, and yet secure men fear it not, they think hell is not so terrible a place.

Fourthly. Because they know no better an estate, Hence, though they feel their woful and miserable condition, yet they desire not to come out of it. Although men find hard lodging in the world, hard times, hard friends, hard hearts, yet they make a shift with that they find in this miserable inn, until they come to hell; for such a man, pursued by outward miseries, or inward troubles, there stays; O, miserable man, that makes shift till he come to hell! They may hear of the happy estate of God's people, but not knowing of it experimentally, they stay where they are. (Job 4:14.)

Take a prince's child, and bring it up in a base house and place, it never aspires after a kingdom or crown; so men hatched in this world, knowing no better an estate, never cast about them to get a better inheritance than they scramble for here. Wives mourn for the long absence of their beloved husbands, because they know them and their worth. God may absent himself from men weeks, months, years, but men shed not one tear for it, because they never tasted the sweetness of his presence. It is strange to see men take more content in their cups and cards, pots and pipes, dogs and hawks, than in the fellowship of God and Christ, in word, in prayer, in meditation; which ordinances are burdens and prison unto them. What is the reason of it? Is there no more sweetness in the presence of God's smiling in Christ than in a filthy whores? Yes; but they know not the worth, sweetness, satisfying goodness of a God. Some sea fish, (say they,) if once they come into fresh water, will never return again, because they now taste a difference between those brackish and sweet waters: so is it here; if men did but once taste the happiness of God's people, they would not for a thousand world be one half hour in their wild, loose sea again.

Fifthly. Because if they do know a better estate, yet their present pleasures, their sloth, doth so bewitch them, and God's denials, when they seek unto him, do so fat discourage them, that they sleep still securely in that estate. A slothful heart, bewitched with present ease, and pleasures, and delights, considering many a tear, many a prayer must it make, many a night must it break its sleep, many a weary step must it take towards heaven and Christ, if ever it come there, grows discouraged, and deaded, and hard-hearted in a sleepy estate, and had rather have a bird in the hand than two in the bush; Israelites wished that they were at their onions and garlic again in Egypt. Was there no Canaan? Yes; but they wished so because there were walls built up to heaven, and giants, sons of Anak, in the land, difficulties to overcome. O, slothful hearts! Secondly. Because God sometimes put them to straits, and denied them what they sought for, they were of such a waspish, testy, sullen spirit, that, because the Lord had them not always on his knees, they would run away; so many a man meets with sorrow enough in his sinful, dropsy, drunken estate; he hears of Heaven, and a better estate, yet why goes he to his lusts and flesh pots again? O, because there are so many difficulties, and blocks, and hindrances in his way; and because they pray and find not ease, therefore they eat, drink, laugh, sport, and sleep in their miserable estate still. (Matt. 7:14.) Therefore men walk in the broad way, because the other way to life is strait and narrow; it is a plague, a burden, a prison, to be so strict; men had rather sit almost an hour in the stocks than be an hour at prayer; men had rather be damned at lat than sweat it out and run through the race to receive a crown; and hence men remain secure.

Sixthly. Because of the strange, strong power of sin, which bears that sway over men's souls that they must serve it as prisoners stoop to their jailers, as soldiers that have taken their pay, their pleasure of sin, must follow it as their captain, though they go marching on to eternal ruin; nay, though doomsday should be to-morrow, yet they must and will serve their lusts. As the Sodomites, when they were smitten with blindness, which tormented their eyes as though they had been pricked with thorns, (for so the Hebrew word signifies,) even when destruction was near, they groped for the door. Men can not but sin, though they perish for sin; hence they remain secure.

Seventhly. Despair of God's mercy: hence, like Cain, men are renegades from the face of God; men think they shall never find mercy when all is done; hence they grow desperately sinful; like those Italian senators, that, despairing of their lives, when upon submission they had been promised their lives, yet, being conscious of their villainy, made a curious banquet, and at the end of it every man drank up his glass of poison, and killed himself; so men feeling such horrible hard hearts, and being privy to such notorious sins, they cast away lives, and heaven, and soul for lost, and so perish woefully, because they lived desperately, and so securely.

Eighthly. Because men nourish a blind, false, flattering hope of God's mercy: hence many knowing and suspecting that all is naught with them, yet having some hope they may be in a good estate, and God may love them, hence they lie down securely, and rest in their flattering hope. Hence observe, those people that seldom come to a conclusion, to a point, that either they are in the state of grace or out of it, that never come to be affected, but remain secure in their condition, they commonly grow to this desperate conclusion: that they hope God will be merciful unto them; if not, they can not help it; like the man that had on his target the picture of God and the devil; under the first he wrote, *Si tu non vis*, if thou wilt not; under the other he wrote, *Ipse rogitat*, here is one will.

Ninthly. Because men bring not their hearts under the hammer of God's word to be broken, they never bring their consciences to be cut. Hence they go on still securely with festered consciences. Men put themselves above the word, and their hearts above the hammer; they come not to have the minister to humble them, but to judge of him, or to pick some pretty fine thing out of the word, and so remain secure sots all their days: for if ever thy heart be broken, and thy conscience be awaked, the word must do it; but people are so sermon-trodden, that their hearts, like footpaths, grow hard by the word.

Tenthly. Because men consider not of God's wrath daily, nor the horrible nature of sin; men chew not these pills: hence they never come to be affected nor awakened.

Awaken, therefore, all you secure creatures; feel your misery, that so you may get out of it. Dost thou know thine estate is naught, and that thy condemnation will be fearful, if ever thou dost perish? And is thine heart secretly secure, so damnably dead, so desperately hard, that thou hast no heart to come out of it? What? no sigh, no tears? Canst thou carry all thy sins upon thy back, like Samson the gates of the city, and make a light matter of them? Dost thou see hell fire before thee, and yet wilt venture? Art thou worse than a beast which we can not beat nor drive into the fire if there be any way to escape? O, get thy heart to lament and mourn under thy miseries; who knows then but the Lord may pity thee? But O, hard heart! thou canst mourn for losses and crosses, burning of goods and houses, yet though God be lost, and his image burnt down, and all is gone, thou canst not mourn. If thine heart were truly affected, the pillow would be washed with thy tears, and the wife in thy bosom would be witness of thy heart-breakings in midnight for those sins which have grieved the Spirit of God many a time; thou couldest not sleep quietly nor comfortably without assurance. If you were sick to death, physicians should hear how you do; and if you were humbled, we should have you in the bitterness of your spirit cry out, "What shall we do?" But know it, thou must mourn here or in hell. If God broke David's bones for his adultery, and the angels' backs for their pride, the Lord, if ever he saves thee, will break thine heart too.

Question. But wilt thou say, How shall I do to get mine heart affected with my misery?

Answer. 1. Take a full view of thy misery. 2. Take special notice of the Lord's readiness and willingness to receive thee yet unto mercy; for two things harden the heart: 1. False hope, whereby a man hopes he is not so bad as indeed he is. 2. No hope, whereby a man, when he sees himself so notoriously bad, thins there is no willingness in the Lord to pardon or receive such a monster of men to mercy; and, if neither the hammer can break they stony heart, nor the sunshine of mercy melt it, thou hast a heart worse than the devil, and art a spectacle of the greatest misery, 1. In regard of sin. 2. In regard of God's wrath.

First. In regard of sin. Thou hast sinned, and that grievously, against a great God. Thou makest no great matter of this: no; but, thou it be no load to thee, it is a load on the Lord's heart, (Is. 1:24,) and time will come he will make the whole sinful world, by rivers of fire and blood, to know what an evil is; for, -

1. In every sin thou dost strike God, and fling a dagger at the heart of God. 2. In every sin thou dost spite against God; for, if there were but one only thing wherein a man could do his friend a displeasure, was not here spite see if he did that thing? Now tell me, hath not the Lord been a good friend unto thee? Tell me, wherein he hath grieved thee? And tell me, in what one

thing canst thou please the devil, and do God a displeasure, but by sin? Yet, O hard heart, thou makest nothing of it. But consider, thirdly, in every sin thou dost dethrone God, and settest thyself above God; for, in every sin, this question is put, Whose will shall be done, God's will or man's? Now, man by sin sets his own will above the Lord's, and so kicks God (blessed forever, adored of millions of saints and angels) as filth under his feet. What, will this break your hearts?

Consider, then, of God's wrath, the certainty of it, the unsupportableness of it, -- how that, dying in thy sins and secure estate, it shall fall; for, when men cry, Peace, peace, then cometh sudden destruction at unawares. Pray, therefore, to God to reveal this to thee, that thine heart may break under it. Secondly, consider the Lord's mercy and readiness to save thee, who hath prepared mercy, and entreats thee to take it, and waiteth every day for thee to that end.

The third reason of man's ruin is that carnal confidence, whereby men seek to save themselves, and to scramble out of their miserable estate by their own duties and performances, when they do feel themselves miserable. The soul doth as those (Hos. 5:13) men when they be wounded and troubled: they never look after Jesus Christ, but go to their own waters to heal themselves, like hunted harts when the arrow is in them. (Rom. 9:31,32.)

For the opening of this point, I shall show you these two things: -

1. Wherein this resting in duties appears.
2. Why men do rest in themselves?

First. This resting in duties appears in these eleven degrees: -

1. The soul of a poor sinner, if ignorantly bred and brought up, rests confidently in superstitious vanities. Ask a devout Papist how he hopes to be saved; he will answer, by his good works. But inquire, further, What are these good works? Why, for the most part, superstitious ones of their own inventions, (for the crow thinks her own bird fairest,) as whipping themselves, pilgrimages, fasting, mumbling over their Paternosters, bowing down to images and crosses.

2. Now, these being banished from the church and kingdom, then men stand upon their titular profession of the true religion, although they be devils incarnate in their lives. Look up and down the kingdom; you shall see some roaring, drinking, dicing, carding, whoring, in taverns and blind alehouses; others belching out their oaths, their mouths ever casting out, like raging seas, filthy, frothy speeches; others, like Ismaels, scoffing at the best men; yet these are confident they shall be saved. Why, (say they,) they are no Papist; hang them, they will die for their religion, and rather burn than turn again, by the grace of God. Thus the Jews boasted they were Abraham's seed; so our carnal people boast: Am I not a good Protestant? Am not I baptized? Do I not live in the church? and therefore, resting here, hope to be saved. I

remember a judge, when one pleaded once with him for his life, that he might not be hanged because he was a gentleman; he told him that therefore he should have the gallows made higher for him: so when thou pleadest, I am a Christian and a good Protestant, (yet thou wilt drink, and swear, and whore, neglect prayer, and break God's Sabbath,) and therefore thou hopest to be saved; I tell thee thy condemnation shall be greater, and the plagues in hell the heavier.

3. If men have no peace here, then they fly to, and rest in, the goodness of their insides. You will have many a man, whom, if you follow to his chamber, you will find very devout; and they pray heartily for the mercy of God, and forgiveness of sins; but follow them out of their chambers, watch their discourses, you shall find it frothy and vain, and now and then powdered with faith and truth, and obscene speeches. Watch them when they are crossed, you shall see them as angry as wasps, and swell like turkeys, and so spit out their venom like dragons. Watch them in their journeys, and shall see them shoot into an alehouse, and there swill and swagger, and be familiar with the scum of the country for profaneness, and half drunk, too, sometimes. Watch them on the Lord's day; take them out of the church once, and set aside their best clothes, and they are then the same as at another time; and, because they must not work nor sport that day, they think they may with a good conscience sleep the longer on the morning. Ask, now, such men how they hope to be saved, seeing their lives are so bad; they say, though they make not such shows, they know what good prayers they make in private; their hearts, they say, are good. I tell ye, brethren, he that trusteth in his own heart and his good desires, and so resteth in them, is a fool. I have heard of a man that would haunt the taverns, and theaters, and whore houses at London all day; but he durst not go forth without private prayer in the morning, and then would say, at his departure, Now, devil, do thy worst; and so used his prayers (as many do) only as charms and spells against the poor, weak, cowardly devil, that they think dares not hurt them, so long as they have good hearts within them, and good prayers in their chambers; and hence they will go near to rail against the preacher as a harsh master, if he do not comfort them with this - that God accepts of their good desires.

4. If their good hearts can not quiet them, but conscience tells them they are unsound without, and rotten at core within, then men fall upon reformation; they will leave their whoring, drinking, cozening, gaming, company-keeping, swearing, and such like roaring sins; and now all the country saith he is become a new man, and he himself thinks he shall be saved; (2 Pet. 2:20;) they escape the pollutions of the world, as swine that are escaped and washed from outward filth; yet the swinish nature remains still; like mariners that are going to some dangerous place, ignorantly, if they meet

with storms, they go not backward, but cast out their goods that endanger their ship, and so go forward still; so may a man, going toward hell, be forced to cast out his lusts and sins; but he goeth on in the same way still for all that. The wildest beast, (as stags,) if they be kept waking from sleep long, will grow tame; so conscience giving a man no rest for some sins he liveth in, he groweth tame: he that was a wild gentleman before remains the same man still, only he is made tame now; that is, civil and smooth in his whole course; and hence they rest in reformation, which reformation is, commonly, but from some troublesome sin, and it is because they think it is better following their trade of sin at another market; and hence some men will leave their drinking and whoring, and turn covetous, because there is more gain at that market; sometimes it is because sin hath left them, as an old man.

5. If they can have no rest here, they get into another starting hole: they go to their humiliations, repentings, tears, sorrows, and confessions. They hear a man can not be saved by reforming his life, unless he come to afflict his soul too; he must sorrow and weep here, or else cry out in hell hereafter. Hereupon they betake themselves to their sorrows, tears, confession of sins; and now the wind is down, and the tempest is over, and they make themselves safe. (Matt. 11:1.) They would have repented; that is, the heathen, as Beza speaks, when any wrath was kindled from Heaven, they would go to their sackcloth and sorrows, and so thought to pacify God's anger again; and here they rested. So it is with many a man; many people have sick fits and qualms of conscience, and then they do as crows, that give themselves a vomit by swallowing down a stone when they are sick, and then they are well again; so when men are troubled for their sins, they will give themselves a vomit of prayer, a vomit of confession and humiliation. (Is. 58:5.) Hence many, when they can get no good by this physic, by their sorrows and tears, cast off all again; for, making these things their God and their Christ, they forsake them when they can not save them. (Matt. 3:14.) More are driven to Christ by the sense of the burden of a hard, dead, blind, filthy heart than by the sense of sorrows, because a man rests in the one, viz., in sorrows, most commonly, but trembles and flies out of himself when he feels the other. Thus men rest in their repentance; and therefore Austin hath a pretty speech which sounds harsh, that repentance damneth more than sin; meaning that thousands did perish by resting in it; and hence we see, among many people, if they have large affections, they think they are in good favor; if they want them, they think they are castaways, when they can not mourn nor be affected as once they were, because they rest in them.

6. If they rest here, then they turn moral men; that is, strict in all duties of the moral law, which is a greater matter than reformation or humiliation;

that is, they grow very just and square in their dealings with men, and exceeding strict in duties of the first table toward God, as fasting, prayer, hearing, reading, observing the Sabbath: and thus the Pharisees lived, and hence they are called “the strict sect of the Pharisees.” Take heed you mistake me not; I speak not against strictness, but against resting in it; for except your righteousness exceed theirs, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You shall find these men fly from base persons and places, like the pest house, commend the best books, cry down the sins of the time, and cry against civil or moral men, (the eye sees not itself,) and cry up zeal and forwardness. Talk with him about many moral duties that are to be done toward God or man, he will speak well about the excellency and necessity of it, because his trade and skill, whereby he hopes to get his living and earn eternal life, lieth there; but speak about Christ, and living by faith in him and from him, and bottoming the soul upon the promises, (pieces of evangelical righteousness,) he that is very skillful in any point of controversy is as ignorant almost as a beast, when he is examined here. Hence, if ministers preach against the sins of the time, they commend it for a special sermon, (as it haply deserves, too;) but let him speak of any spiritual, inward, soul-working points, they go away and say he was in their judgment confused and obscure; for their part they understood him not. (Beloved,) pictures are pretty things to look on, and that is all the goodness of them; so these men are, (as Christ looked on and loved the natural young man in the gospel,) and that is all their excellency. You know, in Noah’s flood, all that were not in the ark, though they did climb and get to the top of the tallest mountains, they were drowned; so labor to climb never so high in morality, and the duties of both tables, if thou goest not into God’s ark, the Lord Jesus Christ, thou art sure to perish eternally.

7. If they have no rest here in their morality, they grow hot within, and turn marvelous zealous for good causes and courses; and there they stay and warm themselves at their own fire: thus Paul (Phil. 3:6) was zealous, and there rested. They will not live, as many do, like snails in their shells, but rather than be damned for want of doing, they are content to give away their estate, children, any thing almost, to get pardon for the sin of their soul. (Micah 6:7.)

8. If they find no help from hence, but are forced to see and say, when they have done all, they are unprofitable servants, and they sin in all that which they do, then they rest in that which is like evangelical obedience; they think to please God by mourning for their failings in their good duties to be so, and therein rest. (Duet. 5:29.)

9. If they feel a want of all these, then they dig within themselves for power to leave sin, power to be more holy and humble, and so think to work out themselves, in time, out of this estate, and so they dig for pearls in their own dunghills, and will not be beholding to the Lord Jesus; to live on him in

the want of all; they think to set up themselves out of their own stock, without Jesus Christ, and so, as the prophet Hosea speaks, (14:3,4,) think to save themselves, by their riding on horse, that is, by their own abilities.

10. If they feel no help here, then they go unto Christ for grace and power to leave sin and do better, whereby they may save themselves; and so they live upon Christ, that they may live of themselves; they go unto Christ, they go not into Christ, (Ps. 78:34,35,) like hirelings that go for power to do their work, that they may earn their wages. A child of God contents himself with, and lives upon, the inheritance itself the Lord in his frees mercy hath given him. But now we shall see many poor Christians that run in the very road the Papist devoutly go to hell in.

First. The Papist will confess his misery, that he is (and all men are) by nature a child of wrath, and under the power of sin and Satan.

Secondly. They hold Christ is the only Savior.

Thirdly. That this salvation is not by any righteousness in a Christ, but righteousness from a Christ, only by giving a man power to do, and then dipping men's doing in his blood, he merits their life. Thus the wisest and devoutest of them profess, as I am able to manifest; just so do many Christians live. First. They feel themselves full of sin, and are sometimes tired and weary of themselves, for their vile hearts, and they find no power to help themselves. Secondly. Hereupon hearing that only Christ can save them, they go unto Christ to remove these sins that tire them, and load them, that he would enable them to do better than formerly. Thirdly. If they get these sins subdued and removed, and if they find power to do better, then they hope they shall be saved: whereas thou mayest be damned, and go to the devil at the last, although thou dost escape all the pollutions of the world, and that not from thyself and strength, but from the knowledge of Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. 2:20.) I say, woe to you forever if you die in this estate; it is with our Christians in this case as it is with the ivy, which clasps and grows about the tree, and draws sap from the tree, but it grows not one with the tree, because it is not ingrafted into the tree; so many a soul cometh to Christ, to suck the juice from Christ to maintain his own berries, (his own tock of grace:) alas! He is but ivy, he is no member or branch of this tree, and hence he never grows to be one with Christ. 2. Now, the reasons why men rest in their duties are these: -

First. Because it is natural to a man out of Christ to do so. Adam and all his posterity were to be saved by his doing: "Do this and live;" work, and here is thy wages; win life, and wear it. Hence all his posterity seeks to this day to be saved by doing; like father, like son. Now, to come out of all duties truly to a Christ, hath not so much as a coat in innocent, much less corrupted nature; hence men seek to themselves. Now, as it is with a bankrupt, when his tock is spent, and his estate cracked, before he will turn prentice, or live upon

another, he will turn peddler of small wares, and so follow their old trade with a less stock: so men naturally follow their old trade of doing, and hope to get their living that way; and hence man, having no experience of trading with Christ by faith, live of themselves. Samson, when all his strength was lost, would go to shake himself as at other times: so when men's strength is lost, and God and grace are lost, yet men will go and try how they can live by shifts and working for themselves still.

Secondly. Because men are ignorant of Jesus Christ and his righteousness; hence men can not go unto him, because they see him not; hence they shift as well as they can for themselves by their duties. (John 4:14.) Men seek to save themselves by their own swimming, when they see no cable cast out to help them.

Thirdly. Because this is the easiest way to comfort the heart, and pacify conscience, and to please God, as the soul thinks; because by this means a man goes no farther than himself.

Now, in forsaking all duties, a soul goeth to heaven quite out of himself, and there he must wait many a year, and that for a little, it may be. Now, if a fainting man have *aqua vitae* at his bed's head, he will not knock up the shopkeeper for it. Men that have a balsam of their own to heal them will not go to the physician .

Fourthly. Because by virtue of these duties a man may hide his sin, and live quietly in his sin, yet be accounted an honest man, as the whore in Prov. 7:15,16, having performed her vows, can entice without suspicion of men or check of conscience: so the scribes and Pharisees were horribly covetous, but their long prayers covered their deformities, (Matt. 23:14;) and hence man set their duties at a higher rate than they are worth, thinking they shall save them because they are so useful to them. Good duties, like new apparel on a man pursued with hue and cry of conscience, keep him from being known.

Take heed of resting in duties; good duties are men's money, without which they think themselves poor and miserable; but take heed that you and your money perish not together. (Gal. 5:3.) The paths to hell are but two. The first path of sin, which is a dirty way. Secondly, the path of duties, which (rested in) is but a clearer way. When the Israelites were in distress, (Judg. 10:14,) the Lord bids them go to the gods they served: so when thou shalt lie howling on thy death bed, the Lord will say, Go unto the good prayers and performances you have made, and the tears you have shed. O, they will be miserable comfort at that day.

Objection. But I think thou wilt say, no true Christian man hopes to be saved by his good works and duties, but only by the mercy of God and merits of Christ.

Answer. It is one thing to trust to be saved by duties, another thing to rest in duties. A man trust unto them when he is of this opinion, that only

Christ can save him, but in his practice he goeth about to save himself. The wisest of the Papist are so at this day, and so are our common Protestants. And this is a great subtlety of the heart, that is, when a man thinks he can not be saved by his good works and duties, but only by Christ: he then hopeth, because he is of this opinion, that when he hath done all he is an unprofitable servant; (which is only an act or work of the judgment informed aright;) that, therefore because he is of this opinion, he shall be saved.

But because it is hard for to know when a man rests in duties, and few find themselves guilty of this sin, which ruins so many, I will show two things:

-

1. The signs of a man's resting in duties.
2. The insufficiency of all duties to save men; that so those that be found guilty of this sin may not go on in it.

First. For the signs whereby a man may certainly know, when he rest in his duties, which if he do, (as few professors especially but they do,) he perisheth eternally.

First. Those that yet never saw they rested in them, they that never found it a hard matter to come out of their duties.. For it is most natural for a man to stick in them, because nature sets men upon duties; hence it is a hard matter to come out of resting in duties. For two things keep a man from Christ: -

1. Sin. 2. Self. Now, as a man is broken off from sin by seeing and feeling it, and groaning under the power of it, so is a man broken from himself. For men had rather do any thing then come unto Christ, there is such a deal of self in them; therefore, if thou hast no experience, that at no time thou hast rested too much in thy duties, and then didst groan to be delivered from these entanglements, (I mean not form the doing of them, - this is familism and profaneness, - but from resting in the bare performance of them,) thou dost rely upon thy duties to this day.

These rest in duties, that prize the bare performance of duties wonderfully; for those duties that carry thee out of thyself unto Christ make thee to prize Christ. Now, tell me, dost thou glory in thyself? Now I am somebody. I was ignorant, forgetful, hard-hearted; now I understand, and remember better, and can sorrow for my sins: if thou dost rest here, thy duties never carries thee farther than thyself. Dost thou think, after that thou hast prayed with some life, Now I have done very well, and now thou dost verily think (meaning for thy duties) the Lord will save thee, though thou never come to Christ, and sayest, as he in another case, "Now I hope the Lord will do good to me, seeing I have got a priest in my house," (Judg. 17:13.) Dost thou enhance the price of duties thus, that thou dost dote on them? Then I do pronounce from God, thou dost rest in them. "These things" (saith Paul) "I counted gain," (that is, before his conversion to Christ, he prized them

exceedingly,) but “now I account them loss.” And this is the reason why a child of God, commonly, after all his prayers, tears, and confessions, doubts much of God’s love toward him; whereas another man, that falleth short of him, never questions his estate; the first sees much rottenness and vileness in his best duties, and so judgeth meanly of himself; the other, ignorant of the vileness of them, prizeth them, and esteemeth highly of them; and setting his corn at so high a price, he may keep them to himself; the Lord never accepteth them, nor buyeth them at so high a rate.

Thirdly. Those that never came to be sensible of their poverty and utter emptiness of all good; for so long as a man hath a penny in his purse, that is, feel any good in himself, he will never come a-begging unto Jesus Christ, and therefore rests in himself. Now, didst thou never feel thyself in this manner poor, viz., I am ignorant as any beast, as vile as any devil. O Lord, what a nest and litter of sin and rebellion lurk in my heart! I once thought at least my heart and desires were good, but now I feel no spiritual life. O dead heart! I am the poorest, vilest, basest, and blindest creature that ever lived. If thou dost not thus feel thyself poor, thou never camest out of thy duties; for when the Lord bringeth any man beholding to Christ for every farthing token.

Fourthly. Those that gain no evangelical righteousness by duties, rest in duties; I say, evangelical righteousness, that is more prizing of acquaintance with, desire after, loving and delighting in union with the Lord Jesus Christ; for a mortal man may grow in legal righteousness, (as the stony and thorny ground seed sprang up, and increased much, and came near unto maturity,) and yet rest in duties all this while. For as it is with tradesmen, they rest in their buying and selling, though they make no gain of their trading. Now Jesus Christ is a Christian’s gain, (Phil.1:21;) and hence a child of God asks himself after sermon, after prayer, after sacrament, What have I gained of Christ? Have I got more knowledge of Christ, more admiring of the Lord Jesus? Now, a carnal heart, that rests in his duties, asketh only what he hat done, as the Pharisee: “I thank God I am not as other men; I fast twice a week, I give alms,” and the like; and thinks verily he shall be saved, because he prays, and because he hears, and because he reforms, and because he sorrows for his shins; that is, not because of the gaining of Christ in a duty, but because of his naked performance of the duty; and so they are like that man that I have heard of, that thought verily he should be rich, because he had got a wallet to beg: so men, because they perform duties, think verily they shall be saved. No such matter: Let a man have a bucket made of gold; doth he think to get water because he hath a bucket? No, no; he must let it down into the well, and draw up water with it: so thou must let down all thy duties into Christ, and draw light and life from his fullness, else, though thy duties be golden duties, thou shalt perish without Christ. When a man hath bread in his wallet, and

got water in his bucket, he may boldly say, So long as these last, I shall not famish; so mayest thou say, when thou hast found and got Christ, in the performance of any duty, So long as Christ's life lasteth, I shall live; as long as he hath any wisdom or power, so long shall I be directed and enabled in well doing.

Fifthly. If thy duties make thee sin more boldly, thou dost then rest in duties; for these duties, which carry a man out of himself unto Christ, ever fetch power against sin; but duties that a man rests in arm him and fence him in his sin. (Is. 1:14.) A cart that hath no wheels to rest on can hardly be drawn into the dirt; but one that hath wheels cometh loaded through it: so a child of God that hath no wheels, no duties, to rest upon, can not willingly be drawn into sin; but another man, though he be loaden with sin, (even sometimes against his conscience,) yet having duties to bear him up, goeth merrily on in a sinful course, and makes no bones of sin. When we see a base man revile a great prince, and strike him, we say, Surely, he durst not do it unless he had somebody to bear him out in it, that he rests and trust unto: so when we see men sin against the great God, we conceive, certainly, they durst not do it, if they had not some duties to bear them out in it, and encourage them in their way, that they trust unto.

For, take a profane man: what makes him drink, swear, cozen, game, whore? Is there no God to punish? Is there no hell hot enough to torment? Are there no plagues to confound him? Yes. Why sinneth he so then? O, he prayeth to God for forgiveness, and sorroweth, and repents in secret, (as he saith,) and this bears him up in his lewd pranks.

Take a moral man: he knows he hath failings, and his sins, as the best have, and is overtaken sometimes as the best are: why doth he not remove these sins then? He confesseth them to God every morning when he riseth. Why is he not more humbled under his sin then? The reason is, he constantly observeth morning and evening prayer, and then he craves forgiveness for his failings, by which course he hopes he makes his peace with God; and hence he sinneth without fear, and ariseth out of his falls into sin without sorrow. And thus they see and maintain their sins by their duties, and therefore rest in duties.

Sixthly. Those that see little of their vile hearts by duties, rest in their duties; for if a man be brought nearer to Christ, and to the light, by duties, he will spy out more motes; for the more a man participates of Christ, his health, and life, the more he feeleth the vileness and sickness of sin. As Paul when he rested in his duties before his conversion, before that the law had humbled him, he was alive; that is, he thought himself a sound man, because his duties covered his sins, like fig leaves. There fore ask thine own heart if it be troubled sometimes for sin, and if after thy praying and sorrowing thou dost grow well, and thinkest thyself safe, and feelest not thyself more vile. If it

be thus, I tell thee, thy duties be but fig leaves to cover thy nakedness, and the Lord will find thee out, and unmask thee one day; and woe to thee if thou dost perish here.

Secondly. Therefore behold the insufficiency of all duties to save us; which will appear in these three things which I speak, that you may learn hereafter never to rest in duties: -

First. Consider, thy best duties are tainted, poisoned, and mingled with some sin, and therefore are most odious in the eyes of a holy God, (nakedly and barely considered in themselves;) for, if the best actions of God's people be filthy, as they come from them, then, to be sure, all wicked men's actions are much more filthy and polluted with sin; but the first is true - "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;" for as the fountain is so is the stream; but the fountain of all good actions (that is, the heart) is mingled partly with sin, partly with grace; therefore every action participates of some sin, which sins are daggers at God's heart, even when a man is praying and begging for his life; therefore there is no hope to be saved by duties.

Secondly. Suppose thou couldest perform them without sin; yet thou couldest not hold out in doing so. (Is. 40:6,) "All flesh and the glory thereof is but grass." So thy best actions would soon wither if they were not perfect; and if thou canst not persevere in performing duties perfectly, thou art forever undone, though thou shouldest do so for a time, live like an angel, shine like a sun, and, at thy last gasp, have but an idle thought, commit the least sin, that one rock will sink thee down even in the haven, though never so richly laden; one sin, like a little firestick in the thatch, will burn thee; one act of treason will hang thee, though thou hast lived never so devoutly before, (Ezek 18:24;) for it is a crooked life when all the parts of the line of thy life be not straight before Almighty God.

Thirdly. Suppose thou shouldest persevere; yet it is clear thou hast sinned grievously already; and dost thou think thine obedience for the time to come can satisfy the Lord for all those rents behind, for all those sins past? as can a man that pays his rent honestly every year satisfy hereby for the old rent not paid in twenty years? All thy obedience is a new debt, which can not satisfy for debts past. Indeed, men may forgive wrong and debts, because they be but finite; but the least sin is an infinite evil, and therefore God must be satisfied for it. Man may remit debts, and yet remain men; but the Lord having said, "The soul that sinneth shall die," and his truth being himself, he can not remain God, if he forgive it without satisfaction. Therefore duties are but rotten crutches for a soul to rest upon.

But to what end should we use any duties? Can not a man be saved by his good prayers, nor sorrows, nor repentings? What should we pray any more then? Let us cast off all duties, if all are to no purpose to save us; as good play for nothing as work for nothing.

Though thy good duties can not save thee, yet thy bad works will damn thee. Thou art, therefore, not to cast off the duties, but the resting in these duties. Thou art not to cast them away, but to cast them down at the feet of Jesus Christ, as they did their crowns, (Rev. 4:10,11,) saying, If there be any good or graces in these duties, it is thine, Lord; for it is the prince's favor that exalts a man, not his own gifts: they came from his good pleasure.

But thou wilt say, To what end should I perform duties, if I can not be saved by them?

For these three ends: -

First. To carry thee to the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Savior. (Heb.7:25.) He only is able to save (not duties) all that come unto God (that is, in the use of means) by him. Hear a sermon to carry thee to Jesus Christ; fast and pray, and get a full tide of affections in them to carry thee to the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, to get more love to him, more acquaintance with him, more union with him; so sorrow for thy sins that thou mayest be more fitted for Christ, that thou mayest prize Christ the more; use thy duties as Noah's dove did her wings, to carry thee to the ark of the Lord Jesus Christ, where only there is rest. If she had never used her wings, she had fallen into the waters; so, if thou shalt use not duties, but cast them all off, thou art sure to perish. Or, as it is with a poor man that is to go over a great water for a treasure on the other side, though he can not fetch the boat, he calls for it; and, though there be no treasure in the boat, yet he useth the boat to carry him over to the treasure. So Christ is in heaven, and thou on earth; he doth not come to thee, and thou canst not go to him; now call for a boat; though there is no grace, no good, no salvation, in a pithless duty, yet use it to carry thee over to the treasure - the Lord Jesus Christ. When thou comest to hear, say, Have over Lord by this sermon; when thou comest to pray, say, Have over Lord by this prayer to a Savior. But this is the misery of people. Like foolish lovers, when they are to woo for the lady, they fall in love with her handmaid that is only to lead them to her; so men fall in love with, and dote upon, their own duties, and rest contented with the naked performance of them, which are only handmaids to lead the soul unto the Lord Jesus Christ.

Secondly. Use duties as evidence of God's everlasting love to you when you be in Christ; for the graces and duties of God's people, although they be not causes, yet they be tokens and pledges of salvation to one in Christ: they do not save a man, but accompany and follow such a man as shall be saved, (Heb. 6:9.) Let a man boast of his joys, feelings, gifts, spirit, grace, if he walks in the commission of any one sin, or the omission of any one known duty, or in the slovenly, ill-favored performance of duties, this man, I say, can have no assurance without flattering himself. (2 Pet. 1:8,9,10.) Duties, therefore, being evidences and pledges of salvation, use them to that end, and make much of

them therefore; as a man that hath a fair evidence for his lordship, because he did not purchase his lordship, will he therefore cast it away? No, no; because it is an evidence to assure him that it is his own; and so, to defend him against all such as seek to take it from him, he will carefully preserve the same; so, because duties do not save thee, wilt thou cast away good duties? No; for they are evidences (if thou art in Christ) that the Lord and mercy are thine own. Women will not cast away their love tokens, although they are such things as did not purchase or merit the love of their husbands; but because they are tokens of his love, therefore they will keep them safe.

That God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may be honored by the performance of these duties, therefore use them. Christ shed his blood that he might purchase unto himself a people zealous of good works, (Tit. 2:14,) not to save our souls by them, but to honor him. O, let not the blood of Christ be shed in vain! Grace and good duties are a Christian's crown; it is sin only makes a man base. Now, shall a king cast away his crown, because he bought not his kingdom by it? No; because it is an ornament and glory to wear it when he is made a king. So I say unto thee, It is better that Christ should be honored that thy soul saved; and, therefore, perform duties, because they honor the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus use thy duties, but rest not in duties; nay, go out of duties, and match thy soul to the Lord Jesus Christ; take him for better and for worse; so live in him and upon him all thy days.

Fourthly. By reason of man's headstrong presumption, or false faith, whereby man seek to save themselves by catching hold on Christ, when they see an insufficiency in all duties to help them, and themselves unworthy of mercy; for this is the last and most dangerous rock that these times are split upon. Men make a bridge of their own to carry them to Christ. I mean, they look not after faith wrought by an omnipotent power, which the eternal Spirit of the Lord Jesus must work in them, but they content themselves with a faith of their own forging and framing; and hence they think verily and believe that Christ is their sweet Savior, and so doubt not but they are safe, when there is no such matter; but even as dogs they snatch away children's bread, and shall be shut out of doors (out of heaven hereafter forever) for their labor.

All men are of this opinion, that there is no salvation but by the merits of Jesus Christ; and because they hold fast this opinion, therefore they think they hold fast Jesus Christ in the hand of faith, and so perish by catching at their own catch, and hanging on their own fancy and shadow. Some others catch hold of Christ before they come to feel they want of faith and ability to believe, and catching hold on him, (like dust on a man's coat, whom God will shake off, or like burs and briers, cleaving to one's garment, which the Lord will trample under foot,) now say they, they thank God, they have got comfort by this means, and though God killeth them, yet they will trust unto him. (Micah 3:11.)

It is in this respect a harder matter to convert a man in England than in the India, for there they have no such shifts and forts against our sermons; to say they believe in Christ already, as most amongst us do, we can not rap off men's fingers from catching hold on Christ before they are fit for him; like a company of thieves in the street, you shall see a hundred hands scrambling for a jewel that is fallen there, that have least, nay, nothing to do with it. Every man saith, almost, I hope Christ is mine; I put my whole trust and confidence in him, and will not be beaten from this. What! must a man despair? must not a man trust unto Christ? Thus men will hope and trust, though they have no ground, no graces to prove they may lay hold and claim unto Christ. This hope, scared out of his wits, damns thousands; for I am persuaded, if men did see themselves Christ-less creatures, as well as sinful creatures, they would cry out, "Lord, what shall I do to be saved?"

This faith is a precious faith. (2 Pet. 1:2.) Precious things cost much, and we set them at a higher rate; if thy faith be so, it hath cost thee many a prayer, many a sob, many a salt tear. But ask most men how they come by their faith in Christ, they say very easily; when the lion sleeps, a man may lie and sleep by it; but when it awakens, woe to that man that doth it so: so while God is silent and patient, thou mayest befool thyself with thinking thou dost trust unto God; but woe to thee when the Lord appears in his wrath, as one day he will; for by virtue of this false faith, men sinning take Christ for a dishclout to wipe them clean again, and that is all the use they have of this faith. They sin indeed, but they trust unto Christ for his mercy, and so lie still in their sins: God will revenge with blood, and fore, and plagues, this horrible contempt from heaven.

Hence many of you trust to Christ, as the apricot tree, that leans against the wall, but it is fast rooted in the earth: so you lean upon Christ for salvation, but you are rooted in the world, rooted in your pride, rooted in your filthiness still. Woe to you if you perish in this estate; God will hew you down as fuel for his wrath, whatever mad hope you have to be saved by Christ. This, therefore, I proclaim from the God of heaven: -

1. You that never felt yourselves as unable to believe as a dead man to raise himself, you have as yet no faith at all.

2. You that would get faith, first must feel your inability to believe: and fetch not this slip out of thine own garden; it must come down from Heaven to thy soul, if ever thou partakest thereof.

Other things I should have spoken of this large subject, but I am forced here to end abruptly; the Lord lay not this sin to their charge who have "stopped my mouth, laboring to withhold the truth in unrighteousness." And blessed be the good God, who hath stood by his unworthy servant thus long, enabling him to lead you so far as to show you the rocks and dangers of your passage to another world.