

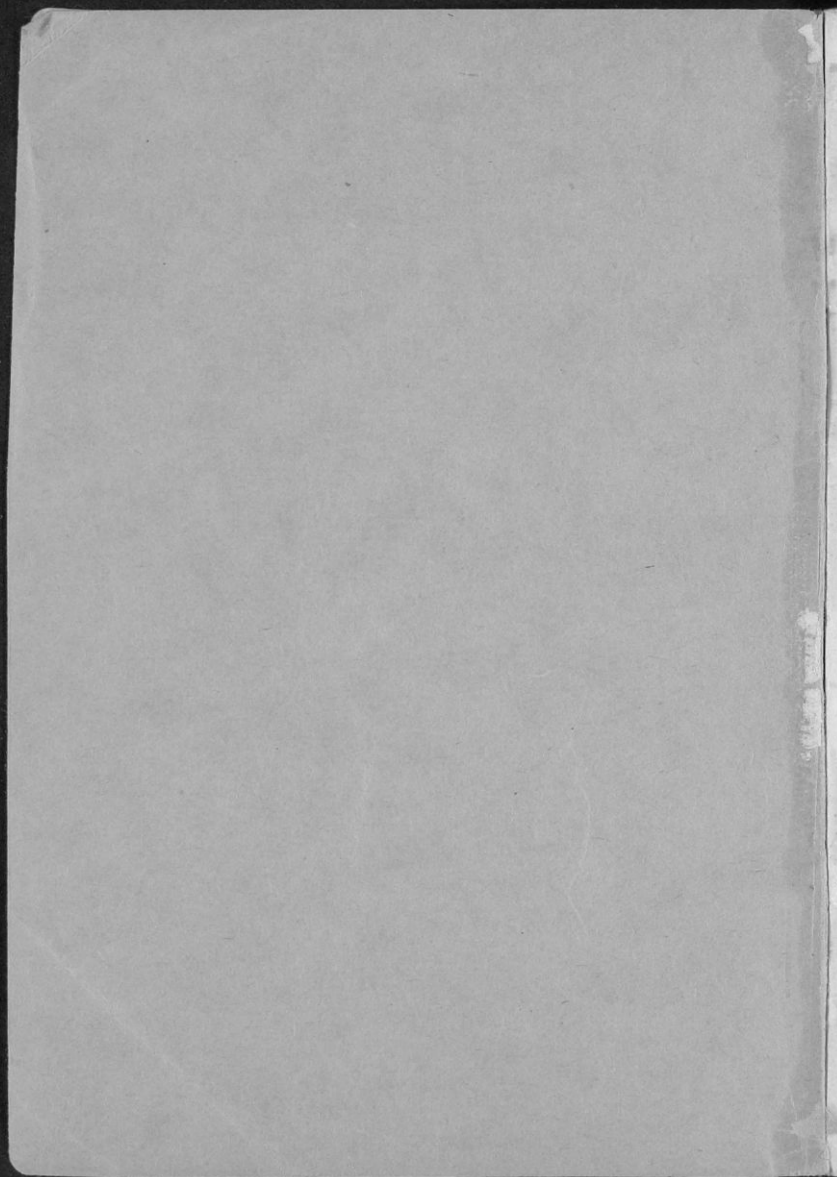
Alleine, Joseph  
The true way...  
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*The True Way  
to Happiness*

BY THE  
REV. JOSEPH ALLEINE



**J. HUISKEN**  
851 OAKLAND AVE., S. W.  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.



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to Happiness*

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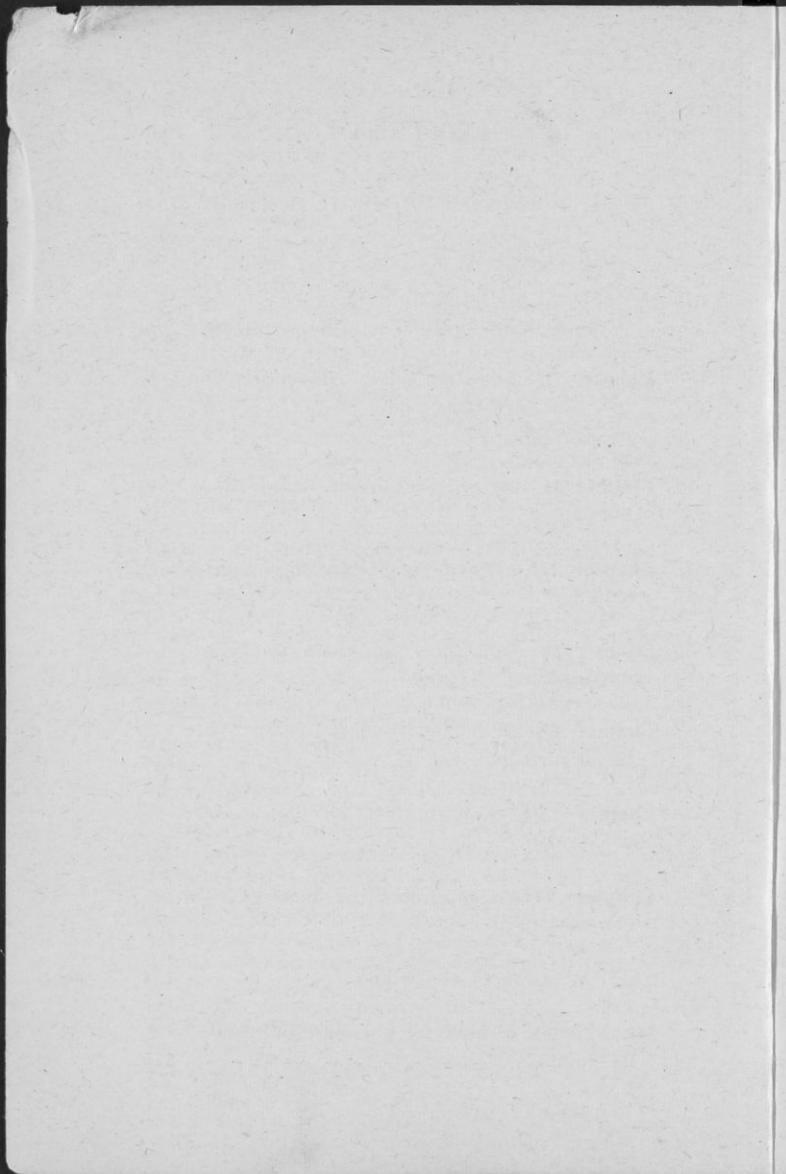
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## INTRODUCTION

Joseph Alleine, the author of the volume here offered to the public, was a native of England. He was born at Devizes, some eighty miles west of London, in 1634, and died Nov. 17, 1668, at Taunton, in Somersetshire. Already as a lad he had deep religious impressions. At times persons who accidentally came where he was, found him not alone engaged in prayer but so absorbed in his simple devotions, that he was not aware of their presence. When his eldest brother, a young minister of rare promise, died in the year 1645, Joseph implored his father, Tobie Alleine, a "tradesman of credit and renown," an humble and experienced Christian, a Puritan, that he might be educated to "succeed his brother in the work of the ministry." It was to be a troubled work in troublous days that Joseph Alleine undertook after his graduation from Oxford in 1653, and especially after he had served two years as chaplain of his college, (Corpus Christi), and had become assistant minister at Taunton.

That was during the period of bitter persecution in England, under the reign of King Charles II, when ministers were forced, at the pain of ejection out of their parishes, or, if persisting in preaching, at the pain of imprisonment, to "conform" to the government and rites of the Established Church of England, which Charles used as the tool of a tyrant, while he himself was a Romanist at heart, and a profligate in his life. That was the period during which John Bunyan was imprisoned for well nigh twelve long years, (1660-1672) in the Bedford county jail. Alleine, one of the 2000 ministers who were ejected because of their non-conformity, in loyalty to their Presbyterian principles, was imprisoned twice, because he continued to preach, and all the remaining years of his life were troubled by constant danger of arrest. Like the great Baptist preacher of Bedford, Alleine used his pen as well as his voice to testify for Christ and to plead for a living, experimental Christianity. He was a learned man, engaged at times in scientific study and experimentation. He also wrote an "Explanation of the Assembly's Shorter Catechism," published in 1665. But it was not through his scientific studies, nor even through his

larger book just named, that Alleine's name would live to this day. It was through the small work which at first was published as "An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners," (1671), and four years later under the title "The True Way to Happiness," the title under which it now appears anew. It might also be called "A Sure Guide to Heaven," for under such a name it was published in 1691.

The book evidently contains the substance of various sermons preached on the very important subject of **Conversion**. Thousands upon thousands of copies of the volume have been published in its original language, as well as in Welsh, German, Dutch and other tongues. It has been blessed unto the hearts of untold numbers of anxious inquirers after salvation, in the New World as well as in the Old. Ministers might well use it to enrich their sermons, on the important subject of conversion to God, a subject, alas, we fear, neglected by tens of thousands of nominal Christians, and omitted, we are afraid, from altogether too many pulpit discourses, but by our Lord Himself set forth as of supreme importance, for covenant people as well as for outsiders. Did He not utter in Matt. 18:3, the solemn and searching words: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven?" And again, in Luke 13:3: "I tell you, nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish?"

Convinced of the need of having a book like this placed into the hands of pastors and people everywhere, especially at the present time, when so little conviction of sin is manifest, the publisher of this present edition has laid it on the press, looking to God to bless its prayerful perusal unto many hearts, till sinners become alarmed about their sin and weepingly find their way to the Cross. Jer. 31:9.

The work he undertakes in this, is a labor of love, without any looking for financial remuneration. What he prayerfully hopes is that the Master whom he has served during many years, may accept it as an offering of his heart, and consecrate it to the increase of His blessed Kingdom. We trust he will not be disappointed in this expectation.

HENRY BEETS.

Grand Rapids, Mich., Nov. 1, 1926.





# THE TRUE WAY TO HAPPINESS,

## An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners

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### An earnest Invitation

Reader, I beseech you to allow friendly plainness and freedom with you in your deepest concernments. I am not playing the orator, to make a learned speech to you, nor dressing my dish with eloquence wherewith to please you. These lines are upon a weighty errand indeed, namely, to convince and convert, and to save you. I am not baiting my hook with rhetoric, nor fishing for your applause, but for your souls. My work is not to please you, but to save you: nor is my business with your fancies, but your hearts. If I have not your hearts, I have nothing. If I were to please your ears I could sing another song.

I want to speak to you about Conver-

sion, as the true way to happiness. Some of you may not know what I mean by Conversion, therefore, for your sakes, I shall show what this Conversion is. Others cherish secret hopes of mercy, though they continue as they are; and for them I must show the necessity of Conversion. Others are like to harden themselves with a vain conceit that they are converted already; unto them I must show the marks of the unconverted. Others, because they feel no harm, fear none, and so sleep upon the top of the mast; to them I shall show the miseries of the unconverted. Others sit still because they see not their way out; to them I shall show the means of Conversion. And finally, for the quickening of all, I shall close with the motives to Conversion.

## CHAPTER I.

SHOWING WHAT CONVERSION IS NOT, AND  
CORRECTING SOME MISTAKES ABOUT IT.

Let the blind Samaritans worship they know not what;\* let the Heathen Athenians superscribe their altar, Unto the

\* John iv. 22.



unknown God;\* they that know man's constitution, and the nature of the human soul's operation, cannot but know, that the understanding having the empire in the soul, he that will go rationally to work, must labour to let in the light here. Now, that I may cure the mistakes of some, who think they are converted when they are not, as well as remove the troubles and fears of others, who think they are not converted when they are; I shall show you the nature of conversion, both negatively, or what it is not; and positively, what it is.

We will begin with the negative.

1. It is not the taking upon us the profession of Christianity. Doubtless Christianity is more than a name. If we will hear Paul, it lies not in word, but in power.† If to cease to be Jews and Pagans, and to put on the Christian profession, had been true conversion, who better Christians than they of Sardis and Laodicea? These were all Christians by profession, and had a name to live; but because they had but a name, are condemned by Christ, and threatened to be spewed out.‡ Are there not many that mention the name of the Lord Jesus, and yet depart not from iniquity?§ and profess they know God, but in works they deny him?|| And will God receive these for true converts, because turned to the Christian religion? What!

\* Acts xvii. 23 † 1 Cor. iv. 20. ‡ Rev. in. 1. 16.  
§ 2 Tim. ii. 19. || Titus i. 16.

converts from sin, when yet they live in sin? It is a visible contradiction. Surely if the lamp of profession would have served the turn, the foolish virgins had never been shut out.\* We find not only professors, but preachers of Christ, and wonder-workers, turned off because evil-workers.†

2. It is not the being washed in the laver of regeneration, or putting on the badge of Christ in baptism. Many take the press-money, and wear the livery of Christ, that yet never stand to their colours, nor follow their leader. Ananias and Sapphira, and Simon Magus, were baptized as well as the rest.

Friends and brethren, be not deceived; God is not mocked.‡ Whether it be your baptism, or whatever else that you pretend, I tell you from the living God, that if any of you be prayerless persons, or unclean, or malicious, or covetous, or riotous, or a scoffer, or a lover of evil company,§ in a word, if you are not holy, strict, and self-denying Christians,|| you cannot be saved, except you be transformed by a further work upon you, and renewed again by repentance.

3. It lies not in moral righteousness. This exceeds not the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and therefore cannot bring us to the kingdom of God.¶ Paul,

\*Matt. xxv. 12.

† Matt. vii. 22, 23.

‡ Gal. vi. 7.

§ Prov. xiii. 20.

¶ Heb. xii. 14. Matt. xvi. 24. ¶ Matt. v. 20.

while unconverted, touching the righteousness which is in the law, was blameless.\* None could say, Black is thine eye. The self-justiciary could say, I am no extortioner, adulterer, unjust, etc.† Thou must have something more than all this to show or else, however thou mayest justify thyself, God will condemn thee. I condemn not morality, but warn you not to rest here; piety includes morality, as Christianity doth humanity, and grace reason; but we must not divide the tables.

4. It consists not in an external conformity to the rules of piety. It is too manifest men may have a form of godliness without the power.‡ Men may pray long,§ and fast often,|| and be very forward in the service of God, though costly and expensive,\*\* and yet be strangers to conversion: They must have more to plead for themselves, than that they keep their church, give alms, and make use of prayer, to prove themselves sound converts. No outward service but a hypocrite may do it, even to the giving all his goods to feed the poor, and his members to the fire.††

5. It lies not in the chaining up of corruption by education, human laws, or the farce of incumbent affliction. It is too common and easy to mistake education for grace; but if this were enough, who a

\* Phil. iii. 6.

† 2 Tim. iii. 5.

|| Luke xviii. 12.

\*\* Isaiah i. 11.

† Luke xviii. 11.

§ Matt. xxiii. 14.

|| Mark vi. 20.

†† 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

better man than Joash? While Jehoiada his uncle lived, he was very forward in God's service, and calls upon him to repair the house of the Lord;\* but here was nothing more than good education all this while; for when his good tutor was taken out of the way, he appears to have been but a wolf chained up, and falls away to idolatry.

6. In short it consists not in illumination or conviction, not in a superficial change or partial reformation. An apostate may be a man enlightened;† and a Felix tremble under conviction;‡ and a Herod amend many things.§ It is one thing to have sin alarmed only by convictions, and another to have it captivated and crucified by converting grace. Many, because they have been troubled in conscience for their sins, think well of their case, miserably mistaking conviction for conversion. With these, Cain might have passed for a convert, who ran up and down the world like a man distracted, under the rage of a guilty conscience, till with building and business he had worn it away.|| Others think, that because they have given over their riotous courses, and are broken off from evil company, or some particular lust, and reduced to sobriety and civility, they

\* 2 Kings xii. 2, 7.

§ Mark vi. 20.

† Heb. vi. 4.

‡ Acts xxiv. 21.

|| Gen. iv. 13, 14.

are now no other than real converts; forgetting that there is a vast difference between being sanctified and civilized; and that many seek to enter into the kingdom of heaven,\* and are not far from it,† and arrive to the almost of Christianity,‡ and yet fall short at last. Whilst conscience holds the whip over them, many pray, hear, read and forbear delightful sins; but no sooner is the lion asleep but they are at their vomit again. Who more religious than the Jews, when God's hand was upon them? yet no sooner was the affliction over, but they forgot God, and showed their religion to be a fit.§ Thou mayest have disgorged a troublesome sin, that will not sit easy on thy stomach, and have escaped those gross pollutions of the world, and yet not have changed thy swinish nature all the while.||

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

**Application.** Hear then, O sinners! hear

\* Luke xiii. 24.

† Mark xii. 34.

‡ Acts xxvi. 28.

§ Psal. lxxviii. 34—37.

¶ 2 Pet. ii. 20, 22.

|| Isa. lv. 3.



as you would live.¶ Why would you so willingly deceive yourselves, or build your hopes upon the sand? I know he shall find hard work of it, that goes to pluck away your hopes. It cannot but be ungrateful to you, and truly it is not pleasing to me. I set about it as a surgeon, when to cut off a putrefied member from his well-beloved friend, which of force he must do, though with an aching heart, a pityful eye, and a trembling hand. But understand me, brethren, I am only taking down the ruinous house, (which will otherwise speedily fall of itself, and bury you in the rubbish) that I may build it fair, firm, and strong forever. The hope of the hypocrite shall perish,\* if God be true to his word. And hadst thou not better, O sinner! let the word convince thee now in time, and let go thy false and self-deluding hopes, than have death, too late to open thine eyes, and find thyself in hell before thou art aware? I should be a false and faithless shepherd, if I should not tell you, that you, who have built your hopes upon no better grounds than these before mentioned, are yet in your sins. Let your conscience speak. What is it that you have to plead for yourselves? Is it that you wear Christ's livery? that you bear his name? that you are of the visible church? that you have knowledge in the points of religion, are civilized, per-

\* Prov. xi. 7.

form religious duties, are just in your dealings, have been troubled in conscience for your sins? I tell you from the Lord, these pleas will never be accepted at God's bar. All this, though good in itself, will not prove you converted, and so will not suffice to your salvation. O! look about you, and bethink yourselves of turning speedily and soundly. Set to praying and to reading, and studying your own hearts; rest not till God hath made thorough work with you, for ye must be other men, or else ye are lost men.

But if these be short of conversion, what shall I say of the profane sinner? It may be, he will scarce cast his eye, or lend his ear to this discourse; but if there be any such reading, or within hearing, he must know from the Lord that made him, that he is far from the Kingdom of God. May a man be civilized, and not converted? where then shall the drunkard and glutton appear? May a man keep company with the wise virgins, and yet be shut out? shall not a companion of fools much more be destroyed?\* May a man be true and just in his dealings, and yet not be justified of God, what then will become of thee. O wretched man! whose conscience tells thee thou art false in thy trade and false of thy word, and makest thy advantage by a lying tongue? If men may be enlightened, and brought to

\* Prov. xiii. 20.

the performance of holy duties, and yet go down to perdition for resting in them and sitting down on this side of conversion; what will become of you, O miserable families! that live without God in the world? and of you, O wretched sinners! with whom God is scarce in all your thoughts; that are so ignorant that you cannot, or so careless, that you will not pray? O repent and be converted; break off your sins by righteousness; away to Christ for pardoning and renewing grace; give up yourselves to him, to walk with him in holiness, or else you shall never see God. O that you would take the warnings of God! In his name I once more admonish you: Turn you at my reproof.\* Forsake the foolish, and live.† Be sober, righteous, godly.‡ Wash your hands, ye sinners; purify your hearts, ye double-minded.§ Cease to do evil; learn to do well.|| But if you will go on, you must die.¶

## CHAPTER II.

SHOWING POSITIVELY WHAT CONVERSION IS

I may not leave you with your eyes half open, as he that saw men as trees walking.\*\* The word is profitable for doctrine, as well as reproof.\* And therefore having thus far conducted you by the shelves and

\* 2 Tim. iii. 16.

\*\* Mark viii. 24.

¶ Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

\* Prov. i. 23 § James iv. 8.

‡ Tit. ii. 12. † Ibid. ix. 6.

|| Isa. i. 16, 17.

rocks of so many dangerous mistakes, I would guide you at length into the harbour of truth.

Conversion then, in short, lies in the thorough change both of the heart and life: I shall briefly describe it in its nature and causes.

1. The Author is the Spirit of God, and therefore it is called the sanctification of the Spirit,† and the renewing of the Holy Ghost;‡ yet not excluding the other persons in the Trinity: for the Apostle teacheth us to bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that he hath begotten us again;§ and Christ is said to give repentance unto Israel,|| and is called the everlasting Father,¶ and we his seed, and the children which God hath given him.\*\* O blessed birth! the whole Trinity fathers the new creature. Yet this work is principally ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and so we are said to be born of the Spirit.††

So then it is a work above man's power. We are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.‡‡ Never think thou canst convert thyself; if ever thou wouldest be savingly converted, thou must despair of doing it in thy own strength. It is a resurrection from the dead;§§ a new creation;\* a work of absolute Omnipotence.† Are these out of the

† Tit. iii. 5. † 2 Thess. ii. 13. || Acts v. 31.

§ 1 Pet. i. 3. \*\* Heb. ii. 13 Isa. liii. 10.

§§ Rev. xx. 5. Eph. ii. 1. ¶ Isa. ix. 6.

‡‡ John i. 13.

†† John iii. 8.

reach of human power? If thou hast no more than thou hadst by thy first birth, a good nature, a meek and chaste temper, &c., thou art a very stranger to true conversion. This is a supernatural work.

2. The moving cause is internal or external. The internal mover is only free grace. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he saved us, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.‡ Of his own will begat he us.§ We are chosen and called **unto** sanctification, not **for** it.|| How affectionately doth Peter lift up his hands! Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again.¶ How feelingly doth Paul magnify the free mercy of God in it! God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ: by grace ye are saved.\*\*

The external mover is the merit and in tercession of the blessed Jesus. He hath obtained gifts for the rebellious,†† and through him it is that God worketh in us what is well-pleasing in his sight.‡‡ Through him are all spiritual blessings bestowed upon us in heavenly things.\* He

\* Gal. vi. 15; Eph. ii. 10.† Eph. i. 19.

‡ Titus iii. 5.

§ James i. 18.

|| Eph. i. 4.

¶ 1 Pet. i. 3.

\*\* Eph. ii. 4, 5.

†† Psalm lxxviii. 18.

‡‡ Heb. xiii. 21.

intercedes for the elect that believe not. †  
 Every convert is the fruit of his travail. ‡  
 O never was infant born into the world  
 with that difficulty that Christ endured  
 for us! How emphatically he groaneth in  
 his travail! All the pains that he suffered  
 on his cross, they were our birthpains, §  
 the pulls and throes that Christ endured  
 for us. He is made sanctification to us. ||  
 He sanctified himself, (that is, set apart  
 himself as a sacrifice) that we may be  
 sanctified. ¶ We are sanctified through  
 the offering of his body once for all. \*\*

3. The instrument is either personal or  
 real. The personal is the ministry. I have  
 begotten you in Christ, through the gos-  
 pel. †† Christ's ministers are they that are  
 sent to open men's eyes, and to turn them  
 to God. ‡‡

The instrument real is the word. We  
 were begotten by the word of truth; this  
 is it that enlightens the eyes, that con-  
 verteth the soul; §§ that maketh wise to  
 salvation. |||| This is the incorruptible seed,  
 by which we are born again. ¶¶ If we are  
 washed, it is by the word. \*\*\* If we are  
 sanctified, it is through the truth. ††† This  
 generates faith, and regenerates us. ‡‡‡

O ye saints, how should you love the

\* Eph. i. 3. || 1 Cor. i. 30. †† 1 Cor. iv. 15.  
 ††† John xvii. 17. |||| 2 Tim. iii. 15. § Acts ii. 24.  
 ¶¶ 1 Pet. i. 23. ‡‡‡ Rom. x. 17. James i. 18.  
 ‡‡ Acts xxvi. 18. † John xvii. 20. ¶ John xvii. 19.  
 \*\* Heb. x. 10. §§ Psa. xix. 7, 8. \*\*\* Eph. v. 26.

word! for by this ye have been converted. O ye sinners, how should you ply the word! for by this you must be converted; no other ordinary means but this. You that have felt its renewing power, make much of it while you live; be forever thankful for it; tie it about your necks, write it upon your hands, lay it in your bosoms.\* When you go, let it lead you; when you sleep, let it keep you; when you wake, let it talk with you. Say with holy David, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me.†" You that are unconverted, read the word with diligence, flock to it where powerfully preached; fill the porches as the multitude of the impotent, blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.‡ Pray for the coming of the Spirit in the word. Come off thy knees to the sermon, and come to thy knees from the sermon. The seed doth not prosper, because not watered by prayers and tears, nor covered by meditation.

4. The final cause is man's salvation, and God's glory. We are chosen through sanctification to salvation;§ called, that we might be glorified;|| but especially that God might be glorified,¶ that we should show forth his praise,\*\* and be fruitful in good works.†† Oh Christian! do not forget the end of thy calling; let thy light shine,\*

\* Prov. vi. 21, 22.

† Psa. cxix. 93.

‡ John v. 3.

§ 2 Thess. ii. 13.

|| Rom. viii. 30.

¶ Isa. lx. 21.

\*\* 1 Pet. ii. 9.

†† Col. i. ..0.

let thy lamp burn, let thy fruits be good, and many, and in season,† let all thy designs fall in with God's, that he may be magnified in thee.‡

5. The subject is the elect sinner, and that in all his parts and powers, members and mind. Whom God predestinates them only he calls.§ None are drawn to Christ by their calling, nor come to him by believing, but his sheep, those whom the Father hath given him.|| Effectual calling runs parallel with eternal election.¶

Thou beginnest at the wrong end, if thou disputest first about thine election. Prove thy conversion, and then never doubt of thine election. Or canst thou not yet prove it? set upon a present and thorough turning. Whatever God's purposes be, (which are secret) I am sure his promises are plain. How desperately do rebels argue, If I am elected, I shall be saved, do what I will. If not, I shall be damned, do what I can. Perverse sinner, wilt thou begin where thou shouldest end? Is not the word before thee? What saith it? Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.\*\* If you mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live.†† Believe, and be saved.‡‡ What can be plainer? Do not stand still, disputing about thine election, but set to repenting and believing. Cry to God for converting grace. Revealed things

\* Matt. v. 16. || John vi. 37, 44. †† Acts xvi. 31.

† Phil. i. 10. †† Rom. viii. 13. § Rom. viii. 30.

‡ Psa. i. 3. \*\* Acts iii. 19. ¶ 2 Pet. i. 10.



belong to thee; in these busy thyself. 'Tis just (as one well said) that they that will not feed on the plain food of the word, should be choked with the bones. Whatever God's purposes be, I am sure his promises are true. Whatever the decrees of heaven be, I am sure, that if I repent and believe, I shall be saved; and that if I repent not, I shall be damned.

More particularly, this change of conversion passes throughout the whole subject. Conversion is no repairing of the old building; but it takes all down, and erects a new structure: it is not the putting in a patch, or sewing on a list of holiness, but, with the true convert, holiness is woven into all his powers, principles, and practice. The sincere Christian is quite a new fabric, from the foundation to the top stone all new. He is a new man,\* a new creature. All things are become new.† Conversion is a deep work, a heart-work;‡ it turns all upside down, and makes a man be in a new world. It goes throughout with men: throughout the mind, throughout the members, throughout the motions of the whole life.

1. Throughout the mind. It makes an universal change within. First, it turns the balance of the judgment, so that God and his glory do weigh down all carnal and worldly interest.§ It opens the eye of

\* Eph. iv. 24. Phil. i. 200. § Acts xx. 24.

‡ Acts ii. 37. Psa. lxxiii. 25. † 2 Cor. v. 17.

the mind, and makes the scales of its native ignorance to fall off, and turns men from darkness to light.\* The man that before saw no danger in his condition, now concludes himself lost, and for ever undone,† except renewed by the power of grace. He that formerly thought there was little hurt in sin, now comes to see it to be the chief of evils. He sees the unreasonableness, the unrighteousness, the deformity, and filthiness that is in sin; so that he is affrighted with it, loathes it, dreads it, flies it, and even abhors himself for it.‡

Now, according to this new light, the man is of another mind, another judgment than before he was: now God is all with him, he hath none in heaven or on earth like him.§ He prefers him truly before all the world; his favour is his life; the light of his countenance is more than corn, or wine and oil, the good that formerly he inquired after, and set his heart upon.|| This is the convert's voice; The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. Whom have I in heaven, but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.¶

Secondly, it turns the bias of the will, both as to means and end. 1. The intentions of the will are altered.\*\* Now the

\* Acts xxvi. 18. Eph. v. 8. 1 Pet. 2:9. † Acts ii. 37

¶ Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26. Lam. iii. 24. § Psal. lxxiii. 25.

\*\* Ezek. xxxvi. 26. Jer. xxxi. 33. Isaiah xxvi. 8, 9.

‡ Rom. vii. 15. Job xlii. 6. || Psal. iv. 6, 7.

man hath new ends and designs. Now he intends God above all, and desires and designs nothing in all the world so much, as that Christ may be magnified in him.\* He counts himself more happy in this, than in all that the earth could yield, that he may be serviceable to Christ, and bring him glory in his generation. This is the mark he aims at, that the name of Jesus may be great in the world; and that all the sheaves of his brethren may bow to Christ's sheaf.†

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

2. The election is also changed, so that he chooseth another way.‡ He pitcheth upon God as his blessedness, and upon Christ as the principal, and holiness, as the subordinate means to bring him to God.§ He chooseth Jesus for his Lord.|| He is not merely forced into Christ by the storm, nor doth he take Christ for bare necessity; but he deliberately resolves that Christ is his best choice;¶ and would rather have him to choose than all the good of this world, might he enjoy it while he would. Again, he takes holiness for his path; he doth not of mere necessity submit to it, but he likes and loves it. I have chosen the way of thy precepts. He takes God's testimonies, not as his bondage, but as his

\* Phil. i. 20. ‡ Psa. cxix. 15. † Gen. xxxvii. 7.

§ John xiv. 6. Rom. ii. 7. ¶ Phil. i. 23. || Col. ii. 6.

heritage, yea, heritage for ever.\*\* He counts them not his burthen, but his bliss, not his cords, but his cordials.\* He doth not only bear, but takes up Christ's yoke. He takes not holiness as the stomach doth the loathed potion, which it will down with rather than die, but as the hungry doth his beloved food. No time passeth so sweetly with him (when he is himself) as that he spends in the exercises of holiness; these are both his aliment, and element, the desire of his eyes, and the joy of his heart.† Put thy conscience to it as thou goest, whether thou art the man. O happy man, if this be thy case! But see thou be thorough and impartial in the search.

Thirdly, it turns the bent of the affections.‡ These run all in a new channel: the Jordan is driven back, and the water runs upward, against its natural course.

Christ is his hope,§ this is his prize;|| here his eye is, here his heart is. He is contented to cast all overboard (as the merchant in the storm ready to perish) so he may but keep this jewel.

The first of his desires is not after gold, but grace.|| He hungers after it, he seeks it as silver, he digs for it as for hid treasure; he had rather be gracious than be great; he had rather be the holiest man on

\* 1 John v. 3. Psal. cxix. 14, 16, 17.

† Job xxiii. 12. Psal. cxix. 82, 13., 162, 174, lxxiii. 5.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 11. § 1 Tim. i. 1. || Phil. iii. 3.

¶ Phil. iii. 12.

\*\* Psal. cxix. 1..1, 173.

earth, than the most learned, the most famous, the most prosperous. While carnal, he said, O! if I were but in great esteem, and rolled in wealth, and swimmèd in pleasure; if my debts were paid, and I and mine provided for, then I were a happy man. But now the tune is changed: O! saith the convert, if I had but my corruptions subdued, if I had such measures of grace, such fellowship with God, though I were poor and despised, I should not care, I should account myself a blessed man. Reader, is this the language of thy soul?

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

His cares are quite altered. He was once set for the world, and any scraps of by-time were enough for his soul. Now he gives over caring for the asses, and sets his heart on the kingdom: now all the cry is, "What shall I do to be saved?"† His great solicitude is how to secure his soul. O how he would bless you, if you could put him out of doubt of this!

His fears take another turn.‡ Once he was afraid of nothing so much as the loss of his estate or esteem, the pleasure of friends, or the frowns of the great; nothing sounded so terrible to him, as pain, or

\* Psa. cxix. 14. † Acts xv. 30. ‡ Heb. xi. 25, 26.

poverty, or disgrace: now these are little to him, in comparison of God's dishonour or displeasure. How warily doth he walk, lest he should tread upon a snare! He feareth always; he looks before and behind; he hath his eye upon his heart, and is often casting it over his shoulder, lest he should be overtaken with sin.\* It kills his heart to think of losing God's favour; this he dreads as his only undoing.† No thought in the world doth pinch him and pain him so much, as to think of parting with Christ.

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

His sorrows have now a new vent.§ The view of his sins, the sight of a Christ crucified, that would scarce stir him before,

\* Psa. xxxix. 1. Prov. xxviii. 14. Eccles. ii. 14.

† Psa. li. 11, 12 cxix. 8.

‡ Cant. v. 16.

§ 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10.

now how much do they affect his heart!

His hatred boils, his anger burns against sin.\* He hath no patience with himself; he calls himself fool, and thinks any name too good for himself, when his indignation is stirred up against sin.†

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

2. Throughout the members. Those that were before the instruments of sin, are now become the holy utensils of Christ's living temple.‡ The eye that was once a wandering eye, a wanton eye, a haughty and covetous eye, is now employed, as Mary's, in weeping over its sins,§ in be-

\* Psa. cxix. 104. †Psa. lxxiii. 22. Prov. xxx. 2.

‡ Rom. vi. 16. 1 Cor. iii. 16. § Luke vii. 38.

holding God in his works,|| in reading his word,¶ in looking up and down for objects of mercy, and opportunities for his service.

The ear that was once open to Satan's call, and that, like a vitiated palate, did relish nothing, so much as filthy, or at least frothy talk, and the fool's laughter, is now bored to the door of Christ's house, and open to his discipline: it saith, Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth; and waits for his words as the rain, and relisheth them more than the appointed food,\* than honey and the honeycomb.†

The head, that was the shop of worldly designs, is now filled with other matters, and set on the study of God's will.‡ The thoughts and cares that fill it, are principally how he may please God, and flee sin.

His heart, that was full of filthy lusts, is now become an altar of incense, where the fire of divine love is ever kept in; and whence the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise, and the sweet incense of holy desires, ejaculations, and aspirations, are continually ascending.§

The mouth is become a well of life, his tongue as choice silver, and his lips feed many. Now the salt of grace hath seasoned his speech, and eat out the corruption,|| and cleansed the mouth from its filthy communication, flattery, boasting,

|| Psa. viii. 3.

¶ Acts viii. 30.

\* Job xxiii. 12.

† Psa. xix. 10.

‡ Psa. i. 2. cxix. 97. cxxxix. 17, 18.

§ Psa. cvii. 1. cxix. 20.

|| Col. iv. 6.



lying, swearing, backbiting, that once came like flashes from the hell that was in the heart.\*

The throat, that was once an open sepulchre,† now sends forth the sweet breath of prayer and holy discourse, and the man speaks in another tongue, in the language of Canaan, and is never so well as when talking of God and Christ, and the matters of another world. His mouth bringeth forth wisdom, his tongue is become the silver trumpet of his Maker's praise, his glory, and the best members that he hath.

Now here you shall have the hypocrite halting. He speaks, it may be, like an angel, but he hath a covetous eye, or the gain of unrighteousness in his hand; or the hand is white, but his heart is full of rottenness;‡ full of unmortified cares, a very oven of lust, a shop of pride, the seat of malice. It may be, like Nebuchadnezzar's image, he hath a golden head, a great deal of knowledge; but he hath feet of clay, his affections are worldly, he minds earthly things, and his way and walk are sensual and carnal: you may trace him in his secret haunts, and his footsteps will be found in some bye-paths of sin; the work is not throughout with him.

3. Throughout the motions, or the life and practice. The new man takes a new course,§ his conversation is in heaven.|| No

\* James iii. 6, 7. † Rom. iii. 13. ‡ Matt. xxiii. 27.

§ Eph. ii. 2, 3. || Phil. iii. 20.

sooner doth Christ call by effectual grace, but he straightway becomes a follower of him.\* When God hath given the new heart, and written his law in his mind, he forthwith walks in his statutes, and keeps his judgments.†

Though sin may be in him, yet it hath no more dominion over him;‡ he hath his fruit unto holiness. And though he makes many a blot, yet the law of life and Jesus, is what he eyes as his copy;§ and he hath an unfeigned respect to all God's commandments, making conscience even of little sins and little duties.|| His very infirmities are his soul's burden, and are like the dust in a man's eye, which though but little, yet is not a little troublesome. (O man! dost thou read this, and never turn in upon thy soul by self-examination?) The sincere convert is not one man at church, and another at home; he is not a saint on his knees, and a cheat in his shop; he will not tithe mint and cummin, and neglect mercy and judgment, and the weightier matters of the law; he doth not pretend piety, and neglect morality,¶ but he turns from all his sins, and keeps all God's statutes,\*\* though not perfectly, except in desire and endeavour, yet sincerely; not allowing himself in the breach of any.†† Now he delights in the word, and sets himself to prayer, and

\* Matt. iv. 20.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27.

‡ Rom. vi. 7, 14, 22.

§ Psa. cxix. 30. Heb. xii. 2.

|| Psa. cxix. 113.

¶ Matt. xxiii. 14.

\*\* Ezek. xvii. 21.

†† Rom. vii. 15.

opens his hand, and draws out his soul to the hungry.\* He breaketh off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor,† and hath a good conscience, willing in all things to live honestly,‡ and to keep without offence towards God and man.

Here again you find the unsoundness of many professors, that take themselves for good Christians. They are partial in the law,§ and take up with the chief and easy duties of religion, but go not through with the work. They are as a cake not turned. It may be you shall have them exact in their words, punctual in their dealings, but then they do not exercise themselves, unto godliness; and for examining themselves, and governing their hearts, to this they are strangers. You may have them duly at church, but follow them to their families, and there you shall see little but the world minded; or if they have a road for family duties, follow them to their closets, and there you shall find their souls are little looked after. It may be they seem otherwise religious, but bridle not their tongues, and so all their religion is vain.|| It may be they come up to closet and family prayer; but follow them to their shops, and there you shall find them in a trade of lying, or some covert and cleanly way of deceit. Thus the hypocrite goes through-

\* Rom. vii. 22. Psa. cix. 4. Isa. lviii. 10.

† Daniel iv. 27.

‡ Heb. xiii. 18.

§ Mal. ii. 9.

|| James i. 26.

out in the course of his obedience.—And thus much for the subject of Conversion.

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

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

First, Sin. When a man is converted, he is forever out with sin; yea, with all sin.\* But most of all with his own sins, and especially with his bosom sin.† Sin is now the butt of his indignation;‡ he thirsts to bathe his hands in the blood of his sins. His sins set his sorrows abroach. It is sin that pierces him and wounds him; he feels it like a thorn in his side, like a prick in his eye; he groans and struggles under it, and not formally, but feelingly cries out, O wretched man! He is not impatient of any burden so much as of his sin.§ If God should give him his choice, he would choose any affliction, so he might be rid of sin: he feels it like the cutting gravel in his shoes, pricking and paining him as he goes.

Before conversion he had light thoughts of sin; he cherished it in his bosom, as Uriah his lamb; he nourished it up, and it grew up together with him; it did eat as it were of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. But when God opens his eyes by conversion, he throws it

\* Psa. cxix. 128.

† Psa. xviii. 23.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 11.

§ Psa. xl. 12.

away with abhorrence.\* When a man is savingly changed, he is not only deeply convinced of the danger, but defilement of sin; and O, how earnest is he with God to be purified! He loaths himself for his sins.† He runs to Christ, and casts himself into the fountain for sin and for uncleanness.‡

The sound convert is heartily engaged against sin; he struggles with it, he wars against it; he is too often foiled, but he will never yield the cause, nor lay down his weapons, but he will up and to it again, while he has breath in his body. He can forgive his other enemies, he can pity them, and pray for them;§ but here he is implacable, here he is set upon revenge; his eye shall not pity, his hand shall not spare, though it be a right hand or a right eye. Be it a gainful sin, most delightful to his nature, or support to his esteem with carnal friends, yet he will rather throw away his gain, see his credit fall, or the flower of pleasure wither in his hand, than he will allow himself in any known way of sin.|| He will grant no indulgence, he will give no toleration, he draws upon sin wherever he meets it, and frowns upon it with this unwelcome salute. Have I found thee, O mine enemy!

Reader, hath conscience been at work whilst thou hast been looking over these lines? Hast thou pondered these things in

\* Isa. xxx. 22.    † Ezek. xxxvi. 31.    ‡ Zech. xiii. 1.  
§ Acts vii. 60.    || Luke xix. 8.

thy heart? Hast thou searched the book within, to see if these things be so? If not, read it again, and make thy conscience speak, whether or no it be thus with thee.

Hast thou crucified thy flesh with its affections and lusts; and not only confessed, but forsaken thy sins—all sin in thy fervent desires, and the ordinary practice of every deliberate and wilful sin in thy life? If not, thou art yet unconverted.

Secondly, Satan. Conversion binds the strong man, spoils him of his armour, casts out his goods, and turns men from the power of satan unto God.\* Before, the devil could no sooner hold up his finger to the sinner to call him to his wicked company, sinful games, filthy delights, but presently he followed, like an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks; as a bird that hasteth to the prey, and knoweth not that it is for his life. But when he is converted, he serves another master, and takes quite another course;† he goes and comes at Christ's beck.‡ Satan may sometimes catch his foot in a trap, but he will no longer be a willing captive. He watches against the snares and baits of satan, and studies to be acquainted with his devices. He is very suspicious of his plots, and is very jealous in what comes athwart him, lest satan should have some design upon him. He wrestles against principalities and pow-

\* Acts xxvi. 8. † 1 Pet. iv. 4. ‡ Col. iii. 24.

ers;\* he entertains the messenger of satan as men do the messenger of death; he keeps his eye upon his enemy,† and watches in his duties, lest satan should put in his foot.

Thirdly, the world. Before a sound faith a man is overcome of the world; either he bows down to Mammon, or idolizes his reputation, or is a lover of pleasure, more than a lover of God.‡ Here is the root of man's misery by the fall; he is turned aside to the creature instead of God, and gives that esteem, confidence, and affection to the creature, that is due to God alone.§

But converting grace sets all in order again, and puts God on the throne, and the world at his footstool: || Christ in the heart, and the world under his feet. ¶ So Paul, I am crucified to the world, and the world to me.\*\* Before this change, all the cry was, Who will show us any worldly good? But now he sings another tune, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me, and let who will take the corn and wine. †† Before, his heart's delight and content was in the world: then the song was, Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry; thou hast much goods laid up for many years. But now all this is withered, and there is no comeliness that he should desire it; and he tunes up, with the sweet psalmist of

\* Eph. vi. 12. † 1 Pet. v. 8. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 4.

§ Rom. i. 25. Matt. x. 37. Prov. xviii. 11. Jer. xvii. 5.

¶ Psa. xxiii. 25. || Eph. iii. 17. Rev. xii. 1.

\*\* Gal. vi. 14. †† Psa. iv. 6, 7.

Israel, The Lord is the portion of my inheritance. The lines are fallen to me in a fair place, and I have a goodly heritage. He blesseth himself, and boasteth himself in God;\* nothing else can give him content. He has written vanity and vexation upon all his worldly enjoyments;† and loss and dung upon all human excellencies.‡ He hath life and immortality now in chase.§ He pursues grace and glory, and hath an incorruptible crown in pursuit.|| His heart is set in him to seek the Lord.¶ He first seeks the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof; and religion is no longer a matter by the bye with him, but the main of his care.\*\*

Well then, pause a little, and look within. Doth not this nearly concern thee? Thou pretendest for Christ, but doth not the world sway thee? Dost not thou take more real delight and content in the world, than in him? Dost thou not find thyself better at ease when the world goes to thy mind, and thou art encompassed with carnal delights, than when retired to prayer and meditation in the closet, or attending upon God's word and worship? No surer evidene of an unconverted state, than to have the things of the world uppermost in our aim, love, and estimation.††

\* Psa. xxxiv. 2. Lam. iii. 24. † Ecl. i. 2.

‡ Phil. iii. 7, 8. § Rom. ii. 7. || 1 Cor. ix. 25.

¶ 1 Chron. xxii. 19. 2 Chron. xv. 15.

\*\* Matt. vi. 33. Psa. xxvii. 4.

†† 1 John ii. 15. James iv. 4.



With the sound convert Christ hath the supremacy. How dear is his name to him! How precious is his saviour!\* The name of Jesus is engraven upon his heart,† and lies like a bundle of myrrh between his breasts‡ Honour is but air, and laughter is but madness, and Mammon is fallen, like Dagon before the ark, with hands and head broken off on the threshold, when once Christ is savingly revealed. Here is the pearl of great price to the true convert, here is his treasure, here is hope.§ This is his glory, My beloved is mine and I am his.|| O, it is sweeter to him to be able to say, Christ is mine, than if he could say, The kingdom is mine, the Indies are mine.

Fourthly, your own righteousness. Before conversion, man seeks to cover himself with his own fig-leaves,¶ and to make himself whole with his own duties.\*\* He is apt to trust in himself,†† and set up his own righteousness, and to reckon his counters for gold, and not submit to the righteousness of God.‡‡ But conversion changes his mind; now he casts away his own righteousness as a filthy rag.§§ Now he is brought to poverty of spirit,||| complains of and condemns himself;¶¶ and all his inventory is poor, and miserable and wretch-

\* Cant. i. 3. Psa. xlv. 8. † Gal. iv. 19.

‡ Cant. i. 13, 14. § Matt. xiii. 44, 45.

|| Gal. vi. 14. Cant. ii. 16. ¶ Phil. iii. 6, 7.

\*\* Mic. vi. 6, 7. †† Luke xvi. 15. xviii. 9.

‡‡ Rom. x. 3. §§ Isa. lxiv. 6. ||| Matt. v. 3.

¶¶ Rom. vii. \*\*\* Rev. iii. 17.

ed, and blind, and naked.\*\*\* He sees a world of iniquity in his holy things and calls his once idolized righteousness but filth and dross, and would not for a thousand worlds be found in himself.\* His finger is ever upon his sores,† his sins, his wants. Now he begins to set a high price upon Christ's righteousness; he sees the need of a Christ in every duty, to justify both his person and performances. He cannot live without him, he cannot pray without him. Christ must go with him, or else he cannot come into the presence of God; he leans upon the hand of Christ, and so bows himself in the house of his God; he sets himself down for a lost, undone man without him; his life is hid and grows in Christ, as the root of a tree spreads in the earth for stability and nutriment. Before, the news of Christ was a stale and sapless thing; but now, how sweet is Christ! The voice of the convert is, with the martyr, None but Christ.

The terms to which we turn are,

First, to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Secondly, to the laws, ordinances, and ways of Christ.

A man is never truly sanctified, till his very heart be in truth set upon God above all things, as his portion and chief good. These are the natural breathings of a believer's heart. Thou art my portion.‡ My

\* Phil. iii. 4, 7, 8, 9. † Psa. li. 3. ‡ Psa. cxix. 57.

soul shall make her boast in the Lord.\* My expectation is from him; he only is my rock and my salvation, he is my defence. In God is my salvation and glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God.†

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

Hast thou taken God for thy happiness? Where doth the content of thy heart lie? Whence doth thy choicest comfort come in? Come then, and with Abraham, lift up thine eyes eastward and westward, and northward, and cast about thee. What is it thou wouldst have in heaven, or on earth, to maké thee happy? If God should give thee thy choice, as he did to Solomon, or should say to thee, as Ahasuerus to Esther, What is thy petition, and what is thy request, and it shall be granted to thee?‡ what wouldst thou ask? Go into the gardens of pleasure, and gather all fragrant flowers from thence, would these content thee, Go to the treasures of Mammon, suppose thou mightest lade thyself as thou wouldst from thence. Go to the towers, to the trophies of honour; what thinkest thou of being a man of renown, and having a name like the name of the great men of the earth? Would any of these, would all these suffice thee, and make thee count thyself a happy man? If so, then certainly thou art carnal and un-

\* Psa. xxxiv. 2. † Psa. lxii. 1, 2, 5, 7. xviii. 1, 2.

‡ Esth. v. 3.

converted. If not, go farther; wade into the divine excellencies, the store of his mercies, the hiding of his power, the depths unfathomable of his all-sufficiency; doth this suit thee best and please thee most; dost thou say, It is good to be here? \* Here will I pitch, here will I live and die. Wilt thou let all the world go rather than this? Then it is well between God and thee. Happy art thou, O man, happy art thou that ever thou wast born; if a God can make thee happy, thou must needs be happy; for thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God. † Dost thou say to Christ, as he to us, Thy Father shall be my Father, and thy God be my God? ‡ Here is the turning point. An unsound professor never takes up his rest in God, but converting grace does the work, and so cures the fatal misery of the fall, by turning the heart from its idols to the living God. § Now, says the soul, Lord, whither shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. || Here he centres, here he settles: O, it is as the entrance of heaven to him to see his interest in God. When he discovers this, he saith, Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. ¶ And he is even ready to breathe out Simeon's song, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; \*\* and saith with Jacob, when his old heart

\* Matt. xvii. 4. † Deut. xxvi. 17. ‡ John xx. 17.

§ 1 Thess. i. 9. || John vi. 68. ¶ Ps. cxvi. 7.

\*\* Luke ii. 29.

revived at the welcome tidings, It is enough.\* When he seeth he hath a God in covenant to go to, this is all his salvation, and all his desire.†

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

The true convert turns to Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man.‡ His work is to bring us to God.§ He is the way to the Father,|| the only plank on which we may escape, the only door by which we may enter,¶ the only means of life, the only way, the only name given under heaven.\*\* He looks not for salvation in any other but him, nor in any other with him, but throws himself on Christ alone, as one that should cast himself with arms spread out upon the sea.

Here, saith the convinced sinner, I will venture; and if I perish, I perish; if I die, I will die here. But, Lord, suffer me not to perish under the pitiful eye of thy mercy.—Intreat me not to leave thee, or to turn away from following after thee.†† Here I will throw myself: if thou kick me, if thou kill me, I will not go from thy door.‡‡

Thus the poor soul doth venture on

\* Gen. xlv. 28. † 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. ‡ 1 Tim. ii. 5.  
 § 1 Pet. iii. 18. || John xiv. 6. ¶ John x. 9.  
 \*\* Acts iv. 12. †† Ruth i. 16. ‡‡ Job xiii. 15.

Christ and resolvedly adheres to him. Before conversion the man made light of Christ, minded his farm, friends, merchandise, more than Christ;\* now Christ is to him as his necessary food, his daily bread, the life of his heart, the staff of his life.† His great design is, that Christ may be magnified in him.‡ His heart once said, as they to the spouse, What is thy beloved more than another?§ He found more sweetness in his merry company, wicked games, and earthly delights, than in Christ. He took religion for a fancy, and the talk of great enjoyment for an idle dream; but now to him to live is Christ. He sets light by all that he accounted precious, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.||

All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert. He loves not only the wages, but the work of Christ;¶ not only the benefits, but the burden of Christ. He is willing not only to tread out the corn, but to draw under the yoke. He takes up the commands of Christ, yea, and the cross of Christ.\*\*

The unsound convert closeth only by halves with Christ. He is all for the salvation of Christ, but he is not for sanctification; he is for the privileges, but values not the person of Christ. He divides the offices and benefits of Christ. This is an

\*Matt. xxii. 5.

† Gal. ii. 20.

‡ Phil. i. 20.

§ Cant. v. 9.

|| Phil. iii. 8.

¶ Rom. vii. 12.

\*\* Matt. xi. 29. xvi. 24.

error in the foundation. Whoso loveth life, let him beware here; it is an undoing mistake, of which you have been often warned, and yet none more common. Jesus is a sweet name, but men love not the Lord Jesus in sincerity.\* They will not have him as God offers, to be a prince and a Savior.† They divide what God hath joined, the king and the priest. Yea, they will not accept the salvation of Christ as he intends it; they divide it here. Every man's vote, is for salvation from suffering; but they desire not to be saved from sinning. They would have their lives saved, but withal would have their lusts. Yea, many divide here again; they would be content to have some of their sins destroyed, but they cannot leave the lap of Delilah, or divorce the beloved Herodias; they cannot be cruel to the right eye or right hand; the Lord must pardon them in this thing.‡

O be infinitely tender here; your souls lie upon it. The sound convert takes a whole Christ, and takes him for all intents and purposes, without exceptions, without limitations, without reserves. He is willing to have Christ, upon his own terms, upon any terms. He is willing to bear the dominion of Christ, as well as have deliverance by Christ. He saith with Paul, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?§ Any thing, Lord. He sends a blank to Christ, to set down his conditions.||

\* Eph. vi. 24. † Acts v. 31. ‡ 2 Kings v. 18.  
§ Acts ix. 6. || Acts ii. 37. xvi. 30.

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

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

First, the judgment is brought to approve of them, and subscribe to them as most righteous and most reasonable.† The mind is brought to like the ways of God; and the corrupt prejudices that were once against them, as unreasonable and intolerable, are now removed. The understanding assents to them all, as holy, just, and good.‡ How is David taken up with the excellencies of God's laws! How doth he expatiate in their praise, both from their inherent qualities and admirable effects!§

Secondly, the desire of the heart is to know the whole mind of Christ.|| He would not have one sin undiscovered, nor be ignorant of one duty required. It is the natural and earnest breathing of a sanctified heart, Lord, if there be any way of wicked-

\* Psa. cxix 111,112. † Psa. cxix: 112, 128, 137, 138.

‡ Rom. vii. 12. § Psa. xix. 8—10, &c.

|| Psa. cxix. 124, 125, 169. xxv. 4, 5.



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

Thirdly, the free and resolved choice of the will is determined for the ways of Christ, before all the pleasures of sin, and prosperities of the world.|| His consent is not extorted by some extremity of anguish, nor is it only a sudden and hasty resolve, but he is deliberately purposed, and comes off freely to the choice.¶ True, the flesh will rebel, yet the prevailing part of his will is for Christ's law and government, so that he takes them not up as his toil or burden, but his bliss.\*\* While the unsanctified go in Christ's ways as in chains and fetters, he doth it naturally;†† and Counts Christ's laws his liberty.\* He

\* 2 Pet. iii.5.

† John iii. 20.

‡ Psa. cxix. 18, 19, 27, 33, 64, 68, 78, 108, 124.

§ Psa. cxix. 11. || Psa. cxix. 103, ..27, 162.

¶ Psa. xvii. 3. cxix. 30.

\*\* 1 John v. 3. Psa. cxix. 60, 72.

†† Psa. xl. 8. Jer. xxxi. 33.

is willing in the beauties of holiness,† and hath this inseparable mark. That he had rather (if he might have his choice) live a strict and holy life, than the most prosperous and flourishing life in the world. There went with Saul a band of men whose hearts God had touched.‡ When God toucheth the hearts of his chosen, they presently follow Christ,§ and (though drawn) do freely run after him,|| and willingly offer themselves to the service of the Lord, seeking him with their whole desire.¶ Fear hath its use; but this is not the main spring of motion with a sanctified heart. Christ keeps not his subjects in by force, but is King of a willing people. They are, through his grace, freely resolved for his service, and do it out of choice, not as slaves, but as the son or spouse, from a spring of love and a loyal mind. In a word, the laws of Christ are the convert's love, his desire, his delight, and continual study.\*\*

Fourthly, the bent of his course is directed to keep God's statutes.†† It is the daily care of his life to walk with God. He seeks great things, he hath noble designs, though he falls too short. He aims at nothing less than perfection; he desires it, he

\* Psal. cxix. 32, 45. James i. 25. † Psal. cx. 3.

‡ 1 Sam. x. 26. § Matt. iv. 22. || Cant. i. 4.

¶ 2 Chron. xvii. 16. xv. 15.

\*\* Psal. cxix. 159, 163, 167, 5, 20, 107, 77, 92, 103, 111, 143, 97, 99. i. 2.

†† Psal. cxix. 4 8, 167, 168.

reaches after it; he would not rest in any pitch of grace till he were quite rid of sin, and had perfected holiness.\*

Here the hypocrite's rottenness may be discovered. He desires holiness, as one well said, only as a bridge to heaven, and inquires earnestly what is the least that will serve his turn; and if he can get but so much as may bring him to heaven, this is all he cares for. But the sound convert desires holiness for holiness' sake,† and not only for heaven's sake. He would not be satisfied with as much as might save him from hell, but desires the highest pitch. Yet desires are not enough. What is thy way and thy course? Is the drift and scope of thy life altered? Is holiness thy trade, and religion thy business?‡ If not, thou art short of sound conversion.

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

Again: then be exhorted, O man, that readeest, to turn in upon thine own self. What saith conscience? Doth it not begin to bite? Doth it not pain thee as thou goest? Is this thy judgment, this thy choice, and this thy way, that we have de-

\* Phil. iii. 11—14

† Psa. cxix. 97. Matt. v 6

‡ Rom. viii. 1. Matt. xxv. 16. Phil. i. 20.

scribed? If so, then it is well. But doth not thy heart condemn thee, and tell thee, there is such a sin thou livest in, against thy conscience? Doth it not tell thee there is such and such a secret way of wickedness that thou art guilty of? such or such a duty that thou makest no conscience of?

Doth not conscience carry thee to thy closet, and tell thee how seldom prayer and reading is performed there? Doth it not lead thee to thy family, and show thee the charge of God, and the souls of thy children and servants that are neglected there? Doth not conscience carry thee to thy shop or thy trade, and tell thee of some mystery of iniquity there? Doth it not carry thee to thy places of entertainment, and remind thee of the company thou keepest there; the precious time thou mispendest there; the talents thou wastest there? Doth it not lead thee into thy secret chamber, and discover to thee things that are hid from the eyes of man, and known only to God and thyself?

O conscience! do thy duty. In the name of the living God, I command thee to discharge thy office. Lay hold upon this sinner, fall upon him, arrest him, apprehend him, undeceive him. What, wilt thou flatter and soothe him while he lives in his sins! Awake! O conscience; what meanest thou, O sleeper? What! Hast thou never a reproof in thy mouth? What! shall this soul die in his careless neglect of God and

eternity, and thou altogether hold thy peace? What! Shall he go on in his trespasses, and yet have peace? O rouse up thyself, and do thy work! Now let the preacher in thy bosom speak, cry aloud, and spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet. Let not the blood of his soul be required at thy hands.

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### CHAPTER III

#### OF THE NECESSITY OF CONVERSION

It may be you are ready to say, What meanest this stir? And you are apt to wonder why I follow you with such earnestness, still ringing one lesson in your ears, that you should repent and be converted.\* But I must say unto you as Ruth to Naomi, Intreat me not to leave you, nor to turn aside from following after you.† Were it a matter of indifferency, I would never make so much ado. Might you be saved as you are, I would gladly let you alone. But would you not have me solicitous for you, when I see you ready to perish? As the Lord liveth, before whom I am, I have not the least hopes to see one of your faces in heaven except you be converted. I utterly despair of your salvation, except you will be prevailed with

\* Acts iii. 19.

† Ruth i. 16.

to turn thoroughly, and give up yourselves to God in holiness and newness of life. Hath God said, Except you be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God;\* and yet do you wonder why your ministers do so plainly travail in birth with you. Think it not strange that I am earnest with you to follow after holiness, and long to see the image of God upon you. Never did any, nor shall any enter into heaven by any other way but this. The conversion described is not an high pitch of some taller Christians, but every soul that is saved passeth this universal change.

It was a passage of the noble Roman, when he was hasting with corn to the city in the famine, and the mariners were loath to set sail in foul weather, Our voyage is more necessary than our lives. What is that thou dost count necessary? Is thy bread necessary? Is thy breath necessary? Then thy conversion is much more necessary. Indeed, this is the one thing necessary. Thine estate is not necessary; thou mayest sell all for the pearl of great price, and yet be a gainer by the purchase.† Thy life is not necessary; thou mayest part with it for Christ to infinite advantage. Thine esteem is not necessary; thou mayest be reproached for the name of Christ, and yet be happy; yea, much more happy in reproach than in repute\* But thy conversion is necessary, thy damnation lies

\* John iii. 3.

† Matt. xiii. 46.

upon it. And is it not needful, in so important a case, to look about thee? On this one point depends thy making or marring to all eternity.

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

First, thy being is in vain. Is it not a pity that thou shouldst be good for nothing, an unprofitable burden of the earth, a wart or wen in the body of the universe? Thus thou art whilst unconverted; for thou canst not answer the end of thy being. Is it not for the divine pleasure that thou art and wast created?† Did he not make thee for himself.‡ Art thou a man, and hast thou reason? Why then bethink thyself why and whence thy being is. Behold God's workmanship in thy body, and ask thyself, to what end did God rear this fabric? Consider the noble faculties of thy heaven-born soul. To what end did God bestow these excellencies? To no other than that thou shouldst please thyself, and gratify thy senses? Did God send men, like the swallows, into the world, only to gather a few sticks and dirt, and build their nests, and breed up their young, and then away? The very heathens could see farther than this. Art thou so fearfully and wonderfully made,\* and dost thou not yet think with thyself, surely it was for

\* 1 Pet. iv. 14. Matt. v. 10, 11.

† Rev. iv. 11.

‡ Prov. xvi. 4.

some noble and high end?

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

First, To no purpose. Man unconverted is like a choice instrument that hath every string broken or out of tune. The Spirit of the living God must repair and tune it by the grace of regeneration, and sweetly move it by the power of actuating grace, or else thy prayers will be but howlings, and all thy services will make no music in the ears of the Most High.† All thy powers and faculties are so corrupt in their natural state, that except thou be purged from dead works, thou canst not serve the living God.‡

An unsanctified man cannot work the work of God. 1. He hath no skill in it; he is altogether as unskilful in the work, as in the word of righteousness.§ There are great mysteries as well in the practices as in the principles of godliness. Now the unregenerate know not the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven\* You may as well expect him that never learned the alphabet

\* Psa. cxxxix. 14.

† Eph. ii. 10. Phil. ii. 13. Hos. vii. 14. Isa. i. 15

‡ Heb. ix. 14. Titus i. 15.

§ Heb. v. 13.



to read, or look for good music on the lute, from one that never set his hand to an instrument, as that a natural man should do the Lord any pleasing service. He must first be taught of God † taught to pray, ‡ taught to profit, § taught to go, || or else he will be utterly at a loss. 2. He hath no strength for it. How weak is his heart! ¶ He is presently tired. The Sabbath, what a weariness is it! \*\* He is without strength, †† yea, dead in sins. ‡‡

3. He hath no mind to it. He desires not the knowledge of God's ways. §§ He doth not know them; he doth not care to know them. |||| He knows not, neither will he understand. 4. He hath neither due instruments, nor materials for it. A man may as well hew marble without tools, or paint without colours or instruments, or build without materials, as perform any acceptable service without the graces of the Spirit, which are both the materials and instruments in this work. Almsgiving is not a service of God, but of vain glory, if not held forth by the hand of Divine love. What is the prayer of the lips, without grace in the heart, but the carcase without the life? What are all our confessions, unless they be exercises of godly sorrow and unfeigned repentance? What our petitions unless animated all along

\* Matt. xiii. 11.    1 Tim. iii. 16.    † John vi. 45.  
 ‡ Luke xi. 1.        § Isa. xlvi. 17    || Hosea xi. 3.  
 ¶ Ezek. xvi. 30.    \*\* Mal. i. 13.    †† Rom. v. 6.  
 ‡‡ Eph. ii. 5.        §§ Job xxi. 14.    ||| Psa. lxxxii. 5.

with holy desires, and faith in the Divine attributes and promises? What our praises and thanksgivings, unless from the love of God and a holy gratitude, and sense of God's mercies in the heart? So that a man may as well expect the tree should speak, or look for logic from the brutes, or motion from the dead, as for any service holy and acceptable to God, from the unconverted. When the tree is evil, how can the fruit be good?\*

Secondly, to bad purpose. The unconverted soul is a very cage of unclean birds;† a sepulchre full of corruption and rottenness;‡ a loathsome carcass, full of crawling worms, and sending forth a hellish and most noisome savour in the nostrils of God.§ O dreadful case! Dost thou not yet see a change to be needful? Would it not have grieved one to see the golden consecrated vessels of God's temple turned into quaffing bowls of drunkenness, and polluted with idol service?|| Was it such an abomination to the Jews, when Antiochus set up a picture of a swine at the entrance of the temple? How much more abominable then it would have been to have had the very temple itself turned into a stable or a sty, and to have had the Holy of Holies served like the house of Baal, and to have been turned into a draught-house?¶ This is the very case of

\*Matt. vii. 18. † Rev. xviii. 2. ‡ Matt. xxiii. 27.  
§ Psa. xiv. 3. || Dan. v. 2, 3. ¶ 2 Kings x. 27.

the unregenerate. All thy members are turned into instruments of unrighteousness,\* servants of Satan, and thy inmost powers into receptacles of uncleanness.† You may see the goodly guests within by what comes out; for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, etc., these discover what a hell there is within. O abuse insufferable to see a heaven-born soul abased to the filthiest drudgery! To see the glory of God's creation, the chief of the works of God, the Lord of the universe, lapping with the prodigal at the trough, or licking up with greediness the most loathsome vomit! Was it such a lamentation, to see those that did feed delicately, sit desolate in the streets; and the precious sons of Sion, comparable to fine gold, esteemed but as earthen pitchers, and those that were clothed in scarlet embrace dunghills?‡ and is it not much more fearful to see the only thing that hath immortality in this lower world, and carries the stamp of God, become a vessel wherein there is no pleasures?§ (which is but a modest expression of the vessel men put to the most sordid use!) O indignity intolerable! Better thou wert dashed in a thousand pieces, than continue to be abased to so filthy a service.

Secondly, not only man, but the whole

\* Rom. vi. 19.

† Eph. ii. 2. Titus i. 15.

‡ Lam. iv. 2. 5.

§ Jer. xxii. 28.

visible creation is in vain, without this. Beloved, God hath made all visible creatures in heaven and earth for the service of man and man only is the spokesman for all the rest, Man is in the universe, like the tongue to the body, which speaks for all the members. The other creatures cannot praise their Maker, but by dumb signs and hints to man that he should speak for them. Man is as it were the high priest of God's creation, to offer the sacrifice of praise for all his fellow-creatures. The Lord God expecteth a tribute of praise from all his works;\* now all the rest do bring in their tribute to man, and pay it by his hand. So then if man be false, and faithless, and selfish, God is wronged of all, and shall have no active glory from his works.

O dreadful thought to think it! that God should build such a world as this, and lay out such infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness thereupon, and all in vain; and that man should be guilty at last of robbing and spoiling him of the glory of all. O think of this! While thou art unconverted all the offices of the creatures to thee are in vain; thy meat nourishes thee in vain, the sun holds forth his light to thee in vain, the stars that serve thee in their courses by their powerful, though hidden influence,† do it in vain. Thy beast carries thee in vain. In a word, the un-

\* Psa. ciii. 22. † Judges v. 20. Hosea ii. 21, 22.

wearied labour, and continued travail of the whole creation, as to thee, is in vain. The service of all the creatures that drudge for thee, and yield forth their strength unto thee, that therewith thou shouldst serve their Maker, is all but lost labour. Hence the whole creation groaneth under the abuse of this unsanctified world,\* that perverts them to the service of their lusts, quite contrary to the very end of their being.

Thirdly, without this thy religion is vain.† All thy religious performances will be but lost, for they can neither please God,‡ nor save thy soul,§ which are the very ends of religion. Be thy services never so specious, yet God hath no pleasure in them.|| Is not that man's case dreadful, whose sacrifices are as murders, and whose prayers are a breath of abomination?¶ Many under convictions think they will set upon mending, and that a few prayers and alms will salve all again; but alas! sirs, while your hearts remain unsanctified, your duties will not pass. How punctual was Jehu, and yet all was rejected, because his heart was not upright.\*\* How blameless was Paul! and yet being unconverted, all was but loss.†† Men think they do much in attending God's service, and

\* Rom. viii. 22. † James i. 26. ‡ Rom. viii. 8.

§ 1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3. || Isa. i. 14. Mal. i. 10.

¶ Isa. lxvi. 3. Prov. xxviii. 9.

\*\* 2 Kings x. with Hosea i. 4.

†† Phil. iii. 6, 7

‡‡ Isa. lviii. 3 Matt. vii. 22.

are ready to twit him with it,†† and set him down so much their debtor; whereas their persons being unsanctified, their duties cannot be accepted.

O soul! do not think when thy sins pursue thee, a little praying and reforming thy course will pacify God. Thou must begin with thy heart; if that be not renewed, thou canst not please God.

God threatens it as the greatest of temporal judgments, that they should build and not inhabit, plant and not gather; that their labours should be eaten up by strangers.\* Is it so great a misery to lose our common labours, to sow in vain, and build in vain? how much more to lose our pains in religion, to pray, and hear, and fast in vain? This is an undoing and eternal loss. Be not deceived! if thou goest on in thy sinful state, though thou shouldst spread forth thine hands, God will hide his eyes; though thou make many prayers, he will not hear.† If a man without skill set about our work, and mar it in the doing, though he take much pains, we give him but little thanks. God will be worshipped after the due order.‡ If a servant do our work, but contrary to our order, he will have rather stripes than praise. God's work must be done according to God's mind, or he will not be pleased; and this cannot be, except it be done with a holy heart.§

\* Deut. xxviii. 30, 38, 39, 41.

† Isa. i. 15.

‡ 1 Chron. xv. 13.

§ 2 Chron. xxv. 2.

|| Job viii. 12, 13.

¶ Jer. ii. 37.

Fourthly, without this thy hopes are in vain.|| The Lord hath rejected thy confidence.¶

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

O wretched man! that can have no ease in this case but what comes from the deadliness of thy disease. You shall have the poor sick man saying in his lightness, I am well; when you see death in his face, he will needs up and about his business, when the very next step is like to be in his grave. The unsanctified often see nothing amiss; they think themselves whole, and cry not out for a physician; but this shows

\* Isa. lix 8.      † Acts ix. 31.      ‡ Psalm lxxxv. 8.

§ Isa. i. 5.      || Lev. xiii. 44.      ¶ 1 Kings viii. 38.

\*\* Psalm li. 8.      †† 1 Tim. vi. 10.

the danger of their case.

Sin doth naturally breed distempers and disturbances in the soul. What a continual tempest and commotion is there in a discontented mind! What an eating evil is inordinate care! What is passion, but a fever in the mind? What is lust, but a fire in the bones? What is pride but a deadly tympany? Or Covetousness, but an insatiable and insufferable thirst? Or malice and envy, but venom in the very heart? Spiritual sloth is but a scurvy in the mind; and carnal security a mortal lethargy: and how can that soul have true comfort that labours under so many diseases? But converting grace cures, and so eases the mind; prepares the soul for a settled, standing, immortal peace. Great peace have they that love thy commandments, and nothing shall offend them;\* they are the ways of wisdom that afford pleasures and peace.† David had infinitely more pleasure in the word, than in all the delights of his court.‡ The conscience cannot be truly pacified till soundly purified.§ Cursed is that peace that is maintained in a way of sin.|| Two sorts of peace are more to be dreaded than all the troubles in the world, peace with sin, and peace in sin.

Secondly, thy hopes of salvation hereafter are in vain, yea worse than in vain; they are most injurious to God, most

\* Psa. cxix. 165.

† Prov. iii. 17.

‡ Psa. cxix. 103, 127.

§ Heb. x. 22.

|| Deut. xxix. 19. 20.



pernicious to thyself. There is death, desperation, blasphemy in the bowels of this hope. 1. There is death in it. Thy confidence shall be rooted out of thy tabernacle. God will up with it root and branch; it shall bring thee to the king of terrors.\* Though thou mayest lean upon this house, it will not stand,† but will prove like a ruinous building, which, when a man trusts to, falls down about his ears. 2. There is desperation in it. Where is the hope of the hypocrite, when God takes away his soul?‡ then there is an end for ever of his hope. Indeed the hope of the righteous hath an end, but then it is not a destructive but a perfective end; his hope ends in fruition, others' in frustration.§ The godly must say at death, It is finished; but the wicked, It is perished; and in too earnest bemoan himself, as Job in a mistake; Where is now my hope? He hath destroyed me; I am gone, and my hope is removed like a tree.|| The righteous hath hope in his death.¶ When nature is dying, his hopes are living; when his body is languishing, his hopes are flourishing; his hope is a living hope;\*\* but the others' is a dying, a damning, soul-undoing hope. When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish, and the hope of unjust men perisheth.†† It shall be cut off,

\* Job xviii. 14.      † Job viii. 15.      ‡ Job xxvii. 8.  
 § Prov. x. 28.      || Job xix. 10.      ¶ Prov. xiv. 32.  
 \*\* 1 Pet. i. 3.      †† Prov. xi. 7.

and prove like the spider's web,\* which he spins out of his own bowels; but then comes death with the broom, and takes down all, and so there is an eternal end of his confidence wherein he trusted. For the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and their hope shall be as the giving up the ghost.† Wicked men are fixed in their carnal hope, and will not be beaten out of it; they hold it fast, they will not let it go. Yea, but death will knock off their fingers; though we cannot undeceive them, death and judgment will. When death strikes his dart through thy liver, it will pierce thy soul and thy hopes together. The unsanctified have hope only in this life;‡ and therefore, are of all men most miserable. When death comes, it lets them out into the amazing gulf of endless desperation. 3. There is blasphemy in it. To hope we shall be saved, though we continue unconverted, is to hope we shall prove God a liar. He hath told you, that merciful and pitiful as he is, he will never save you notwithstanding, if you go on in ignorance, or a course of unrighteousness.§ In a word, he hath told you, that whatever you be or do, nothing shall avail you to salvation, unless you become new creatures.|| Now, to say God is merciful, and we hope will save us nevertheless, is in effect to say, We hope God will not do as he

\* Job viii. 14.

† Job xi. 20.

‡ 1 Cor. xv. 19.

§ Isa. xxvii. 11. 1 Cor. vi. 9.

|| Gal. vi. 19.

says. We must not set God's attributes at variance; God is resolved to glorify his mercy, but not to the prejudice of his truth, as the presumptuous sinner will find to his everlasting sorrow.

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

Answer, 1. This is not to hope in Christ, but **against** Christ. To hope to see the kingdom of God without being born again, to hope to find eternal life in the broad way, is to hope Christ will prove a false prophet. It is David's plea, I hope in thy word;\* but this hope is against the word. Show me a word of Christ for thy hope, that he will save thee in thy ignorance or profane neglect of his service, and I will never go to shake thy confidence.

2. God doth with abhorrence reject this hope. Those condemned in the prophet went on in their sins, Yet, saith the text, they will lean upon the Lord.† God will not endure to be made a prop to men in their sins. The Lord rejected those presumptuous sinners that went on still in their trespasses, and yet would stay themselves upon Israel's God,‡ as a man would shake off the briers (as one said well) that cleave to his garment.

3. If thy hope be any thing worth, it will purify thee from thy sins;§ but cursed

\*Psa. cxix. 81.

† Isa. xlvi. 1, 2,

‡ Mic. iii. 11.

§ 1 John iii. 3.

is that hope that cherisheth men in their sins.

Objection. Would you have us to despair?

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

Fifthly, without this, all that Christ hath done and suffered will be, as to you, in vain;† that is, it will no way avail to your salvation. Many urge this as a sufficient ground for their hopes, that Christ died for sinners. But I must tell you, Christ never died to save impenitent and unconverted sinners, so continuing.‡ A great divine was wont, in his private dealings with souls, to ask two questions; 1st. What hath Christ done for you? 2d. What hath Christ wrought in you? Without the application of the Spirit in regeneration we can have no saving interest in the benefits of redemption. I tell you from the Lord, Christ himself cannot save you, if you go on in this state.

I. It were against his trust. The Mediator is the servant of the Father;§ shows

‡ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

§ Isa. xlii. 1.

|| John x. 18, 36. vi. 38. 40.

\* Acts ii. 37.

† John xiii. 8. Titius ii. 14.

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

First, to overturn all his counsels, of which this is the order, that men should be brought through sanctification to salvation.‡ He hath chosen them, that they should be holy.§ They are elected to pardon and life through sanctification.|| if thou canst repeal the law of God's immutable counsel, or corrupt him whom the Father hath sealed, to go directly against his commission, then, and not otherwise, mayest thou get to heaven in this condition. To hope that Christ will save thee while unconverted, is to hope that Christ will falsify his trust. He never did nor will save one soul, but whom the Father hath given him in election, and drawn to him in effectual calling. Be assured. Christ will save none in a way contrary to his Father's will.¶

\* Matt. xi. 27. John xvii. 2. † John xvii. 4, 6, 12.

‡ 2 Thess. ii. 13. § Eph. i. 4. || 1 Pet. i. 2.

¶ John vi. 35, 37, 38.

Secondly, to offer violence to all his attributes. 1. To his justice: for the righteousness of God's judgment lies in rendering to all according to their works.†† Now should men sow to the flesh, and yet of the Spirit reap everlasting life;\* where were the glory of Divine justice, since it should be given to the wicked according to the work of the righteous? 2. To his holiness. If God should not only save sinners, but save them in their sins, his most pure and strict holiness would be exceedingly defaced. The unsanctified man is in the eyes of God's holiness worse than a swine or viper.‡ It would be offering the extremest violence to the infinite purity of the Divine nature to have such to dwell with him; they cannot stand in his judgment, they cannot abide in his presence.‡ If holy David would not endure such in his house, no, nor in his sight;§ can we think God will? 3. To his veracity: for God hath declared from heaven, that if any shall say he shall have peace, though he go on in the imagination of his heart, his wrath shall smoke against that man;|| that they (only) that confess and forsake their sins shall find mercy;¶ that they that shall enter into his hill, must be of clean hands and a pure heart.\*\* Where were God's truth, if, notwithstanding all this, he

\* Gal. vi. 7, 8.

† Matt. xii. 34. 2 Pet. ii. 22.

‡ Psal. i. 5. v. 4, 5.

§ Psal. ci. 33, 7.

|| Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

¶ Prov. xxviii. 13.

\*\* Psal. xxiv. 3, 4.

†† Rom. ii. 5, 6.

should bring men to salvation without conversion? O desperate sinner, that darest to hope that Christ will lie to his Father, and falsify his word to save thee. 4. To his wisdom: for this were to throw away the choicest mercies on them who would not value them, nor were any way suited to them.

First, they would not value them. The unsanctified sinner puts but little price upon God's great salvation.\* He sets no more by Christ than the whole by the physician;† he prizes not his balm, values not his cure, tramples upon his blood.‡ Now would it stand with wisdom to force pardon and life upon those who would give no thanks for them? Would the all-wise God (when he hath forbidden us to do it) throw his holy things to dogs, and his pearls to swine, that would, as it were, but turn again and rend him;§ this would make mercy to be despised indeed. Wisdom requires that eternal life be given in a way suitable to God's honour, and that God should secure his own glory as well as man's felicity. God would lose the praise and glory of his grace, if he should cast it away on them that were not only unworthy but unwilling.

Secondly, they are no way suited to them. The Divine wisdom is seen in suiting things to each other; the means to the end; the object to the faculty; the quality

\* Matt. xxii. 5.

‡ Heb. x. 29

† Matt. ix. 12.

§ Matt. vii. 6.

of the gift to the capacity of the receiver. Alas, what would an unsanctified creature do in heaven? He could take no content there, because nothing suits him. The place doth not suit him, he would be quite out of his element; the company doth not suit him. What communion hath darkness with light, corruption with perfection, filth and rottenness with glory and immortality? The employment doth not suit him; the anthems of Heaven fit not for his mouth, please not his ear. Canst thou charm thy beast with music? Or wilt thou bring him to thy organ, and expect that he should make thee melody, or keep time with the tuneful choir? Spread thy table with delicates before a languishing patient and it will give him great offence. Alas! if the poor man thinks a sermon long, and says of a Sabbath, What a weariness is it!\* how miserable would he think it, to be held to it to all eternity?

5. To his immutability, or else to his omniscience or omnipotence. For this is enacted in the conclave of heaven, and enrolled in the decrees of the court above, none but the pure in heart shall ever see God.† This is laid up with him, and sealed among his treasures. Now, if Christ bring yet any to heaven unconverted, either he must get them in without his Father's knowledge, (and then where is his omniscience?) or against his will, (and then where were his omnipotence,) or he must

\* Mal. i. 13.

† Matt. v. 8.



change his will, (and then where were his immutability?)

Sinner, wilt thou not give up thy vain hope of being saved in this condition? saith Bildad, Shall the earth be forsaken for thee? Or the rocks moved out of their place.\* May I not much more reason so with thee? Shall the laws of Heaven be reversed for thee? Shall the everlasting foundations be overturned for thee? Shall Christ put out the eye of his Father's omniscience, or shorten the arm of his eternal power for thee? Shall Divine justice be violated for thee? Or the brightness of the glory of his holiness be blemished for thee? O the impossibility, absurdity, and blasphemy that is in such a confidence. To think Christ will ever save thee in this condition, is to make thy Saviour to become a sinner, and to do more wrong to the Infinite Majesty than all the wicked on earth, or devils in hell ever did, or could do. And yet wilt thou not give up such a blasphemous hope?

II. Against his word. We need not say, who shall ascend into heaven, to bring down Christ from above? Or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from beneath? The word is nigh us.† Are you agreed that Christ shall end the controversy? Hear then his own words. Except you be converted, you shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven.‡ You

\* Job xviii. 4. † Rom. x. 6, 7, 8.

‡ Matt. xviii. 3.

must be born again.§ If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me.|| Repent, or perish.|| One word, one would think, were enough from Christ; but how often and earnestly doth he reiterate it. Verily, verily, except a man be born again he shall not see the kingdom of God.\* Yea, he doth not only assert, but prove the necessity of the new birth;† without which man is no more fit for the kingdom of heaven, than a beast is for the king's presence chamber. And wilt thou believe thy own presumptuous confidence, directly against Christ's words? He must go quite against the law of his kingdom and rule of his judgment, to save thee in this state.

III. Against his oath. He hath lifted up his hand to heaven, he hath sworn that those that remain in unbelief, and know not his ways, that is, are ignorant of them, or disobedient to them, shall not enter into his rest.‡ And wilt thou not yet believe, O sinner! that he is in earnest? Canst thou hope he will be forsworn for thee? The covenant of grace is confirmed by an oath, and sealed by blood;§ but all must be made void, and another way to heaven found out, if thou be saved living and dying un sanctified. Men cannot be saved while unconverted, except they could get another covenant made.

§ John iii. 7. || John xiii. 8. ¶ Luke xiii. 3.

\* John iii. 3, 5.

† John iii. 6.

‡ Psalm xcvi. 11. Heb. iii. 11.

§ Heb. vi. 17. ix. 16, 18, 19. Matt. xxvi. 28.

IV. Against his honour. God will so show his love to the sinner, as withal to show his hatred to sin; therefore, he that names the name of Jesus must depart from iniquity,\* and deny all ungodliness. And he that hath hope of life by Christ, must purify himself as he is pure;† otherwise Christ would be thought a favourer of sin. The Lord Jesus would have all the world to know, that though he pardons sin, he will not protect it. If holy David shall say, Depart from me all ye workers of iniquity,‡ and shall shut the doors against them;§ shall not such much more expect it from Christ's holiness? Would it be for his honour to have the dogs to the table, or lodge the swine with his children, or to have Abraham's bosom to be a nest of vipers?

V. Against his offices. God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour.|| He would act against both, should he save men in their sins. It is the office of a king, to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well.¶ He is a minister of God, a revenger, to execute wrath on him that doth evil. Now, should Christ favour the ungodly, (so continuing) and take those to reign with him that would not that he should reign over them,\*\* this would be quite against his office. He therefore reigns, that he may put his enemies

\* 2 Tim. ii. 19. † 1 John iii. 3. Tit. ii. 12.  
 ‡ Psalm vi. 8. § Psalm ci. 7. || Acts v. 31.  
 ¶ Rom. xiii. 3, 4. \*\* Luke xix. 27.

under his feet.†† Now, should he lay them in his bosom, he would cross the end of his regal power. It belongs to Christ, as a king to subdue the hearts and slay the lusts of his chosen.\* What king would take rebels in open hostility into his court? What were this but to betray life, kingdom, government, and all together? If Christ be a king, he must have honour, homage, subjection, &c.† Now to save men while in their natural enmity, were to obscure his dignity, lose his authority, bring contempt on his government, and sell his dear bought rights for nought.

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

Application. Arise then. What meanest thou, O sleeper? Awake, O secure sinner,

\* Psā. xlv. 5. cx. 3. † Mal. i. 6. ‡ Matt. i. 21.

§ Rom. xi. 26.

|| Acts iii. 26. ¶ Dan. ix. 24.

†† 1 Cor. xv. 24.

lest thou be consumed in thine iniquities say as the lepers, If we sit here we shall die.\*\* Verily, it is not more certain that thou art now out of hell, than that thou shalt speedily be in it, except thou repent, and be converted; there is but this one door for thee to escape by. Arise then, O sluggard! and shake off thine excuses. How long wilt thou slumber, and fold thy hands to sleep.\* Wilt thou lie down in the midst of the sea, or sleep on the top of the mast.† There is no remedy, but thou must either turn or burn. There is an unchangeable necessity of the change of thy condition, except thou art resolved to abide the worst of it, and try it out with the Almighty. If thou lovest thy life, O man, arise and come away. Methinks I see the Lord Jesus laying the merciful hands of an holy violence upon thee; methinks he carries it like the angels to Lot.‡ Then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, lest thou be consumed. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, the Lord being merciful unto him, and they brought him without the city, and said, Escape for thy life stay not in all the plains, escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed.

O, how wilful will thy destruction be, if thou shouldst yet harden thyself in thy sinful state? But none of you can say but you have had fair warning. Yet, methinks, I cannot tell how to leave you so. It is not

\* Prov. vi. 10, 11. † Prov. xxiii. 34. ‡ Gen. xix. 15.

\*\* 2 Kings vii. 3, 4.

enough for me to have delivered my own soul. What! shall I go away without my errand? Will none of you arise and follow me? Have I been all this while speaking to the wind, have I been charming the deaf adder, or allaying the troubled ocean with arguments? Do I speak to the trees or rocks, or to men? To the tombs and monuments of the dead, or to a living auditory? If you be men, and not senseless stocks, stand still and consider whither you are going. If you have the reason and understanding of men, dare not to run into the flames, and fall into hell with your eyes open, but bethink yourselves, and set to the work of repentance. What! men, and yet run into the pit, when the very beasts will not be forced in! What! endowed with reason, and yet dally with death and hell, and the vengeance of the Almighty! Are men herein distinguished from the very brutes, that they have no foresight of and care to provide for the things to come? And will you not hasten your escape from eternal torments? O! show yourselves men, and let reason prevail with you. Is it a reasonable thing for you to contend against the Lord your Maker!\* or to harden yourselves against his word;† as though the strength of Israel would he?‡ Is it reasonable that an understanding creature should lose, yea live quite against the very end of his being, and be as a broken pitcher,

\* Isa. xlv. 9. † Job. ix. 4. ‡ 1 Sam. xv. 29.

only fit for the dunghill? Is it reasonable that the only thing in this world that God hath made capable of knowing his will, and bringing him glory, should yet live in ignorance of his Maker, and be unserviceable to his use? yea, should be engaged against him, and spit his venom in the face of his Creator! Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! and let the creatures without sense be judge if this be reason, that man, whom God hath nourished and brought up, should rebel against him? Judge in your own selves: is it a reasonable undertaking for briars and thorns to set themselves in battle against the devouring fire† or for the potsherd of the earth to strive with its maker? You will say, This is not reason, or surely the eye of reason is quite put out. And if this be not reason, then there is no reason that you should continue as you are, but it is all the reason in the world you should forthwith turn and repent.

What shall I say? I could spend myself in this argument. O that you would but hearken to me! That you would but set upon a new course! Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? What! will nobody be persuaded? Reader, shall I prevail with thee for one? Wilt thou sit down and consider the forementioned argument, and debate it whether it be not best to turn. Come, and let us reason to-

\* Isaiah i. 2.

† Isaiah xxvii. 4.

gether. Is it good for thee to be here? Wilt thou sit still, till the tide come in upon thee? Is it good for thee to try whether God will be so good as his word, and to harden thyself in a conceit that all is well with thee, while thou remainest un sanctified?

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

O distracted sinners! What will their end be? what will they do in the day of visitation? Whither will they flee for help? Where will they leave their glory?\* How powerfully hath sin bewitched them! How effectually hath the god of this world blinded them! How strong is the delusion! How uncircumcised their ears! How obdurate their hearts! Satan hath them at his beck. But how long may I call and get no answer? I may dispute with them year after year, and they will give me the hearing and that is all. They must and will have their sins, say what I will. Though I

\* Isaiah x. 3.



tell them there is death in the cup, yet they will take it up; though I tell them it is the broad way, and endeth in destruction, yet they will go on in it. I warn them, yet cannot win them. Sometimes I think the mercies of God will melt them, and his winning invitations overcome them; but I find them as they were; sometimes that the terror of the Lord will persuade them; yet neither will this do it. They will approve the word, like the sermon, commend the preacher, but they will yet live as they did. They will not deny me, and yet they will not obey me. They will flock to the word of God, and sit before me as his people, and hear my words, but they will not do them. They value and will plead for ministers, and I am to them as the lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, yet I cannot get them to come under Christ's yoke. They love me, and will be ready to say they will do any thing for me: but, for my life, I cannot persuade them to leave their sins, to forego their evil company, their intemperance, their unjust gains, &c. I cannot prevail with them to set up prayer in their families and closets, yet they will promise me, like the forward son, that said, I go, sir, but went not.\* I cannot persuade them to learn the principles of religion, though else they will die without knowledge.† I tell them their misery, but they will not believe but it is well enough.

\* Matt. xxi. 30.

† Job xxxvi. 12.

If I tell them particularly I fear for such reasons, their estate is bad, they will judge me censorious; or, if they be at present a little awakened, are quickly lulled asleep by Satan again, and have lost the sense of all.

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

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### SHEWING THE MARKS OF THE UNCONVERTED

While we keep aloof in generals, there is little fruit to be expected; it is the hand-fight that doth execution. David is not awakened by the prophet's hovering at a distance in parabolical insinuations; he is forced to close with him, and tell him plainly, Thou art the man. Few will in

\*Jer. ix. 7.

words deny the necessity of the new birth, but they have a self-deluding confidence that the work is not now to do. And because they know themselves free from that gross hypocrisy which takes up religion merely for a colour to deceive others, and for covering of wicked designs, they are confident of their sincerity, and suspect not that more close hypocrisy (wherein the greatest danger lies) by which a man deceiveth his own soul.\* But man's deceitful heart is such a matchless cheat, and self-delusion so reigning and so fatal a disease, that I know not whether be the greater, the difficulty, disagreeableness, or the necessity, of the undeceiving work that I am now upon. Alas, for my unconverted hearers! They must be undeceived or undone. But how shall this be effected?

Help, O all-searching Light! and let thy discerning eye discover the rotten foundation of the self-deceiver; and lead me, O Lord God, as thou didst the prophet, into the chambers of imagery, and dig through the wall of sinners' hearts, and discover the hidden abominations that are lurking out of sight in the dark. O send thy angel before me, to open the sundry wards of their hearts, as thou didst before Peter, and make even the iron gates to fly open of their own accord. And, as Jonathan no sooner tasted the honey but his eyes were enlightened; so grant, O Lord, that when

\* James i. 26.

the poor deceived souls, with whom I have to do, shall cast their eyes upon these lines, their minds may be illuminated, and their consciences convinced and awakened, that they may see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and be converted, and that thou mayest heal them.

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

But to come more close. As it was said of the adherents to Antichrist, so here; some of the unconverted carry their marks in their foreheads, more openly, and some in their hands more covertly. The apostle reckons up some upon whom he writes the sentence of death; as in these dreadful

\* Rev. iii. 17. † Prov. xxx. 12. ‡ Rom. vii. 9.

catalogues; which I beseech you to attend to with all diligence.\* For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.† But the fearful and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.‡ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.§ Woe to them that have their names written in these rolls; such may know as certainly as if God had told them from heaven, that they are unsanctified, and under an impossibility of being saved in this condition.

There are then these several sorts that (past all dispute) are unconverted; they carry their marks in their forehead.

1. The unclean. These are ever reckoned among the goats and have their

\* Eph. v. 5, 6.

† Rev. xxi. 8.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

§ Gal. v. 19, 21.

names, who ever is left out, in all the before mentioned catalogues.\*

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

3. Drunkards. Not only such as drink away their reason, but withal (yea above all) such as are too strong even for strong drink. The Lord fills his mouth with woes against these, and declares they have no inheritance in the kingdom of God.‡

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

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

6. Railers and backbiters, that love to take up a reproach against their neighbor, and fling all the dirt they can in his face, else wound him secretly behind his back.¶

7. Thieves, extortioners, and oppressors, that grind the poor, overreach their brethren, when they have them at an advantage, these must know that God is the

\* Eph. v. 5. Rev. xxi. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

† Eph. v. 5. Col. iii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

‡ Isa. v. 11, 12, 22. Gal. v. 21.

§ Psalm xv. 1, 2. Rev. xxi. 8, 27. John viii. 44. Prov. vi. 17.

|| James v. 12. Zech. v. 1, 2, 3.

¶ Psalm xv. 1, 3. 1 Cor. vi. 10. v. 11.

avenger of all such.\* Hear, O ye false and purloining, and wasteful servants! Hear, O ye deceitful tradesmen! hear your sentence; God will certainly hold his door against you, and turn your treasures of unrighteousness into treasures of wrath, and make your ill-gotten silver and gold to torment you, like burning metal in your bowels.†

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

9. Those that are frequenters and lovers of evil company. God hath declared he will be the destroyer of all such, and that they shall never enter into the hill of his rest.§

10. Scoffers at religion, that make a scorn of precise walking, and mock at the messengers and diligent servants of the Lord, and at their holy profession, and make themselves merry with the weakness and failings of professors. Hear, you despisers, your dreadful doom.||

Sinner, consider diligently whether thou art not to be found in one of these ranks; for if this be thy case, thou art in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity; for all

\* 1 Thess. iv. 6. † 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. James v. 2, 3.

‡ John viii. 47. Job xv. 4. Psal. xiv. 4. lxxix. 6. Eph. ii. 12, iv. 18. § Prov. xiii. 20, ix. 6. Psal. xv. 4.

|| Prov. xix. 29. iii. 34. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16.

these do carry their marks in their foreheads, and are undoubtedly the sons of death. And if so, the Lord pity our poor congregations! O, how small a number will be left, when these ten sorts are taken out! Alas! on how many doors, on how many faces must we write, Lord, have mercy upon us! Sirs, what shift do you make to keep up your confidence of your good state, when God from heaven declares against you, and pronounces you in a state of damnation? I would reason with you as God with them, How canst thou say, I am not polluted?\* See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done. Man, is not thy conscience privy to thy tricks of deceit, to thy chamber pranks, to thy way of lying? Yea, are not thy friends, thy family, thy neighbours, witnesses to thy profane neglect of God's worship, to thy covetous practices, to thy envious and malicious carriage? May not they point at thee as thou goest, There goes a gaming prodigal? There goes a drunken Nabal, a companion of evil doers? There goes a railer, or a scoffer, or a loose liver? Beloved, God hath written it as with a sunbeam in the book by which you must be judged, that these are not the spots of his children, and that none such, except renewed by converting grace, shall ever escape the damnation of hell.

O that such as you would now be per-

\* Jer. ii. 23.



suaded to repent, and turn from all your transgressions, or else iniquity will be your ruin!\* Alas, poor hardened sinners! Must I leave you at last where you were? Must I leave the tippler still at the ale bench? Must I leave the wanton still at his dalliance? Must I leave the malicious still in his venom, and the drunkard still at his vomit? However, you must know that you have been warned, and that I am clear of your blood. And whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, I will leave the Scriptures with them, either as thunderbolts to awaken them, or as searing irons to harden them to a reprobate sense.† God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goes on still in his trespasses. He that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.‡ Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, &c. I will mock at your calamity, when your destruction cometh as a whirlwind.

And now I imagine many will begin to bless themselves, and think all is well; because they cannot be charged with the grosser evils before mentioned; but I must further tell you, that there are another sort of unsanctified persons, that carry not their marks in their foreheads, but more secretly and covertly, in their hands; these

\* Ezek. xviii. 30.

† Psa. lxviii. 21.

‡ Prov. xxix. 1. i. 24, &c.

do frequently deceive themselves and others, and pass for good Christians, when they are all the while unsound at bottom. Many pass undiscovered till death and judgment bring all to light. Those self-deceivers seem to come even to heaven's gate with full confidence of their admission, and yet are shut out at last.\*

Brethren beloved, I beseech you deeply to lay to heart, and firmly retain this awakening consideration, that multitudes miscarry by cherishing some secret sin, that is not only hidden from others, but for want of searching their own hearts, even from themselves. A man may be free from open pollutions, and yet perish at last by some secret unobserved iniquity. And there are these twelve hidden sins, through which souls go down by numbers into the chambers of death; these you must search carefully for, and note them as black marks, wherever they be found, discovering a graceless and unconverted state. And as you love your lives, read carefully, with a holy jealousy of yourselves, lest you should be the persons concerned.

1. Gross ignorance. O how many poor souls doth this sin kill in the dark! † while they think verily they have good hearts, and are in the ready way to heaven. This is the murderer that dispatches thousands in a silent manner, when, poor hearts! they suspect nothing, and see not the hand that

\* Matt. vii. 22.

† Hos. iv. 6.

destroys them. You shall find, whatever excuses you have for ignorance, that it is a soul-undoing evil.\* Ah! would it not have grieved a man's heart to have seen that woeful spectacle, when the poor Protestants were shut up, a multitude together in a barn and a butcher comes with cruel hands, warmed in human blood, and leads them one by one, blindfold, to a block where he slew them, poor innocents! one after another by scores in cold blood? But how much more should our hearts bleed, to think of the hundreds in great congregations that ignorance doth butcher in secret, and lead blindfold to the block? Beware this be none of your case. Make no plea for ignorance; if you spare that sin, know that it will not spare you. And would a man take a murderer to his bosom?

2. Secret reserves in closing with Christ.—To forsake all for Christ, to hate father and mother, yea, a man's own life for him; this is a hard saying.† Some will do much, but they will not be of the religion that will undo them; they never come to be entirely devoted to Christ, nor fully to resign to him; they must have the sweet sin; they mean to do themselves no harm; they have secret exceptions for life, liberty, or estate. Many take Christ thus, hand overhead, and never consider his self-denying terms, nor cast up the cost. And this error

\* Isa. xxvii. 11. 2 Thess. i. 8. 2 Cor. iv. 3.

† Luke xiv. 26.

in the foundation mars all, and secretly ruins them for ever.\*

3. Formality in religion. Many stick in the bark, and rest in the outside of religion and in the external performances of holy duties;† and this oftentimes doth most effectually deceive men, and doth more certainly undo them than open looseness, as it was in the Pharisee's case.‡ They hear, they fast, they pray, they give alms, and therefore, will not believe but their case is good;§ whereas resting in the work done, and coming short of heart-work, and the inward power and life of religion, they fall at last into the burning, from the flattering hopes and confident persuasions of their being in the ready way to heaven. || O dreadful case, when a man's religion shall serve only to harden him, and effectually to delude and deceive his own soul!

4. The prevalence of false ends in holy duties.¶ This was the bane of the Pharisees. O how many poor souls are undone by this, and drop into hell before they discern their mistake! They perform good duties, and so think all is well; but perceive not that they are actuated by carnal motives all the while. It is too true, that even with the truly sanctified many carnal ends will frequently creep in; but they are the matter of his hatred and humiliation, and never come to be habitually prevalent

\* Luke xiv. 28. Matt. xviii. 21. † Matt. xxiii. 25.

‡ Matt. xxiii. 31.

§ Luke xviii. 11.

|| Matt. vii. 22, 23.

¶ Matt. xxiii. 25.

with him, and bear the greatest sway;\* but now, when the main thing that doth ordinarily carry a man out to religious duties shall be really some carnal end, as to satisfy his conscience, to get the repute of being religious, to be seen of men, to show his own gifts and parts, to avoid the reproach of being a profane and irreligious person, or the like; this discovers an unsound heart.† O professor! if you would avoid self-deceit, see that you mind not only your acts, but withal, yea, above all, your ends.

5. Trusting in their own righteousness.‡ This is a soul-undoing mischief.§ When men do trust in their own righteousness, they do indeed reject Christ's. Beloved, you had need be watchful on every hand; for not only your sins, but your duties may undo you. It may be you never thought of this; but so it is, that man may as certainly miscarry by his seeming righteousness and supposed graces, as by gross sins; and that is, when a man doth trust in these as his righteousness before God, for the satisfying his justice, appeasing his wrath, procuring his favour, and obtaining of his own pardon; for this is to put Christ out of office, and make a saviour of our own duties and graces. Beware of this, O professors! you are much in duties, but this one fly will spoil all the ointment. When

\* Rom. xiv. 7.

† Hos. x. 1. Zech. vii. 5, 6.

‡ Luke xviii. 9.

§ Rom. x. 3.

you have done most and best, be sure to go out of yourselves to Christ, reckon your own righteousness but rags.\*

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

7. The resting in a certain pitch of religion. When they have so much as will save them, as they suppose, they look no farther and so show themselves short of true grace, which will ever put men upon aspiring to farther perfecting.‡

8. The predominant love of the world. This is the sure evidence of an unsanctified heart.§

But how close doth this sin lurk oftentimes under the fair covert of outward profession!|| Yea, such power of deceit is there in this sin, that many times when every-

\* Psa. cxliii. 2. Phil. iii. 9. Isa. lxiv. 6. Neh. xiii. 22.

† Phil. iii. 6. Acts ix. 1. ‡ Phil. iii. 13.

§ Mark x. 22. 1 John ii. 15. || Luke viii. 14.

body else can see the man's worldliness and covetousness, he cannot see it himself, but hath so many colours and excuses, and pretences for his eagerness on the world, that he doth blind his own eyes, and perish in his self-deceit. How many professors are there, with whom the world hath more of their hearts and affections than Christ, who mind earthly things, and thereby are evidently after the flesh, and likely to end in destruction!\* Yet ask these men, and they will tell you confidently, they prize Christ above all; God forbid else! and see not their own earthly-mindedness, for want of a narrow observation of the workings of their own hearts. Did they but carefully search, they would find that their greatest content is in the world,† and the greatest care and main endeavour is to get and secure the world, which are the certain discoveries of an unconverted sinner. May the professing part of the world take earnest heed that they perish not by the hand of this sin unobserved. Men may be, and often are, kept off from Christ as effectually by the inordinate love of lawful comforts, as by the most unlawful courses.‡.....

9. Reigning malice and envy against those that disrespect them, and are injurious to them.§ O how do many, that seem to be religious remember injuries and carry grudges, and will return men as good as

\* Rom. viii. 5. Phil. iii. 19.

† Luke xii. 19.

‡ Matt. xxi. 5. Luke xiv. 18, 24. § 1 John ii. 9, 11.

they bring, rendering evil for evil, loving to take revenge, wishing evil to them that wrong them, directly against the rule of the gospel, the pattern of Christ, and the nature of God!\* Doubtless where this evil is kept boiling in the heart and is not hated, resisted, mortified, but doth habitually prevail, that person is in the very gall of bitterness, and in a state of death.†

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

10. Unmortified pride. When men love the praise of men more than the praise of God, and set their hearts upon men's esteem, applause, and approbation, it is most certain they are yet in their sins, and strangers to true conversion.‡ When men see not nor complain, nor groan under the pride of their own hearts, it is a sign they are quite dead in sin. O, how secretly doth

\* Rom. xii. 14, 17. 1 Pet. ii. 21, 23. Neh. ix. 17.

† Matt. xviii. 34, 35. 1 John iii. 14, 15.

‡ John xii. 43. Gal. i. 10.



this sin live and reign in many hearts, and they know it not, but are very strangers to themselves!\*

11. The prevailing love of pleasure.† This is a black mark. When men give the flesh the liberty that it craves, and pamper and please it, and do not deny and restrain it, when their great delight is in gratifying their bellies, and pleasing their senses; whatever appearances they may have of religion, all is unsound.‡ A flesh-pleasing life cannot be pleasing to God. They that are Christs' have crucified the flesh, and are careful to cross it, and keep it under as their enemy.§

12. Carnal security, or a presumptuous ungrounded confidence that their condition is already good.|| Many cry, peace and safety, when sudden destruction is coming upon them;¶ this was that which kept the foolish virgins sleeping, when they should have been working; upon their beds, when they should have been at the markets.\*\* They perceived not their want of oil till the bridegroom was come; and while they went to buy, the door was shut, and,‡ O that these foolish virgins had no successors! Where is the place, yea, where is the house almost, where these do not dwell? Men are willing to cherish in themselves, upon ever so slight grounds, a hope that

\* John xi. 40.

† 2 Tim. iii. 4.

‡ Rom. xvi. 18. Titus iii. 3.

§ Gal. v. 24. 1 Cor. ix. 25, 27. || Rev. iii. 17.

¶ 1 Thess. v. 3. \*\* Matt. xxv. 5, 10. Prov. x. 5.

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

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

**Application.** And now, conscience, do thy

office; speak out, and speak home to him that heareth or readeth these lines. If thou find any of these marks upon him, thou must pronounce him utterly unclean.\* Take not up a lie into thy mouth, speak not peace to him to whom God speaks no peace. Let not lust bribe thee, or self-love or carnal prejudice blind thee. I subpoena thee from the court of Heaven to come and give in evidence. I require thee in the name of God to go with me to the search of the suspected house. As thou wilt answer it at thy peril, give in a true report of the state and case of him that readeth this book. Conscience, wilt thou altogether hold thy peace at such a time as this? I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us the truth.† Is the man converted, or is he not? Doth he allow himself in any way of sin, or doth he not? Doth he truly love, and please, and prize, and delight in God above all other things, or not? Come, put it to an issue.

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

\* Lev. xiii. 44.

† Matt. xxvi. 63.

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

Beloved, be not your own betrayers, do not deceive your own hearts, nor set your hands to your own ruin, by a wilful blinding of yourselves. Set up a tribunal in you own breasts, bring the word of conscience together. To the law and to the testimony;\* hear what the word concludes

of your estates. O follow the search till you have found how the case stands; mistake here and perish. And such is the treachery of the heart, the subtilty of the tempter, and the deceitfulness of sin;\* all conspire to flatter and deceive the poor soul, and withal, so common and easy it is to be mistaken, that it is a thousand to one but you will be deceived, unless you be very careful, and thorough, and impartial in the inquiry into your spiritual condition. O, therefore, ply your work, go to the bottom, search with candles, weigh you in the balance, come to the standard of the sanctuary, bring your coin to the touchstone. You have the archest cheats in the world to deal with, a world of counterfeit coin is going; happy is he that takes no counters for gold. Satan is master of deceit; he can draw to the life, he is perfect in the trade, there is nothing but he can imitate.

You cannot wish for any grace, but he can fit you to an hair with counterfeit. Trade warily, look on every piece you take, be jealous, trust not so much as your own hearts. Run to God to search you and try you; to examine you, and prove your reins.† If other helps suffice not to bring all to an issue, but you are still at a loss, open your cases faithfully to some godly

\* Jer. xvii. 9. 2 Cor. xi. 3. Heb. iii. 13.

† Psa. xxvi. 2. cxxxix. 23, 24.

§ 2 Pet. i. 10.

\* Isa. viii. 20.

and faithful minister;‡ rest not till you have put the business of your eternal welfare out of question.§ O searcher of hearts, put thou this soul upon, and help him in the search!

## CHAPTER V.

### SHOWING THE MISERIES OF THE UNCONVERTED

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

But I sadly experience, that such a spirit of sloth and slumber,\* possesseth the unsanctified, that though they be convinced that they are yet unconverted, yet they oftentimes carelessly sit still; and what through the avocation of sensual pleasures, or hurry of worldly business, or noise and clamour of earthly cares, and lusts, and affections,† the voice of conscience is drowned, and men go no further than some cold wishes, and general purposes of repenting and amending.‡

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

But here I find myself aground at first putting forth. What tongue can tell the

\* Rom. xi. 8. Matt. xiii. 15. † Luke viii. 14.

‡ Mal. ii. 7. § 2 Pet. i. 10. † Acts xxiv. 25.

heirs of hell sufficiently of their misery unless it were the rich man's in that flame?\* Where is the ready writer whose pen can decypher their misery that are without God in the world?† This cannot fully be done, unless we know the infinite ocean of that bliss and perfection which is in that God, which a state of sin doth exclude men from. Who knoweth (saith Moses) the power of thine anger?‡ And how shall I tell men that which I do not know? Yet so much we know, as one would think would shake the heart of that man that had the least degree of spiritual life and sense.

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

Could I bring paradise into view, or represent the kingdom of heaven to as much advantage as the tempter did the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory thereof, to our Saviour; or could I uncover the face of the deep and devouring gulf of Tophet, in all its terrors, and open the gates of the infernal furnace, alas! he hath no eyes to see it. Could I point out the beauties of holiness or glory of the gospel, to the life; or could I bring above board the more than diabolical deformity and ugliness of sin, he can no more judge

\* Luke xvi. 24.

† Eph. ii. 12.

‡ Psa. xc. 11.

§ Eph. ii. 1.

¶ Matt. xiii. 14, 15.

of the loveliness and beauty of the one, and the filthiness and hatefulness of the other, than a blind man of colours. He is alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart;\* he neither doth nor can know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned;† his eyes cannot be savingly opened but by converting grace;‡ he is a child of darkness, and walks in darkness;§ yea, the light in him is darkness.||

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

Which way shall I come at the miserable

\* Eph. iv. 18.    † 1 Cor. ii. 14.    ‡ Acts xxvi. 18.  
 § 1 John 1, 6.    ¶ Matt. vi. 23.    ¶ Matt. xiii. 15.



objects that I have to deal with? Who shall make the heart of stone to relent,\* or the lifeless carcase to feel and move? That God alone who is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham; † that raiseth the dead, ‡ and melteth the mountains, § and strikes water out of the flints; || that loves to work like himself, beyond the hope and belief of man; that peopleth his church with dry bones, and planteth his orchard with dry sticks; he is able to do this. Therefore, I bow my knee to the most high God, ¶ and as our Saviour prayed at the sepulchre of Lazarus,\*\* and the Shunammite ran to the man of God for her dead child; †† so doth your mourning minister kneel about your graves, and carry you in the arms of prayer to that God in whom your help is found.

O thou all-powerful Jehovah, that workest and none can hinder thee; that hast the keys of death and hell, pity thou the poor souls that lie here entombed, and roll away the gravestone, and say, as to Lazarus, Come forth; lighten thou this darkness, O Inaccessible Light, and let the day-spring from on high visit the dark regions of the dead, to whom I speak, for thou canst open the eyes that death itself hath closed. Thou that formedst the ear, canst restore the hearing. Say thou to these

\* Zech. vii. 11, 12. † Matt. iii. 9. ‡ 2 Cor. i. 9.

§ Neh. i. 5. || Deut. viii. 15. ¶ Eph. iii. 14.

\*\* John xi. 38, 41. †† 2 Kings iv. 25.

ears, Ephphatha, and they shall be opened. Give thou eyes to see thine excellencies, a taste that may relish thy sweetness, a scent that may savour thy ointments, a feeling that may discern the privilege of thy favour, the burden of thy wrath, the intolerable weight of unpardoned sin; and give thy servants order to prophesy to the dry bones; and let the effects of this prophecy be as those of thy prophet, when he prophesied the valley of dry bones into a living army, exceeding great.\*

But I must proceed, as I am able, to unfold that mystery which, I confess, no tongue can fully unfold, no heart can thoroughly comprehend. Know, therefore, that while thou art unconverted,

1st. The infinite God is engaged against thee. It is no small part of thy misery that thou art without God.† How doth Micah run crying after the Danites, Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more?‡ O what a mourning then must thou lift up that art without God, that canst lay no claim to him without daring usurpation! Thou mayest say of God as Sheba of David, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.§ How painful and piercing, a moan is that of Saul in his extremity! The Philistines are upon me, and God is departed from me!|| But what will ye do, O sinners, in your day

\* Ezek. xxxvii. 1, &c.

† Eph. ii. 12.

‡ Judges xviii. 23, 24.

§ 2 Sam. xx. 1.

|| 1 Sam. xxviii. 15.

of visitation! Whither will ye flee for help? where will you leave your glory?\* What will ye do when the Philistines are upon you; when the world shall take its eternal leave of you; when you must bid your friends, houses, and lands farewell for evermore? What will ye do then, I say, that have no God to go to? Will you call on him? Will you cry to him for help? Alas! he will not own you;† he will not take any notice of you, but send you away with, I never knew you.‡ They that know what it is to have a God to go to, a God to live upon, they know a little what a fearful misery it is to be without God. This made that holy man cry out, Let me have a God, or nothing. Let me know him and his will, and what will please him, and how I may come to enjoy him; or would I had never had an understanding to know any thing, &c.

But thou art not only without God, but God is against thee.§ O! if God would but stand neuter, though he did not own or help the poor sinner, his case were not so deeply miserable, though God should give up the poor creature to the will of his enemies, to do their worst with him; though he should deliver him over to the tormentors;|| that devils should tear and torture him to their utmost power and skill, yet this were not half so fearful. But God

\* Isa. x. 3. † Prov. i. 28, 29. ‡ Matt. vii. 23.

§ Ezek. v. 8, 9. Nahum ii. 13. || Matt. xviii. 34.

will set himself against the sinner; and, believe it, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;\* there is no friend like him, no enemy like him. As much as heaven is above the earth—omnipotence above impotence—infinity above nullity—so much more horrible is it to fall into the hands of the living God, than into the paws of bears or lions, yea furies or devils. God himself will be thy tormentor; thy destruction shall come from the presence of the Lord.† Tophet is deep and large, and the wrath of the Lord, like a river of brimstone, doth kindle it.‡ If God be against thee who shall be for thee? If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall intreat for him?§ Thou, even thou art to be feared; and who shall stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?|| Who is that god that shall deliver you out of his hands?¶ Can Mammon? Riches profit not in the day of wrath? \*\* Can kings or warriors? No. They shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? ††

Sinner! Methinks this should go like a dagger to thy heart, to know that God is

\* Heb. x. 9. † 2 Thess. i. 9. ‡ Isa. xxx. 33.

§ 1 Sam. x. 15. || Psal. lxxvi. 7. ¶ Dan. iii. 15.

\*\* Prov. xi. 1. †† Rev. vi. 5, 17.

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

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

II. His heart is against thee. He hateth all the workers of iniquity; man, doth not

\* Ezek. v. 8.

† Psa. xxxiv. 16.

‡ Ezek. xiv. 8.

thy heart tremble to think of thy being an object of God's hatred? Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be towards this people; cast them out of my sight.\* My soul loatheth them, and their souls also abhorred me.†

III. His hand is against thee.‡ All his attributes are against thee.

First, his justice is like a flaming sword unsheathed against thee. If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine adversaries, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood.§

So exact is justice, that it will by no means clear the guilty.|| God will not discharge thee, he will not hold thee guiltless;¶ but will require the whole debt in person of thee; unless thou canst make a Scripture claim to Christ, and his satisfaction. When the enlightened sinner looks on justice, and sees the balance in which he is to be weighed, and the sword by which he must be executed, he feels an earthquake in his breast. But Satan keeps this out of sight, and persuades the soul, while he can, that the Lord is all made up of mercy, and so lulls it asleep in sin. Divine justice is very strict, it must have satisfaction to the utmost farthing, it denounceth indignation and wrath, tribula-

\* Jer. xv. 1.

† Zech. xi. 8.

‡ 1 Sam. xii. 14, 15.

§ Deut. xxxii. 41, 42.

|| Ex. xxxiv. 7.

¶ Ex. xx. 7.

tion and anguish, to every soul that doeth evil.\* It curseth every one that continueth not in every thing that is written in the law, to do it.† The justice of God to the unpardoned sinner, that hath a sense of his misery, is more terrible than the sight of the bailiff or creditor to the bankrupt debtor, or than the sight of the judge and bench to the robber, or of the irons and gibbet to the guilty murderer. When justice sits upon life and death, O what a dreadful work doth it make with the wretched sinner! Bind him hand and foot, cast him into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.‡ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.§ This is the terrible sentence that justice pronounceth. Why sinner, by this severe justice must thou be tried! And, as God liveth, this killing sentence shalt thou bear, unless thou repent and be converted.

Secondly, the holiness of God is full of antipathy against thee.|| He is not only angry with thee, (so he may be with his own children) but he hath a fixed, rooted, habitual displeasure against thee. He loathes thee,¶ and what is done by thee, though for substance commanded by him.\*\* God's nature is infinitely contrary to sin, and so he cannot but hate a sinner out of Christ.

O, what misery is this, to be out of the

\* Rom. ii. 8, 9.      † Gal. iii. 10.      ‡ Matt. xxii. 13.

§ Matt. xxv. 41.      || Psal. v. 4, 5.      ¶ Zech. xi. 8.

\*\* Isa. i. 14.      Mal. i. 10.

favour, yea, under the hatred of God,\* that God who can as easily lay aside his nature, and cease to be God, as not be contrary to thee, and detest thee, except thou be changed and renewed by grace. O sinner! how darest thou to think of the bright and radiant sun of purity, of the beauties, the glory of holiness that is in God! The stars are not pure in his sight.† He humbles himself to behold things that are done in heaven.‡ O those light and sparkling eyes of his! What do they spy in thee? And thou hast no interest in Christ neither, that he should plead for thee. Methinks I should hear thee crying out, astonished, with the Bethshemites, Who shall stand before this Lord God!§

Thirdly, the power of God is mounted like a mighty cannon against thee. The glory of God's power is to be displayed in the wonderful confusion and destruction of them that obey not the gospel.|| He will make his power known in them.¶ How mightily he can torment them! For this end he raised them up that he may make his power known.\*\* O man! art thou able to make thy part good with thy Maker? No more than a silly reed against the cedars of God, or a little cock-boat against the tumbling ocean, or the children's bubbles against the blustering winds. Sinner,

\* Eccles. v. 6. Hos. ix. 15. † Job. xxv. 5.

‡ Psa. cxliii. 6. § 1 Sam. vi. 20.

|| 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. ¶ Rom. ix. 22.

\*\* Rom. ix. 17.



the power of God's anger is against thee;\* and power and anger together make fearful work. It were better thou hadst all the world in arms against thee, than to have the power of God against thee. There is no escaping his hands, no breaking his prison. The thunder of his power who can understand?† Unhappy man that shall understand it by feeling it! If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength; who hath hardened himself against him and prospered! Which removeth the mountains, and they know it not; which overturneth them in his anger; which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealet up the stars. Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou? If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him.‡ And art thou a fit match for such an antagonist? O! consider this, you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver you.§ Submit to mercy; let not dust and stubble stand out against the Almighty; set not briers and thorns against him in battle, lest he go through them, and consume them together; but lay hold on his strength, that you may make peace with him.|| Woe unto him that striveth

\* Psa. xc. 11. † Job. xxvi. 14. ‡ Job. ix. 5, &c.

§ Psa. l. 22. || Isa. xxvii. 4, 5.

with his Maker.¶

Fourthly, the wisdom of God is set to ruin thee. He hath ordained his arrows, and prepared instruments of death, and made all things ready.\* His counsels are against thee, to contrive thy destruction.† He laughs to see how thou wilt be taken and ensnared in the evil day.‡ The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming. He sees how thou wilt come down mightily in a moment; how thou wilt wring thy hands, tear thy hair, eat thy flesh, and gnash thy teeth for anguish and astonishment of heart, when thou seest thou art fallen remedylessly into the pit of destruction.

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

¶ Isa. xlv. 9.

\* Psal. vii. 12, 13.

§ Psal. xcvi. 11.

\*\* 2 Tim. ii. 13.

†† Rom. viii. 13.

† Jer. xviii. 11. ‡ Psal. xxxvii. 13.

|| Luke xiii. 3. ¶ Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

†† John xiii. 8.

§§ Matt. xviii. 3.

and he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. Beloved as the immutable faithfulness of God in his promise and oath affords believers strong consolation,\* so they are to unbelievers for strong consternation and confusion. O sinner, tell me, what shift dost thou make to think of all the threatenings of God's word, that stand upon record against thee? Dost thou believe they are truth or not? If not, thou art a wretched infidel, and not a Christian; and therefore give over the name and hopes of a Christian. But if thou dost believe them, O heart of steel that thou hast, that canst walk up and down in quiet, when the truth and faithfulness of God is engaged to destroy thee! So that if the Almighty can do it, thou shalt surely perish and be damned. Why, man! the whole book of God doth testify against thee, while thou remainest unsanctified. It condemns thee in every leaf, and is to thee like Ezekiel's roll, written within and without with lamentation, and mourning, and woe;† and all this shall surely come upon thee, and overtake thee‡ except thou repent. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of this word shall never pass away.§

Now put all this together, and tell me if the case of the unconverted be not deplorably miserable. As we read of some persons that had bound themselves in an oath, and in a curse, to kill Paul; so thou

\* Heb. vi. 18.

† Ezek. ii. 10.

‡ Deut. xxviii. 15.

§ Matt. v. 18.

must know, O sinner, to thy terror, that all the attributes of the infinite God are bound in an oath to destroy thee.\* O man! what wilt thou do? Whither wilt thou flee? If God's omniscience can find thee, thou shalt not escape. If the true and faithful God will save his oath, perish thou must, except thou believe and repent. If the Almighty hath power to torment thee, thou shalt be perfectly miserable in soul and body to all eternity, unless it be prevented by speedy conversion.

II. The whole creation of God is against thee. The whole creation (saith Paul) groaneth and travaileth in pain.† But what is it the creation groaneth under? Why, the fearful abuse that it is subject to, in serving the lusts of unsanctified men. And what is it that the creation groaneth for? Why, for freedom and liberty from this abuse; for the creature is very unwillingly subject to this bondage.‡ If the unreasonable and inanimate creatures had speech and reason, they would cry out under it as a bondage unsufferable to be abused by the ungodly, contrary to their natures and the ends that the great Creator made them for. While the Lord of hosts is against thee, be sure the host of the Lord is against thee, and all the creatures as it were up in arms, till upon a man's conversion the controversy being taken up between God and him, he makes a covenant of peace with the creatures for him.§

\* Heb. iii. 18. † Rom. viii. 22. ‡ Rom. viii. 19-21.

§ Job v. 22-24. Hosea ii. 18-20.

III. The roaring lion hath his full power upon thee.\* Thou art fast in the paw of that lion that is greedy to devour; in the snare of the devil, led captive by him at his will.† This is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience;‡ his drudges they are, and his lusts they do. He is ruler of the darkness of this world,§ that is, of ignorant sinners that live in darkness. You pity the poor Indians that worship the devil for their God, but little think it is your own case. Why it is the common misery of all the unsanctified, that the devil is their God.|| Not that they do intend to do him homage and worship; they will be ready to defy him, and him that should say so of them; but all this while they serve him, and come and go at his beck, and live under his government; his servants ye are to whom ye yield yourselves to obey.|| Doubtless the liar intends not a service to satan, but his own advantage; yet it is he that stands in the corner unobserved, and putteth the things into his heart.\*\* Questionless, Judas, when he sold his master for money, and the Chaldeans and Sabeans, when they plundered Job, intended not to do the devil a pleasure, but to satisfy their own covetous thirst; yet it was he that actuated them in their wickedness.†† Men may be very

\* 1 Pet. v. 8. † 2 Tim. ii. 26. ‡ Eph. ii. 2.

§ Eph. vi. 12. || 2 Cor. iv. 4. ¶ Rom. vi. 16.

\*\* Acts. v. 3. John viii. 44.

†† John xiii. 27. Job. i. 12, 15, 17.

slaves and drudges for the devil, and never know it; nay, they may please themselves in the thoughts of a happy liberty.\*

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

IV. The guilt of all thy sins lies like a mountain upon thee. Poor soul! thou feelest it not, but this is that which seals thy misery upon thee. While unconverted none of thy sins are blotted out;¶ they are all upon the score against thee. Regeneration and remission are never separated; the un-sanctified are unquestionably unjustified

\* 2 Pet. ii. 19. † Acts. xxvi. 18. ‡ 1 John iii. 8.

§ John viii. 40, 41. || Titus iii. 3. ¶ Acts iii. 19.

\* 1 Cor. vi. 11. 1 Pet. i. 2. Heb. ix. 14.

and unpardoned.\* Beloved, it is a fearful thing to be in debt, but above all in God's debt; for there is no arrest so formidable as his, no prison so horrible as his. Look upon an enlightened sinner, who feels the weight of his own guilt, O how frightful are his looks, how fearful are his complaints! his comforts are turned into wormwood, and his moisture into drought, and his sleep is departed from his eyes.

How light soever you may make of it now, you will one day find the guilt of unpardoned sin to be a heavy burden. It is a millstone; whoever falleth upon it shall be broken; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.† What work did it make with our blessed Saviour! It pressed the very blood out of his veins, and broke all his bones; and if it did this in the green tree, what will it do in the dry?

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

† Matt. xxi. 44.

‡ John viii. 24.

§ 2 Cor. v. 10. Rev. xx. 12.

with thee, there to be thy accusers; and they will to hell with thee, there to be thy tormentors. Better to have so many friends and furies about thee, than thy sins to fall upon thee and fasten on thee. O the work that these will make thee! O look over thy debts in time, how much thou art in the books of every one of God's laws; how is every one of God's commandments ready to arrest thee, and seize thee by the throat, for the innumerable bonds it hath upon thee. What wilt thou do then, when they shall all together come in against thee? Hold open the eyes of conscience to consider this, that thou mayest despair of thyself, and be driven to Christ, and fly for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before thee.\*

V. Thy raging lusts do miserably enslave thee. While unconverted thou art a very servant of sin, it reigns over thee, and holds thee under its dominion, till thou art brought within the bonds of God's covenant.† Now there is not such another tryant as sin. O the filthy and fearful work that it doth engage its servants in! Would it not pierce a man's heart to see a company of poor creatures drudging and toiling, only to heap up faggots to burn themselves! Why this is the constant employment of all sin's drudges. Even while they bless themselves in their un-

\* Heb. vi. 18.

† John viii. 34, 36 Titus iii. 3. Rom. vi. 12, 14, 16, 17.



righteous gains, while they sing and swill in pleasures, they are but treasuring up wrath and vengeance for their eternal burning; they are but laying in powder and bullet, and adding to the pile of Tophet, and flinging in oil to make the flame rage the fiercer. Who would serve such a master, whose work is drudgery, and whose wages is death?\*

What a woful spectacle was the poor wretch who was possessed with the legion! Would it not have grieved thy heart to have seen him among the tombs cutting and wounding himself?† This is thy case, such is thy work, every stroke is a thrust at thy heart.‡ Conscience indeed is now asleep, but when death and judgment shall bring thee to thy senses, then wilt thou feel the raging smart and anguish of every wound.

VI. The furnace of eternal vengeance is heated ready for thee.§ Hell and destruction open their mouths upon thee, they gape and groan for thee;|| waiting as it were with a greedy eye, as thou standest on the brink, when thou wilt drop in. If the wrath of man be as the roaring of a lion,¶ more heavy than the sand;\*\* what is the wrath of the infinite God? If the burning furnace, heated in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery rage, when he commanded it to

\* Rom. vi. 23.    † Mark v. 5    ‡ 1 Tim. vi. 10

§ Isa. xxx. 33.    || Isa. v. 14.    ¶ Prov. xx. 2.

\*\* Prov. xxvii. 3.

be made yet seven times hotter, was so fierce as to burn up even those that drew near it to throw the three children in;\* how hot is that burning oven of the Almighty's fury!† Surely this is seventy times seven more fierce. Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee, saith the Lord of Hosts?‡ Canst thou abide everlasting burnings? Canst thou dwell with consuming fire?§

O sinner! stop here and consider if thou art a man, and not a senseless block, consider: bethink thyself where thou standest. Why upon the very brink of this furnace. As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but one step between thee and it.|| Thou knowest not when thou liest down, but thou mayest be in it before morning. Thou knowest not when thou risest, but thou mayest drop in before night. Darest thou make light of this? Wilt thou go on in such a dreadful condition as if nothing ailed thee? If thou puttest it off, and sayest, This doth not belong to me; look again over the foregoing chapter, and tell me the truth; are none of these black marks found upon thee? Do not blind thine eyes; do not deceive thyself; see thy misery whilst thou mayest prevent it. Think what it is to be a vile outcast, a damned reprobate, a vessel of wrath, into which the Lord will pour out his tor-

\* Dan. iii. 19, 22. † Mal. iv. 1. ‡ Ezek. xxii. 14.

§ Isa. xxxiii. 14. || 1 Sam. xx. 3. ¶ Rom. ix. 22.

menting fury while he hath a being.¶

VII. The law discharges all its threats and curses at thee.\* O how dreadfully doth it thunder! It spits fire and brimstone in thy face; its words are as drawn swords, and as the sharp arrows of the mighty; it demands satisfaction to the utmost, and cries Justice! Justice! It speaks blood, and war, and wounds and death against thee. O the execrations, and plagues, and deaths that this murdering piece is loaded with! † and thou art the mark at which this shot is levelled O man, away to the stronghold; ‡ away from thy sins; haste to the sanctuary, the city of refuge, § even the Lord Jesus Christ; hide thee in him, or else thou art lost without any hope of recovery.

VIII. The gospel itself bindeth the sentence of eternal damnation upon thee. || If thou continuest in thine impenitent and unconverted state, know that the gospel denounceth a much sorer condemnation than ever would have been for the transgression only of the first covenant. Is it not a dreadful case, to have the gospel itself thunder out threats of damnation? To have the Lord roar from mount Sion against thee? ¶ Hear the terror of the Lord. He that believeth not shall be damned. Except ye repent ye shall all perish.\*\* This is the condemnation, that

\* Gal. iii. 10. Rom. vii.

† Deut. xxviii. 15.

‡ Zech. ix. 12. § Heb. xiii. 13. || Mark xvi. 16.

¶ Joel iii. 16. \*\* Luke xiii. 3.

light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light.†† He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him.\* If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?† He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, that hath trampled under foot the Son of God?‡

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

Hear what the Lord saith. Fear ye not me? saith the Lord, will ye not tremble at my presence?§ O sinners, do you make light of the wrath to come?|| I am sure there is a time coming when you will not make light of it. Why, the very devils do believe and tremble.¶ What! are you more hardened than they? Will you run upon the edge of the rock? Will you play at the hole of the asp? Will you put your hand upon the cockatrice's den? Will you dance

†† John iii. 19.

\* John iii. 36. † Heb. ii. 2, 3. ‡ Heb. x. 28, 29.

§ Jer. v. 22. || Matt. iii. 7. ¶ James ii. 19.

upon the fire till you are burnt? Or dally with devouring wrath, as if you were indifferent whether you did escape or endure it? O madness of folly! Solomon's madman, that casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith, Am I not in jest?\* is nothing so distracted as the wilful sinner; † that goeth on in his unconverted state, without sense, as if nothing ailed him. The man that runs on the cannon's mouth, and sports with his blood, or lets out his life in a frolic, is sensible, sober, and serious, to him that goeth on still in his trespasses; ‡ for he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengthens himself against the Almighty: he runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler. § Is it wisdom to dally with the second death, or to venture into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, || as if thou wert but going to wash thee, or to swim for thy recreation? What shall I say? I can find out no expression, no comparison, whereby to set forth the dreadful distraction of that soul that continues to go on in sin.

Awake, awake, ¶ O sinner! arise, and thy flight. There is but one door that thou mayest flee by, and that is the strait door of conversion and the new birth. Unless thou turn unfeignedly from all thy sins, and come to Jesus Christ, and take him

\* Prov. xxvi. 18. † Luke xv. 17. ‡ Psa. lxxviii. 21.  
§ Job. xv. 25, 26. || Rev. xxi. 8. ¶ Eph. v. 14.

for the Lord thy righteousness, and walk in him in holiness and newness of life; as the Lord liveth, it is not more certain that thou art now out of hell, than that thou shalt without fail be in it, but a few days or nights from hence. O set thy heart to think of thy case. Is not thine everlasting misery or welfare that which doth deserve a little consideration? Look again over the miseries of the unconverted. If the Lord hath not spoken by me, regard me not; but if it be the very word of God, that all his misery lies upon thee, what a case art thou in? Is it for one that hath his senses, to live in such a condition, and not to make all possible expedition for preventing his utter ruin? O man! who hath bewitched thee?\* that in the present life thou shouldst be wise enough to forecast thy business, foresee thy danger, and prevent thy mischief; but in matters of everlasting consequence shouldst be slight and careless, as if they little concerned thee. Why, is it nothing to thee to have all the attributes of God engaged against thee? Canst thou do well without his favour? Canst thou escape his hands, or endure his vengeance? Dost thou hear the creation groaning under thee, and hell groaning for thee, and yet think thy case good enough? Art thou in the paw of the lion, under the power of corruption, in the dark noisome prison, fettered with lusts, working out thy own damnation; and is not this worth

\* Gal. iii. 1

the considering? Wilt thou make light of all the terrors of the law, of all its curses and thunderbolts, as if they were but the report of children's pop-guns, or thou wast to war with their paper pellets? Dost thou laugh at hell and destruction, or canst thou drink the envenomed cup of the Almighty's fury, as it were but a common potion?

Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.\* Art thou such a leviathan as that the scales of thy pride should keep thee from thy Maker's coming at thee? Wilt thou esteem his arrows as straw, and the instruments of death as rotten wood? Art thou chief of all the children of pride, even that thou shouldst count his darts as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of his spear? Art thou made without fear, and contemnest his barbed irons?† Art thou like the horse that paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength, who goeth out to meet the armed men? Dost thou mock at fear, and are not affrighted, neither turnest back from God's sword, when his quiver rattleth against thee, the glistening spear and the shield?‡ Well, if the threats and calls of the word will not frighten thee, nor awaken thee, I am sure death and judgment will. O! what wilt thou do when the Lord cometh forth against thee, and in his fury falleth upon thee, and thou shalt feel what thou redest? If, when Daniel's enemies

\* Job. xl. 7.    † Job. xli.    ‡ Job xxxix. 21—23.

were cast into the den of lions, both they and their wives and their children, the lions had the mastery of them, and broke their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den,\* what shall be done with thee when thou fallest into the hands of the living God, when he shall gripe thee in his iron arms, and grind and crush thee into a thousand pieces in his wrath?

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

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## CHAPTER VI

CONTAINING DIRECTIONS FOR CONVERSION

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

Before thou readest these Directions, I advise they, yea, I charge thee before God and his holy angels, that thou resolve to follow them (as far as conscience shall be convinced of their agreeableness to God's word and thy state) and call in his assistance and blessing, that they may succeed. And as I have sought the Lord, and con-

\* Dan. vi. 24.

† Isaiah lv. 6, 7,



sulted his oracles what advice to give thee, so must thou entertain it with that awe, reverence, and purpose of obedience, that the word of the living God doth require.

Now then attend; set thine heart unto all that I shall testify unto thee this day; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life.\* This is the end of all that has been spoken hitherto, to bring you to set upon turning, and making use of God's means for your conversion. I would not trouble you nor torment you before your time, with the forethought of your eternal misery, but in order to your making your escape. Were you shut up under your present misery without remedy, it were but mercy, as one speaks, to let you alone, that you might take in that little poor comfort that you are capable of in this world; but you may yet be happy, if you do not wilfully refuse the means of your recovery. Behold, I hold open the door to you; arise, take your flight; I set the way of life before you, walk in it, and you shall live, and not die.† It grieves me to think you should be your own murderers, and throw yourself headlong, when God and man cries out to you, as Peter in another case to his master, O spare thyself.

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

\* Deut. xxxii. 46. † Deut. xxx. 19. Jer. vi. 16.

Direct. 1. Set it down with thyself as an undoubted truth, that it is impossible for thee ever to get to heaven in this thy unconverted state. Can any other but Christ save thee? and he tells thee he never will do it, except thou be regenerated and converted.\* Doth he not keep the keys of heaven? and canst thou get in without his leave? As thou must, if ever thou come thither in thy natural condition, without a sound and thorough renovation.

Direct. II. Labour to get a thorough sight and lively sense and feeling of thy sins. Till men are weary and heavy laden, and pricked at the heart, and quite sick of sin, they will not come unto Christ, in his way, for ease and cure; nor to purpose inquire, What shall we do?† They must set themselves down for dead men before they will come unto Christ that they may have life.‡ Labour, therefore, to set all thy sins in order before thee, never be afraid to look upon them, but let thy spirit make diligent search.§ Inquire into thine heart, and into thy life; enter into a thorough examination of thyself, and all thy ways;|| that thou mayest make a full discovery, and call in the help of God's Spirit, and a sense of thine own inability hereunto for it is his proper work to convince of sin;\* spread all before the face of thy conscience

\*Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3.

† Matt. xi. 28. Acts. ii. 37. Matt. ix. 12.

‡ John v. 40. § Psalm lxxvii. 6. || Psalm cxix. 59.

\* John xvi. 8.

till thy heart and eyes be set abroad. Leave not striving with God and thy own soul, till it cry out under the sense of thy sins, as the enlightened jailer, What must I do to be saved?† To this purpose.

Meditate on the numerousness of thy sins. David's heart failed when he thought of this and considered that he had more sins than hairs.‡ This made him cry out upon the multitude of God's tender mercies.§ The loathsome carcass doth not more hatefully swarm with crawling worms, than an unsanctified soul with filthy lusts; they fill the head, the heart, the eyes, the mouth of him. Look backward; where was ever the place, what was ever the time, in which thou didst not sin? Look inward; what part or power canst thou find in soul or body, but it is poisoned with sin? What duty dost thou ever perform, into which poison is not shed? O, how great is the sum of thy debts, who hast been all thy life running behind hand, and never didst nor canst pay off one penny! Look over the sin of thy nature, and all its cursed brood, the sins of thy life. Call to mind thy omissions, commissions, the sins of thy thoughts, words, and actions, the sins of thy youth, and those of thy riper years: be not like a desperate bankrupt, that is afraid to look over his books. Read the records of conscience carefully. These books must be opened

‡ Psalm xl. 12.

§ Psalm li. 1.

† Acts xvi. 30.

sooner or later.\*

Meditate on the aggravations of thy sins, as they are the grand enemies of the God of thy life, and of the life of thy soul; in a word, they are the public enemies of all mankind. How do David, Ezra, Daniel, and the good Levites, aggravate their sins, from the consideration of their injuriousness to God, their opposition to his good and righteous laws, the mercies, the warnings they were committed against? † O the work that sin hath made in the world! This is the enemy that hath brought in death, and hath robbed and enslaved man, that hath backed the devil, that hath digged hell. ‡ This is the enemy that hath turned the world upside down, and soweth dissension between man and the creatures; between man and man; yea, between man and himself, setting the sensitive part against the rational, the will against the judgment, lust against conscience; yea, worst of all, between God and man; making the lapsed sinner both hateful to God, and the hater of him. § O man! how canst thou make so light of sin? This is the traitor that shed the blood of the Son of God; that sold him, that mocked him, that scourged him, that spit in his face, that nailed his hands; that pierced his side, that pressed his soul, that mangled his body, that never left him till he had bound

\* Rev. xx. 12

† Neh. ix. Dan. ix. Ezra ix.

‡ Rom. v. 12. 2 Peter ii. 4. John viii. 34.

§ Zech. xi. 8.

him, condemned him, nailed him, crucified him, and put him to an open shame.\* This is that deadly poison, so powerful of operation, as that one drop of it shed on the root of mankind, hath corrupted, spoiled, poisoned, and undone his whole race at once.† This is the common butcher, the bloody executioner, that hath killed the prophets, burnt the martyrs, murdered all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the kings and potentates; that has destroyed cities, swallowed empires, butchered and devoured whole nations. Whatever was the weapon it was done by, sin was it that did the execution.‡ Dost thou yet think it but a small thing? If Adam and all his children could be dug out of their graves, and their bodies piled up to heaven, and an inquest were made, what matchless murderer was guilty of all this blood, it would be all found in the skirts of sin. Study the nature of sin till thy heart inclines to fear and loathe it; and meditate on the aggravations of thy particular sins, how thou hast sinned against all God's warnings, against thy own prayers, against mercies, against correction, against the clearest light, against the freest love, against thine own resolutions, against promises, vows, covenants of better obedience, &c. Charge thy heart home with these things, till it blush for shame, and be brought out of all good opinion of itself.§

\* Isa. liii. 4—6

† Rom. vi. 23.

‡ Rom. v. 18, 19.

§ Ezra ix. 6.

Meditate on the desert of sin. It crieth up to heaven; it calls for vengeance.\* Its due wages is death and damnation; it pulls the curse of God upon the soul and body.† The least sinful word or thought lays thee under the infinite wrath of God Almighty.‡ O what a load of wrath, what a weight of curses; what a treasure of vengeance have all the millions of thy sins then deserved!§ O judge thyself that the Lord may not judge thee.||

Meditate upon the deformity and defilement of sin. It is as black as hell, the very image and likeness of the devil drawn upon the soul.¶ It would more affright thee to see thyself in the hateful deformity of thy nature, than to see the devil. There is no mire so unclean, no vomit so loathsome, no carcase or carrion so offensive, no plague or leprosy so noisome as sin, in which thou art rolled, and covered with its odious filth, whereby thou art rendered more displeasing to the pure and holy nature of the glorious God than the most filthy object, composed of whatever is hateful to all thy senses, can be to thee.\*\* Coudest thou take up a toad into thy bosom? Coudest thou cherish it, and take delight in it? Why, thou art as contrary to the pure and perfect holiness of the divine nature, and as loathsome as that is to thee;\* till thou art purified by the blood of Jesus, and the power of renewing grace.

\* Gen. xviii. 21.

† Gal. iii. 10. Deut. xxviii.

‡ Rom. ii. 8, 9. Matt. xii. 36. †† Matt. xxi i. 33.

§ Rom. ii. 5. John iii. 36. || 1 Cor. xi. 31.

Above all other sins, fix the eye of thy consideration on these two. 1. The sin of thy nature. It is to little purpose to lop the branches, while the root of original corruption remains untouched. In vain do men lave out the streams, when the fountain is running that fills up all again. Let the acts of thy repentance (with David's) go to the root of sin.† The heart is never soundly broken, till thoroughly convinced of the heinousness of original sin. Here fix thy thoughts; this is that which makes thee backward to all good; prone to all evil;‡ that sheds blindness, pride, prejudice, unbelief into thy mind; enmity, inconstancy, obstinacy, into thy will; inordinate heats and colds into thy affections; insensibleness, benumbedness, unfaithfulness, into thy conscience; slipperiness into thy memory; and in a word, hath put every wheel of thy soul out of order, and made it of an habitation of holiness, to become a very hell of iniquity.§ This is what has defiled, corrupted, perverted all thy members, and turned them into weapons of unrighteousness, and servants of sin,|| that hath filled the head with carnal and corrupt designs;¶ the hand with sinful practices;\*\* the eyes with wandering and wantonness;†† the tongue with deadly poison;‡‡ that hath opened the ear to tales, flattery and filthy communication, and shut them

§ James iii. 6.      || Rom. vi. 19.      ¶ Mic. ii. 1.

\*\* Isa. i. 13.      †† 2 Pet. ii. 14.      ‡‡ James iii. 8.

† Psa. li. 5.      ‡ Rom. vii. 15.

against the instructions of life;\* and hath rendered thy heart a very mint and forge for sin, and the cursed womb of all deadly conceptions;† so that it poureth forth its wickedness without ceasing;‡ even as naturally, freely, and unweariedly, as a fountain doth pour forth its waters;§ or the raging sea doth cast forth mire and dirt.|| And wilt thou yet be in love with thyself, and tell us any longer of thy good heart? O, never leave meditating on the desperate contagion of original corruption, till, with Ephraim, thou bemoan thyself;¶ and with the deepest shame and sorrow smite on thy breast, as the publican,\*\* and with Job, abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes.†† 2. The particular evil that thou art most addicted to. Find out all its aggravations, set home upon thy heart all God's threats against it. Repentance drives before it the whole herd, but especially sticks the arrow in the beloved sin, and singles this out above the rest, to run it down.‡‡ O labour to make this sin odious to thy soul, and double thy guards and resolutions against it, because this hath and doth most dishonour God and endanger thee.

Direct. III. Strive to affect thy heart with a due sense of thy present misery. Read over the foregoing chapter again and again, and get it out of the book into thy

\* Zech. vii. 11, 12. † Matt. xv. 19. ‡ 2 Pet. ii. 14.

§ Jer. vi. 7. || Isa. lvii. 20. ¶ Jer. xxxi. 18.

\*\* Luke xviii. 13. †† Job. xlii. 6. ‡‡ Psal. xviii. 23



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

Direct. IV. Settle it upon thy heart, that thou art under everlasting inability ever to recover thyself. Never think thy praying, reading, hearing, confessing, amending will work the cure; these must be at-

\* Matt. ix. 12. † Luke xv. 16, 17. ‡ Rev. iii. 18, 19.

tended to, but thou art undone if thou restest in them.\* Thou art a lost man if thou hopest to escape drowning on any other plank but Jesus Christ.† Thou must unlearn thyself, and renounce thy own wisdom, thy own righteousness, thy own strength, and throw thyself wholly upon Christ, as a man that swims casts himself upon the water, or else thou canst not escape. While men trust in themselves, and establish their own righteousness, and have confidence in the flesh, they will not come savingly to Christ.‡ Thou must know thy gain to be but loss and dung, thy strength but weakness, thy righteousness rags and rottenness, before there will be an effectual closure between Christ and thee.§ Can the lifeless carcass shake off its grave-clothes and loose the bands of death? Then mayest thou recover thyself, who art dead in trespasses and sins, and under an impossibility of serving thy Maker acceptably in this condition.|| Therefore, when thou goest to pray or meditate, or to do any of the duties to which thou art here directed, go out of thyself, and call in the help of the Spirit, as despairing to do any thing pleasing to God in thy own strength; yet neglect not thy duty, but lie at the pool, and wait in the way of the Spirit. While the eunuch was reading, then the Holy Ghost did send Philip to him; when

‡ Luke xviii. 9. Phil. iii. 3. † Acts. iv. 12.

|| Rom. viii. 8. Heb. xi. 6. \* Rom. x. 3.

§ Phil. iii. 7, 8, 9. 2 Cor. iii. 5. Isa. lxiv. 6.

the disciples were praying; when Cornelius and his friends were hearing;\* then the Holy Ghost fell upon them and filled them all. Strive to give up thyself to Christ; strive to pray, strive to meditate, strive an hundred and an hundred times, strive to do it as well as thou canst; and while thou art endeavouring in the way of thy duty, the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and help thee to do, what of thyself thou art utterly unable to perform.†

Direct. V. Forthwith renounce all thy sins. If thou yield thyself to the practice of any sin, thou art undone.‡ In vain dost thou hope for life by Christ, except thou depart from iniquity.§ Forsake thy sins, or else thou canst not find mercy.|| Thou canst not be married to Christ, except thou be divorced from sin; give up that traitor, or you can have no peace with heaven; cast the head of Sheba over the wall; keep not Delilah in thy lap. Thou must part with thy sins or with thy soul; if thou spare even one sin, God will not spare thee. Never make excuses; thy sins must die, or thou must die for them.¶ If thou allow of one sin, though but a little, a secret one, though thou mayest plead necessity, and have an hundred shifts and excuses for it, the life of thy soul must go for the life of that sin;\*\* and will it not be dearly bought?

\* Acts viii. 28, 29. iv. 31 x. 44.

† Prov. i. 23.

‡ Rom. vi. 19. § 2 Tim. ii. 19.

|| Prov. xxviii 13.

¶ Psa. lxxviii. 21. \*\* Ezek. xviii. 21.

O sinner! hear and consider. If thou wilt part with thy sins, God will give thee his Christ. Is not this a fair exchange? I testify unto thee this day, that if thou perish, it is not because there was not a Saviour provided, nor life tendered, but because thou preferredst (with the Jews) the murdered before the Saviour, sin before Christ, and lovedst darkness rather than light.\* Search thy heart, therefore, with candles, as the Jews did their houses for leaven before the passover; labour to find out thy sins; enter into thy closet, and consider, What evil have I lived in? What duty have I neglected towards God? What sin have I lived in against my brother? And now strike the darts through the heart of thy sin, as Joab did through Absalom's.† Never stand looking upon thy sin, nor rolling the sweet morsel under thy tongue;‡ but spit it out as poison, with fear and detestation. Alas! what will thy sins do for thee, that thou shouldst stick at parting with them? They will flatter thee, but they will undo thee, and cut thy throat while they smile upon thee, and poison thee while they please thee, and arm the justice and wrath of the infinite God against thee. They will open hell for thee, and pile up fuel to burn thee. Behold the gibbet that they have prepared for thee. O serve them like Haman, and execute them as they would have done thee;

\* John iii. 19. † 2 Sam. xviii. 14. ‡ Job. xx. 12.

away with them, crucify them, and let Christ only be Lord over thee.

Direct VI. Make a solemn choice of God for thy portion and blessedness.\* With all possible devotion and veneration avouch the Lord for thy God; set the world, with all its glory, and paint, and gallantry, with all its pleasures and promotions, on the one hand; and set God, with all his excellencies and perfections, on the other, and see that thou do deliberately make thy choice.† Take up thy rest in God;‡ sit thee down under his shadow;§ let his promises and perfections turn the scale against all the world. Settle it upon thy heart that the Lord is an all-sufficient portion; that thou canst not be miserable whilst thou hast God to live upon. Take him for thy shield and exceeding great reward. God alone is more than all the world, content thyself with him. Let others carry the preferments and glory of the world, place thou thy happiness in his favour; and in the light of his countenance.||

Poor sinner! thou art fallen off from God, and hast provoked his power and wrath against thee; yet know, that of his abundant grace he doth offer to be thy God in Christ.¶ What sayst thou, man? Wilt thou have the Lord for thy God? Why, take this counsel, and thou shalt

\* Deut. xxvi.      † Josh. xxiv. 15.      ‡ John vi. 68.  
§ Cant. ii. 3.      || Psa. iv. 6, 7.      ¶ 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

have him; come to him by his Christ;\* renounce the idols of thy own pleasures, gain, and reputation;† let these be pulled out of the throne, and set God's interest uppermost in thy heart. Take him as God, to be chief in thy affections, estimations, intentions, for he will not endure to have any set above him.‡

Direct. VII. Accept of the Lord Jesus in all his offices, with all his inconveniences, as thine. Upon these terms Christ may be had. Sinner, thou hast undone thyself, and art plunged into a state of most deplorable misery, out of which thou art unable to get; but Jesus Christ is able and ready to help thee, and freely tenders himself to thee.§ Be thy sins ever so many, ever so great, or of ever so long continuance, yet thou shalt be most certainly pardoned and saved, if thou dost not wretchedly neglect the offer that, in the name of God, is here made to thee. The Lord Jesus calleth to thee to look to him and be saved,|| to come unto him, and he will in no wise cast thee out;¶ yea, he is a suitor to thee, and beseeches thee to be reconciled;\*\* he crieth in the streets, he knocketh at thy door, he wooeth thee to accept of him, and live with him.†† If thou die, it is because thou wouldst not come to him for life.‡‡

\* John xiv. 6.

† 1 Thess. i. 9.

‡ Rom. i. 24. Psal. lxxiii. 25.

§ Heb. vii. 25. John iii. 36.

|| Isa. xlv. 22.

¶ John vi. 37.

\*\* 2 Cor. v. 20.

†† Prov. i. 20. Rev. ii. 30.

‡‡ John v. 40.

Now accept of an offered Christ, and thou art made for ever; now give up thy consent to him, and the match is made; all the world cannot hinder it. Do not stand off because of thy unworthiness, man; I tell thee, nothing in the world can undo thee but thy unwillingness. Speak, man, art thou desirous of the match? Wilt thou have Christ in all his relations to be thine; thy King, thy Priest, thy Prophet? Wilt thou have him with all his inconveniences? Take not Christ hand over head, but sit down first and count the cost. Wilt thou lay all at his feet? Wilt thou be content to run all hazards with him? Wilt thou take thy lot with him, fall where it will? Wilt thou deny thyself, and take up thy cross, and follow him? Art thou deliberately, understandingly, freely, fixedly determined to cleave to him in all times and conditions? If so, my soul for thine thou shalt never perish, but art passed from death unto life.\* Here lies the main point of thy salvation, that thou be found in thy covenant-closure with Jesus Christ; and therefore, if thou love thyself, see that thou be faithful to God and thy soul here.

Direct. VIII. Resign up all thy powers and faculties, and thy whole interest to be his. They gave their own selves unto the Lord.† Present your bodies a living sacrifice.‡ The Lord seeks not yours, but you. Resign therefore thy body with all its

\* John iii. 16. † 2 Cor. viii. 5. ‡ Rom. xii. 1.

members to him, and thy soul with all its powers, that he may be glorified in thy body, and in thy spirit, which are his.\*

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

Direct. IX. Make choice of the laws of Christ as the rule of thy words, thoughts, and actions.§ This is the true convert's choice. But here remember these three rules: 1. You must choose them all; there is no getting to heaven by a partial obedience.|| None must think it enough to take up with the cheap and easy part of religion, and let alone the duties that are costly and self-denying, that grate upon the interest of the flesh; you must take all or none. A sincere convert, though he makes most conscience of the greatest sins, and weightiest duties, yet he makes true conscience of little sins and of all duties.¶ 2. For all times, for prosperity and adversity, whether it rain or shine. A true con-

\* 1 Cor. vi. 20.

† Luke xiv. 33.

‡ Matt. x. 37. Luke xiv. 26. &c. § Psal. cxix. 30.

|| Psal. xcix. 6. 128, 160. Ezek. xviii. 21.

¶ Psal. cxix. 6, 113. Matt. xxiii. 2, 23.



vert is resolved in his way, he will stand to his choice; he will not set his back to the wind, and be of the religion of the times: I have stuck to thy testimonies; I have inclined my heart to thy statutes always, even unto the end. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever. I will have respect to thy statutes continually.\*

3. This must not be done hand over head, but deliberately and understandingly. The disobedient son said, I go, sir, but he went not.† How fairly did they promise, All that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, we will do it! And it is likely they spoke as they meant; but when it came to the trial, it was found that there was not such a heart in them as to do what they had promised.‡

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

Direct. X. Take heed of delaying thy conversion, and set about a speedy and present turning; I made haste and delayed not.|| Remember and tremble at the

\* Psa. cxix. 31, 44, 93, 111, 117. † Matt. xxi. 30.

‡ Deut. v. 27, 29.

§ Psa. xviii. 23. cxix. 6

|| Psa. cxix. 60.

sad instance of the foolish virgins, that came not till the door of mercy was shut;\* and of a convinced Felix, who put off Paul to another season, which we do not find ever came.† O come in while it is called to-day, lest thou shouldest be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, lest the day of grace should be over, and the things that belong to thy peace should be hid from thine eyes. Now mercy is wooing thee, now Christ is waiting to be gracious to thee, and the Spirit of God is striving with thee. Now ministers are calling. Now conscience is stirring. Now the market is open, and thou mayest buy oil. Now Christ is offered for thy acceptance. O strike in with the offers of grace; O! now or never. If thou make light of this offer, God may swear in his wrath thou shalt not taste of his supper.‡

Direct. XI. Attend conscientiously upon the word as the means appointed for thy conversion.§ Attend, I say, not customarily, but conscientiously; with this desire, design, hope, and expectation, that thou mayest be converted by it. To every sermon thou shouldest come with this thought—O, I hope God will now come in; I hope this day may be the time, this may be the man by whom God will bring me home. When thou art coming to the ordinances, lift up thy heart thus to God; Lord, let this be the sabbath, let this be

\* Matt. xxv. 11

† Acts xxiv. 25.

‡ Luke xiv. 24.

§ James i. 19. -1-Cor. iv. 15.

the season wherein I may receive renewing grace. O let it be said, that to-day such a one was born unto thee!

Direct. XII. Strike in with the Spirit when he begins to work upon thy heart. When he works convictions, O do not stifle them, but join in with him, and beg the Lord to carry on conviction to conversion. Quench not the Spirit; do not outstrive him, do not resist him. Beware of stifling convictions with evil company or worldly business. When thou findest any troubles for sin, and fears about thy eternal state, beg of God that they may never leave thee till they have wrought off thy heart thoroughly from sin, and brought it over to Jesus Christ. Say to him, Strike home, Lord, leave not the work in the midst. If thou seest that I am not wounded enough, that I am not troubled enough, wound me yet deeper, Lord, O go to the bottom of my corruption, and let out the life-blood of my sins. Thus yield up thyself to the workings of the Spirit, and spread thy sails to his gusts.

Direct. XIII. Set upon the constant and diligent use of serious and fervent prayer. He that neglects prayer is a profane and unsanctified sinner;\* he that is not constant in prayer is but an hypocrite.† This is one of the first things conversion appears in, that it sets men on praying;‡ therefore, set to this duty. Let never a day

\* Job. xv. 4. † Job xxvii. 10. ‡ Acts. ix. 11

pass over thee, wherein thou hast not, morning and evening, set apart some time for set and solemn prayer in secret. Call thy family also together daily and duly, to worship God with thee. Woe be unto thee, if thine be found among the families that call not on God's name.\* But cold and lifeless devotions will not reach half way to heaven. Be fervent and importunate; importunity will carry it; but, without violence, the kingdom of heaven will not be taken.† Thou must strive to enter;‡ and wrestle with tears and supplications, as Jacob, if thou meanest to carry the blessing.§ Thou art undone for ever without grace, and therefore, thou must set to it, and resolve to take no denial. That man who is fixed in this resolution, Well, I must have grace, and I will never give over till I have grace; I will never leave seeking, waiting, and striving with God and my own heart, till he do renew me by the power of his grace—this man is in the likeliest way to win grace.

Direct. XIV. Forsake thy evil company,|| and forbear the occasions of sin.¶ Thou wilt never be turned from sin, till thou wilt decline and forego temptations of sin.

I never expect thy conversion from sin, unless thou art brought to some self-denial as to flee the occasions. If thou wilt be nibbling at the bait, and playing on the brink, and tampering and meddling with

\* Jer. x. 25. † Matt. xi. 12. ‡ Luke xiii. 24.

§ Gen. xxxii. 24. compared with Hosea xii. 4.

|| Prov. ix. 6.

¶ Prov. xxiii. 31.

the snare, thy soul will surely be taken. Where God doth expose men in his providence unavoidably to temptation, and the occasions are such as we cannot remove, we may expect special assistance in the use of his means; but when we tempt God by running into danger, he will not engage to support us when we are tempted. And of all temptations, one of the most fatal and pernicious is evil company. O, what hopeful beginnings have these often stifled! O, the souls, the estates, the families, the towns that these have ruined! How many poor sinners have been enlightened and convinced, and been just ready to give the devil the slip, and have even escaped the snare, and yet wicked company have pulled them back at last, and made them seven fold more the children of hell? In a word, I have no hopes of thee, except thou wilt shake off thy evil company. Christ speaketh to thee as to them in another case, If thou seek me, then let these go their way.\* Thy life lies upon it; forsake these, or else thou canst not live.† Wilt thou be worse than the beast, to run on when thou seest the Lord with a drawn sword in the way?‡ Let this sentence be written in capitals upon thy conscience, **A COMPANION OF FOOLS SHALL BE DESTROYED.**§ The Lord hath spoken it, and who shall reverse it? And wilt thou run upon destruction

\* John xviii. 8.

† Prov. ix. 6.

‡ Num. xxii. 33.

§ Prov. xiii. 20.

when God himself doth forewarn thee? If God do ever change thy heart, it will appear in the change of thy company. O fear and flee the gulf, by which so many thousand souls have been swallowed up in perdition. It will be hard for thee, indeed, to make thy escape; thy companions will mock thee out of thy religion, and will study to fill thee with prejudices against strictness, as ridiculous and comfortless. They will be flattering thee, and alluring thee, but remember the warning of the Holy Ghost; My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, come with us, cast in thy lot among us; walk thou not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path, avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and pass away; for the way of the wicked is darkness, they know not at what they stumble. They lay wait for their own blood, they lurk privily for their own lives.\*

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

\*Prov. i. 10—18. iv. 14.

## CHAPTER VII.

CONTAINING THE MOTIVES TO CONVERSION

Though what is already said of the necessity of Conversion, and of the miseries of the unconverted, might be sufficient to induce any considering mind to resolve upon a present turning or conversion unto God, yet knowing what a piece of desperate obstinacy and untractableness the heart of man naturally is, I have thought it necessary to add to the means of conversion, and directions for a covenant-closure with God in Christ, some motives to persuade you hereunto.

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

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

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

1. The God that made thee, does most graciously invite thee.

First. His most sweet and merciful nature doth invite thee. O the kindness of God, his yearning bowels, his tender mercies. They are infinitely above our thoughts, higher than heaven, what can we do? Deeper than hell what can we know?\* He is full of compassion, and gracious; long suffering, and plenteous in mercy.† This is a great argument to persuade sinners to come in. Turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. If God

\* Job xi. 7, 8, 9.

† Psalm lxxxvi. 15.



would not repent of the evil, it were some discouragement to us, why we should not repent. If there were no hopes of mercy, it were no wonder why rebels should stand out; but never had subjects such a gracious prince; such pity, patience, clemency, piety, to deal with as you have. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?\* O sinners! see what a God you have to deal with ;if you will but turn, he will turn again and have compassion on you. He will subdue your iniquities, and cast all your sins into the depths of the sea.† Return unto me, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will return unto you.‡ Sinners do not fail because they have too high thoughts of God's mercies, but because: 1. They overlook his justice. 2. They promise themselves mercy out of God's way; his mercy is beyond all imagination;§ great mercies;|| manifold mercies;¶ tender mercies;\*\*\* sure mercies;†† everlasting mercies;‡‡ and are all thy own, if thou wilt but turn. Art thou willing to come in? Why the Lord hath laid aside his terror erected a throne of grace, holds forth the golden sceptre; touch and live. Would a merciful man slay his enemy when prostrate at his feet, acknowledging his wrong, begging pardon, and offering to enter with him into a covenant of peace? Much less

\* Mic. vii. 18.

† Mic. vii. 19.

‡ Mal. iii. 7. Zech. i. 3.

§ Isa. lv. 9.

|| 1 Chron. xxi. 13. ¶ Neh. ix. 19. \*\*\* Ps. xxv. 6.

†† Isa. lv. 3.

‡‡ Ps. ciii. 17. Isa. liv. 8.

will the merciful God. Study his name;\* read their experience.†

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

\* Exod. xxxiv. 7.

†-Neh. ix. 17.

‡ Jer. iii. 11—14, 22.

§ Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

new spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore, turn yourselves, and live ye.\*

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

2. The doors of heaven are thrown open to thee, the everlasting gates are set wide for thee, and an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven administered to thee. Christ now bespeaks thee, as Jezebel did Ahab, Arise and take possession.† View the glory of the other world, as set forth in the map of the gospel, get thee up into Pisgah of the promises, and lift up thine eyes northward and southward, and eastward and westward, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, and that goodly mountain. Behold the paradise of God, watered with the streams of glory. Arise, and walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for the land which thou seest, the Lord will give it thee for ever, if thou wilt but return.‡ Let me say to thee as Paul to Agrippa, Believest thou the prophets? If thou believest indeed, do but view what glorious things are

\* Ezek. xviii. 21, 22, 30—32. † 1 Kings xxi. 15.

‡ Gen. xiii. 14, 15, 17.

spoken of the city of God;\* and know, that all this is here tendered in the name of God to thee. As verily as God is true, it shall be for ever thine, if thou wilt but thoroughly turn and be converted.

Behold the city of pure transparent gold, whose foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones, whose gates are pearls, whose light is glory, whose temple is God. Believest thou this? If thou dost, art thou not worse than distracted, that wilt not take possession when the gates are flung open to thee, and thou art bid to enter? O ye sons of folly, will you embrace the dunghill, and refuse the kingdom? Behold the Lord takes you up into the mountain, shows you the kingdom of heaven, and all the glory thereof, and tells you, All this will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me; if you will submit to mercy, accept my Son, and serve me in righteousness and holiness. O fools, and slow of heart to believe! Will you court the harlot? will you seek and serve the world, and neglect eternal glory? What! not enter into Paradise, when the flaming sword, which was once set to keep you out, is now used to drive you in! But you will say, I am uncharitable to think you infidels and unbelievers. Why, what shall I think you? Either you are desperate unbelievers, that do not credit it, or stark distracted, that you know and believe the excellency and eternity of this

\* Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

glory, and yet do so fearfully neglect it. Surely you have either no faith, or no reason, and I had almost said, conscience shall tell you so before I leave you.

Do but attend to what is offered you. O blessed kingdom! a kingdom of glory;\* a kingdom of righteousness;† a kingdom of peace;‡ and an everlasting kingdom;§ here thou shalt dwell, here thou shalt reign for ever, and the Lord shall seat thee on a throne of glory;|| and with his own hand shall set the royal diadem upon thy head, and give thee a crown, not of thorns, for there shall be no sinning nor suffering there;¶ not of gold, (for that shall be viler than the dirt in that day,) but a crown of life;\*\* a crown of righteousness;†† a crown of glory;‡‡ yea, thou shalt put on glory as a robe,§§ and shalt shine like the sun in the firmament, in the glory of thy Father.|||| Look now upon thy dirty flesh, thy clay, the worms' meat. This very flesh, this lump, this carcase, shall be brighter than the stars.¶¶ In short, thou shalt be made like unto the angels of God,\*\*\* and behold his face in righteousness.††† Look in now and tell me, Dost thou yet believe? If not, conscience must pronounce thee an infidel; for it is the very word of God that I speak.

\* 1 Thess. ii. 12. † 2 Pet. iii. 13. ‡ Rom. xiv. 17.

§ 2 Pet. i. 11. || Matt. xix. 28.

¶ Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 3, 5.

\*\* James i. 12.

†† 2 Tim. iv. 8. ‡‡ 1 Pet. v. 4. §§ 1 Cor. xv. 43.

|||| Matt. xiii. 43. ¶¶ Dan. xii. 3. \*\*\* Luke xx. 36.

††† Psalm xvii. 15.

But if thou say thou believest, let me next know thy resolutions. Wilt thou embrace this for thy happiness? Wilt thou forego thy sinful gains, thy forbidden pleasures? Wilt thou trample on the world's esteem, and spit in the harlot's face, and stop thy ears at her flatteries, and wrest thee out of her embraces? Wilt thou be content to take up with reproach and poverty, if it lie in thy way to heaven, and follow the Lord with humble self-denial in a mortified and flesh-displeasing life? If so, all is thine, and that for ever.

And art thou not fairly offered? Is it not pity but he should be damned that will needs go on and perish, when all this may be had for the taking? Wilt thou take God at his word? Wilt thou let go thy holdfast of the world, and rid thy hands of thy sins, and lay hold on eternal life? If not, let conscience tell thee whether thou art not distracted or bewitched, that thou shouldst neglect so happy a choice, by which thou mightest be made blessed for ever.

3. God will settle unspeakable privileges upon thee.\* Though the full of your blessedness be deferred till hereafter, yet God will give you no little things in hand.

He will redeem you from your thralldom;† he will pluck you from the paw of the lion;‡ the serpent shall bruise your

\* 1 Cor. iii. 22. Heb. xii, 22, 24.

† John viii. 36.

‡ Col. i. 13.

heel, but you shall bruise his head;\* he shall deliver you from the present evil world;† prosperity shall not destroy you, adversity shall not separate between him and you;‡ he will redeem you from the power of the grave,§ and make the king of terrors a messenger of peace to you. He will take out the curse from the cross;|| and make affliction the fining-pot, the fan, the physic, to blow off the chaff, purify the metal, and purge the mind.¶ He will save you from the arrest of the law, and turn the curse into a blessing to you.\*\* He hath the keys of hell and death, and shutteth that no man openeth,†† and he will shut its mouth, as once he did the lions;‡‡ that you shall not be hurt of the second death.§§

But he will not only save you from misery, but install you into unspeakable prerogatives! He will bestow himself upon you, he will be a friend unto you, and a father to you;||| he will be a sun and a shield to you;¶¶ in a word, he will be a God to you,\*\*\* and what can be said more? What you may expect that a God should do for you, and be to you; that he will be, that he will do. She that marries a prince, expects that he should do for her

\* Gen. iii. 15. † Gal. i. 4. ‡ Rom. viii. 25, 38.

§ Psalm xlix. 15. || Psalm cxix. 71.

¶ Dan. xii. 10. Isa. xxvii. 9.

\*\* Rom. vi. 10. Isa. xxvii. 9.

†† Rev. iii. 7. i. 18.

‡‡ Dan. vi. 22.

§§ Rev. ii. 11.

||| 2 Cor. vi. 18.

¶¶ Psa. lxxxiv. 11.

\*\*\* Gen. xvii. 7.

like a prince that she may live in a suitable state, and have an answerable dowry. He that hath a king for his father, or friend expects that he should do for him like a king. Alas! the kings and monarchs of the earth, so much above you, are but like the painted butterflies among the rest of their kind, or the fair coloured palmer-worm, among the rest of the worms, if compared with God. As he doth infinitely exceed the glory and power of his glittering dust, so he will, beyond all proportion, exceed in doing for his favourites whatever princes can do for theirs. He will give you grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from you.\* He will take you for his sons and daughters, and make you heirs of his promises;† and establish his everlasting covenant with you.‡ He will justify you from all that law, conscience and satan can charge upon you.§ He will give you free access into his presence, and accept your person, and receive your prayers.|| He will abide in you, and make you the man of his secrets, and hold a constant and friendly communion with you.¶ His ear shall be open, his door open, his store open at all times to you. His blessing shall rest upon you, and he will make your enemies to serve you, and work out all things for good unto you.\*\*

\* Psa. lxxxiv. 11.

† Heb. vi. 17.

‡ Jer. xxxii. 40.

§ Rom. viii. 33, 34.

|| Eph. iii. 12. i. 6. 1 John v. 14.

¶ John xiv. 23. xv. 15. 1 John i. 3.

\*\* Psalm cxv. 13. Rom. viii. 28.



4. The terms of mercy are brought as low as possible to you. God has stooped as low to sinners as with honour he can. He will not be thought the author of sin, nor stain the glory of his holiness. And whither could he come lower than he hath, unless he should do this? He hath abated the impossible terms of the first covenant.\* He doth not impose any thing unreasonable or impossible as a condition of life upon you. Two things were necessary to be done, according to the tenor of the first covenant. 1. That you should fully satisfy the demands of justice for past offences. 2. That you should perform personally, perfectly and perpetually, the whole law for the time to come. Both these are to us impossible;† but behold God's gracious abatement in both. He doth not stand upon satisfaction; he is content to take of the surety (and him of his own providing too) what he might have exacted from you.‡ He declares himself to have received a ransom,§ and that he expects nothing but that you should accept his Son, and he shall be righteousness and redemption to you.|| And for the future obedience, here he is content to yield to your weakness and omit the rigour. He doth not stand upon perfection as a condition of life, though he

\* Jer. iii. 23. Mark v. 36. Acts. xvi. 31. iii. 19. Prov. xxviii. 13.

† Rom. viii. 3.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 19.

§ Job xxxiii. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 6.

|| John i. 12 1 Cor. i. 30.

still insists upon it as his due, but is content to accept of sincerity.\* And if you come in his Christ, and set your hearts to please him, and make it the chief of your care, he will approve and reward you, though the vessel be marred in your hands.

O, consider your Makers' condescension! Let me say to you as Naaman's servant to him, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it?—How much rather when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?‡ If God had demanded some terrible, some severe and rigorous thing of you, to escape eternal damnation, would you not have done it? Suppose it had been to spend all your days in sorrow in some howling wilderness, or pine yourselves with famine, or to offer the fruit of your bodies for the sin of your souls, would you not have thankfully accepted eternal redemption, though these had been the conditions? If your offended Creator should have held you but one year upon the rack, and then bid you come and forsake your sins, accept Christ, and serve him a few years in self-denial, or lie in this case for ever and ever, do you think you should have stuck at the offer, and disputed the terms, and have been unresolved whether you were to accept of the

\* Gen. xvii. 1. Prov. xi. 20.

† 2 Cor. viii. 12. 2 Chron. vi. 8. Heb. xi. 17.

‡ 2 Kings v. 13.

motion? O sinner, return and live; why shouldst thou die when life is to be had for the taking, and mercy seems beholden to thee (as it were) to be saved? Couldst thou say, indeed, Lord, I knew that thou wast an hard man,\* thou hadst some little excuse; but when the God of heaven has stooped so low, and condescended so far, if now thou shouldst stand off, who shall plead for thee?

Objection. Notwithstanding all these abatements, I am no more able to perform these conditions (in themselves so easy) of Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience, than to satisfy and fulfil the law.

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

5. Wherein you are impotent, God doth offer grace to enable you. I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded.† What though you are plunged into the ditch of that misery, from which you can never get out, Christ offereth to help you out; he reacheth out his hand to you, and if you perish, it is for refusing his help. Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man open to me I will come in.‡ What though you are poor, and wretched, and blind and naked! Christ offereth a cure for your blindness, a covering for your nakedness,

\* Matt. xxv. 24.    † Prov. i. 24.    ‡ Rev. iii. 20.

a remedy for your poverty; he tenders you his righteousness, his grace. I counsel thee to buy of me gold, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.\* Do you say, The condition is impossible, for I have not wherewith to buy! You must know that this buying is without money and without price;† this buying is by begging and seeking with diligence and constancy in the use of Gods' means.‡ God commandeth thee to know him and to fear him. Dost thou say, Yea, but my mind is blinded, and my heart is hardened from his fear! I answer, God doth offer to enlighten thy mind, and to teach thee his fear, that is presented to thy choice; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.§ So that now if men live in ignorance, and estrangement from the Lord, it is because they will not understand and desire the knowledge of his ways.|| If thou criest after knowledge, if thou seekest her as silver, &c. then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.¶ Is not here a fair offer? Turn ye at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you.\*\* Though of yourselves you can do nothing, yet you may do all through his Spirit enabling you, and he doth offer assistance to

\* Rev. iii. 17, 18. †Isa. lv. 1. ‡ Prov. ii. 3, 4.

§ Prov. i. 29. || Job. xxi. 14. ¶ Prov. ii. 3—5

\*\* Prov. i. 23.

you. God bids you wash and make you clean.\* You say you are unable, as much as the leopard to wash out his spots,† yea, but the Lord doth offer to purge you, so that if you will be filthy still, it is through your own wilfulness. I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged.‡ O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be.§ God doth wait, when you will be made clean, when you will yield to his motions, accept of his offers, and let him do for you and in you, what you cannot do for yourselves. You do not know how much God will do upon your importunity, if you will be but restless and instant with him.||

Though God hath not bound himself by express promise to wicked men, to give them grace in the diligent use of the means, yet he hath given them abundance of encouragement to expect it from him, if they seek it earnestly in his way. His most gracious nature is abundant encouragement. If a rich and most bountiful man should see thee in misery, and bid thee come to his door, wouldst thou not with confidence expect at thy coming to find some relief? Thou art not able to believe, nor repent. God appoints thee to use such and such means, in order to thy obtaining faith and repentance; doth not this argue, that God will bestow these upon thee, if thou dost ply him diligently

\* Isa. i. 16.      † Jer. xiii. 23.      ‡ Ezek. xxiv 13.

§ Jer. xiii. 27.      || Luke xi. 8. xviii. 5.

in prayer, meditation, reading, hearing, self-examination, and the rest of his means? Otherwise God should but mock his poor creatures, to put them upon these self-denying endeavours, and then when they have been hard put to it, and continued waiting upon him for grace, deny them at last. Surely if a good natured man would not deal thus, much less will the most merciful and gracious God.

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### THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE

And now, my brethren, let me know your minds. What do you intend to do? Will you go on and die? or, will you set upon a thorough and speedy conversion, and lay hold on eternal life? How long will ye linger in Sodom? How long will ye halt between two opinions?\* Are you not yet resolved whether Christ or Barabbas, whether bliss or torment, whether the land of Cabul,† or the paradise of God be the better choice? Is it a disputable case, whether the Abana and Pharpar of Damascus, be better than all the streams of Eden; or whether the vile puddle of sin, is to be preferred before the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb? Can the world, in good earnest, do that for you, which Christ can? Will it stand by you to eternity? Will pleasures, lands, titles, or

\* 1 Kings xviii. 21.

† 1 Kings ix. 13.

treasures descend with you?\* If not, had you not need look after somewhat that will? What mean you to stand wavering? to be off and on? Foolish children! how long will ye stick between the womb and the world? Shall I leave you at last no farther than Agrippa, but "almost persuaded?" Why, you are forever lost if left there; as good not at all, as not altogether Christians. You are half in the mind to give over your former negligent life, and set to a strict and holy course; you could wish you were as some others are, and could do as they can do. How long will you rest in idle wishes and fruitless purposes? When will you come to a fixed, firm, and full resolve? Do not you see how Satan gulls you, by tempting you to delays? How long hath he drawn you on in the way of perdition! How many years have you been purposing to mend! What if God should have taken you off this while?

Well, put me not off with a dilatory answer. Tell me not of hereafter, I must have your immediate consent. If you be not now resolved, while the Lord is treating with you, and courting you, much less are you likely to be hereafter, when these impressions are worn out, and you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

\*Psalm xlix. 17. 1 Tim. vi. 7.

\* Luke xix. 42.

† John iv. 4.

‡ Luke x. 42. xvi. 25. Prov. i. 27—29.

§ Deut. xxx. 19.

Will you give me your hands? Will you set open the doors, and give the Lord Jesus the full and ready possession? Will you put your names into his covenant? Will you subscribe? What do you resolve upon? If you are still upon your delays, my labour is lost, and all is like to come to nothing. Fain I would that you should now put in your adventures. Come, cast in your lot, make your choice. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation;—to-day if you will hear his voice. Why should not this be the day from whence thou shouldst be able to date thy happiness? Why shouldst thou venture a day longer in this dangerous and dreadful condition? What if God should this night require thy soul? O that thou mightest know in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, before they be hid from thine eyes.\* This is thy day, and it is but a day.† Others have had their day, and have received their doom, and now art thou brought upon the stage of this world, here to act thy part for the whole eternity. Remember thou art now upon thy good behaviour for everlasting; if thou make not a wise choice now, thou art undone for ever. Look, what thy present choice is, such must thine eternal conditions be.‡

And is it true, indeed? Is life and death at thy choice? Yea it is as true as truth is.§

\* Luke xix. 42.

† John ix. 4.

‡ Luke x. 42. xvi. 25. Prov. i. 27—29.

§ Deut. xxx. 19.



Why then, what hinders but that thou shouldst be happy? Nothing doth or can hinder but thine own wilful neglect or refusal. It was the speech of the eunuch to Philip, See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? So I may say to thee, See here is Christ, here is mercy, pardon, and life; what hinders but that thou shouldst be pardoned, and saved? One of the martyrs, as he was praying at the stake, had his pardon set by him in a box (which indeed he refused deservedly, because upon unworthy terms) but here the terms are most honourable and easy. O sinner! wilt thou burn with thy pardon by thee? Why, do but forthwith give up thy consent to Christ, to renounce thy sins, deny thyself, take up the yoke and the cross, and thou carriest the day. Christ is thine, pardon, peace, life, and blessedness, all are thine. And is not this an offer worth embracing? Why shouldst thou hesitate, or doubtfully dispute about the case? Is it not past controversy, whether God, be better than sin, and glory than vanity? Why shouldst thou forsake thy own mercies, and sin against thy own life? When wilt thou shake off thy sloth, and lay by thine excuses? Boast not thyself of to-morrow, thou knowest not where this night may lodge thee.\*

Beloved, now the Holy Spirit is striving with you; he will not always strive. Hast thou not felt thine heart warmed by the

\* Prov. xxvii. 1.

word, and been almost persuaded to leave off thy sins and come unto God! Hast thou not felt some good motions in thy mind, wherein thou hast been warned of thy danger, and told what thy careless course would end in? It may be thou art like young Samuel, who, when the Lord called once and again, knew not the voice of the Lord;\* but these motions and items are the offers, and essays, and callings, and strivings of the Spirit. O, take the advantage of the tide, and know the day of thy visitation.

Now the Lord Jesus stretcheth wide his arms to receive you; he beseecheth you by us. How movingly, how meltingly, how pitifully, how compassionately he calleth! The church is put into a sudden ecstasy upon the sound of his voice, The voice of my beloved!† O, wilt thou turn a deaf ear to his voice? It is not the voice that breaketh the cedars, and maketh the mountains skip like a calf; that shaketh the wilderness, and divideth the flames of fire; it is not Sinai's thunder, but a soft and still voice. It is not the voice of Mount Ebal, a voice of cursing and terror, but the voice of Mount Gerizim, the voice of blessing, and of glad tidings of good things. It is not the voice of the trumpet, nor the voice of war, but a message of peace from the King of Peace.‡ Methinks it should be with thee as with the spouse, My soul failed when he spake.§ I may say unto

\* 1 Sam. iii. 6, 7.

† Cant. ii. 8.

‡ Eph. vi. 15. 2 Cor. v. 18, 20.

§ Cant. v. 6.

thee, O sinner! as Martha to her sister, The Master is come and he calleth for thee.\* O, now with Mary arise quickly, and come unto him! How sweet are his invitations! He crieth in the open concourse, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.† He broaches his own body for thee, O come and lay thy mouth to his side! How free is he! he excludeth none. Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely.‡ Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither. Come eat of my bread, drink of the wine that I have mingled. Forsake the foolish and live.§ Come unto me, &c., take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls.|| Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.|| How doth he bemoan the obstinate refuser. O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!\*\* Behold me, behold me; I have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious people.†† O be persuaded now at last to throw yourselves into the arms of love.

Behold, O ye sons of men, the Lord Jesus hath thrown open the prison, and now he cometh to you, as the magistrates once to them,‡‡ and beseeches you to come out. If it were from a palace or paradise

\* John xi. 28. † John vii. 37. Prov. i. 21.

‡ Rev. xxii. 17. § Prov. ix. 4—6 || Matt. xi. 28, 29

¶ John vi. 37. \*\* Matt. xxiii. 37. †† Isa. lxxv. 1, 2.

‡‡ Acts. xvi. 39.

that Christ did call you, it were no wonder if you were unwilling; (and yet how easily was Adam deluded thence!) but it is from your prison, sirs; from your chains, from the dungeon, from darkness, that he call-eth you;\* and will you not come? He calls you unto liberty,† and will you not hearken? His yoke is easy, his laws are liberty, his service freedom;‡ and whatever prejudices you may have against his ways, if a God may be believed, you shall find them all pleasure and peace, and shall taste sweetness and joy unutterable, and take infinite delight and felicity in them.§

Beloved, I am loath to leave you; I can not tell how to give you over. I am now ready to shut up, but would fain strike this bargain between Christ and you before I end. What! shall I leave you as I found you at last? Have you read hitherto, and are you not yet resolved upon a present abandoning all your sins, and closing with Jesus Christ? Alas! what shall I say? What shall I do? Will you resist all my importunity? Have I run in vain? Have I used so many arguments, and spent so much time to persuade you, and will you at last disappoint me? But it is a small matter that you reject me; you put a slight upon the God that made you; you reject the bowels and beseeching of a Saviour and will be found resisters of the Holy

\* Isa. xlii. 6, 7.

† Gal. v. 13.

‡ Matt. xi. 30. James i. 25. 1 Cor. vii. 22.

§ Prov. iii. 17. Psa. cxix. 103, 111, 165. 1 Pet. i. 8.

Ghost,\* if you will not now be prevailed with to repent and be converted.

Well, though I have called you long, and you have refused, I shall yet this once more lift up my voice like a trumpet. Once more I shall call regardless sinners, that, if it be possible, I may awaken them; O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.† Unless you be resolved to die, lend your ears to the last calls of mercy. Behold, in the name of God I make open proclamation to you. Hearken unto me, O ye children, hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.‡

Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat. Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.§

Ho, every one that is sick of any manner of disease or torment,|| or is possessed

\* Acts. vii. 51.

† Jer. xxii. 29.

‡ Prov. viii. 32, 33.

§ Isa. lv. 1—3.

|| Matt. iv. 23, 24.

with an evil spirit, whether of pride, or fury, or lust, or covetousness, come ye to the Physician; bring away your sick. Lo, here is he that healeth all manner of sicknesses, and all manner of diseases among the people.

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

Ho, every ignorant sinner, come and buy eye-salve that thou mayest see.† Away with thy excuses; for thou art forever lost if thou continuest in this state;‡ but accept of Christ for thy prophet, and he will be a light unto thee.§ Cry unto him for knowledge, study his word, take pains about the principles of religion, humble thyself before him, and he will teach thee his way, and make thee wise unto salvation.|| But if thou wilt not follow him in the diligent use of his means, but idly sit down because thou hast but one talent, he will condemn thee for a wicked and slothful servant.¶

\* Heb. vi. 18. Psalm xlvi. 3.

† Rev. iii. 18. ‡ 2 Cor. iv. 3.

§ Isa. xlii. 6. Eph. v. 14.

|| Matt. xiii. 36. Luke viii. 9. John v. 39.

¶ Matt. xxv. 24—26.

Ho, every profane sinner, come in and live. Return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on thee. O be entreated, return and come, thou that hast defiled thy mouth with oaths and execrations. All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven thee,\* if thou wilt but thoroughly turn unto Christ, and come in. Give up thyself unto Christ as a vessel of holiness, alone for his use; and then, though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; and though they be as crimson, they shall be as white as snow.†

Hear, O ye drunkards, how long will you be drunken? Put away your wine.‡ Give up yourselves to Christ, to live soberly, righteously, and godly; embrace his righteousness, accept his government, and though you have been swine, he will wash you.§

Hear, O ye loose companions, whose delight is in vain and wicked society, to sport away your time in carnal mirth and jollity with them. Come in at Wisdom's call, and choose her and her ways, and you shall live.||

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

\* Matt. iii. 28.

† Luke vii. 47. Isa. i. 18.

‡ 1 Sam. i. 14.

§ Rev. i. 5.

¶ Prov. ix. 5, 6.

¶ Prov. i. 22, 23.

you shall be washed, you shall be justified, you shall be sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.\*

Ho, every formal professor, that art but a lukewarm dough-baked Christian, and retest in the form of godliness, give over thy halving and thy halting, be a Christian throughout, be zealous and repent; and then, though thou hast been an offence to Christ's stomach, thou shalt be the joy of his heart.†

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

\* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

† Rev. iii. 16, 19, 20.

‡ Deut. xxx. 19.

§ Gen. xxiv. 49.

|| Gen. xxiv. 57, 58.

¶ Matt. x. 14, 15.



horrid aggravation of your obstinacy, and additions to your misery? Judge in yourselves. Do you not think their condemnation will be doubly dreadful, that shall go on in their sins, after all endeavors to recall them? Doubtless it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, yea, for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for you.\*

Beloved, if you have any pity for your perishing souls, close with the present offers of mercy. If the God that made you have any authority with you, obey his command, and come in. If you are not the despisers of grace, and would not shut up the doors of mercy against yourselves, repent and be converted; let not heaven stand open for you in vain. Let not the Lord Jesus open his wares, and bid you buy without money and without price, in vain. Let not his ministers and his Spirit strive with you in vain, and leave you now at last unpersuaded, lest the sentence go forth against you. The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain, reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.†

Father of Spirits! take the heart in hand that is too hard for my weakness. Do not thou end, though I have done; half a word from thy effectual power will do the work. O thou that hast the key of David, that openest and no man shutteth, open

\* Matt. xi. 22—24.

† Jer. vi. 29, 30.

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

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MR. ALLEINE'S COUNCIL FOR PERSONAL AND FAMILY GODLINESS

Beloved, I despair of ever bringing you to salvation without sanctification, or possessing you of happiness without persuading you to holiness. God knows, I have not the least hope ever to see one of your faces in heaven except you be converted, and sanctified, and exercise your-

selves unto godliness. I beseech you, study personal godliness and family godliness.

1. Personal godliness. Let it be your first care to set up Christ in your hearts. See that you make all your worldly interests to stoop to him, that you be entirely and unreservedly devoted unto him. If you wilfully, and deliberately, and ordinarily harbour any sin, you are undone. See that you unfeignedly take the law of Christ as the rule of your words, thoughts, and actions; and subject your whole man, members, and minds, faithfully to him. If you have not a true respect to all God's commandments, you are unsound at heart. O study to get the image and impress of Christ upon you within. Begin with your hearts, else you build without any foundation. Labor to get a saving change within, or else all external performances will be to no purpose. And then study to show forth the power of godliness in the life. Let piety be your first and great business; it is the highest point of justice to give God his due. Beware that none of you be a prayerless person; for that is a most certain discovery that you are a Christless and graceless person; or one that is a very stranger to the fear of God. Suffer not your Bibles to gather dust; see that you converse daily with the word. That man can never lay claim to blessedness, whose delight is not in the law of the Lord. Let meditation and self-examination be your daily exercise.

But piety without charity is but the half of Christianity; or rather impious hypocrisy. We may not divide the tables; see, therefore, that you do justly and love mercy, and let equity and charity run like an even thread throughout all your dealings. Be you temperate in all things, and let chastity and sobriety be your undivided companions. Let truth and purity, seriousness and modesty, heavenliness and gravity, be the constant ornaments of your speech. Let patience and humility, simplicity and sincerity, shine out in all the parts of your conversation. See that you forget and forgive wrongs, and requite them with kindness, as you would be found the children of the Most High. Be merciful in your censures, and put the most favourable construction upon your brethren's carriage, that their actions will reasonably bear. Be slow in promising, punctual in fulfilling. Let meekness and innocence, affability, yieldingness, and simplicity, commend your conversation to all men. Let none of your relations want that love and reverence, that tenderness, care, and vigilance, which their several places and capacities call for. This is thorough godliness. I charge you before the most high God, that none of you be found a swearer, or a liar, or a lover of evil company, or a scoffer, or malicious, or covetous, or a drunkard, or a glutton, unrighteous in his dealings, unclean in his living, or a quarreller, or a thief, or a backbiter, or a railer; for I denounce unto you, from

the living God, that destruction and damnation is the end of all such.

2. Family godliness. He that hath set up Christ in his heart, will be sure to study to set him up in his house. Let every family with you be a Christian church; every house a house of prayer. Let every householder say with Joshua, I and my house will serve the Lord, and resolve with David, I will walk in my house with a perfect heart.

First, let religion be in your families, not as a matter to be minded at leisure, but the standing business of the house. Let them have your prayers as duly as their meals. Is there any of your families but have time for taking their food? Wretched man! canst thou not as well find time to pray in?

Secondly, settle it upon your hearts, that your souls are bound up in the souls of your family; they are committed unto you, and if they be lost through your neglect, they will be required at your hands. If you do not, you shall know that the charge of souls is a heavy charge, and that the blood of souls is a heavy guilt. O man, hast thou a charge of souls to answer for, and wilt thou not bestir thyself, that their blood be not found in thy skirts?

1. Let the solemn reading of the word, and singing of psalms, be your family exercises. See Christ singing with his family, namely, his disciples.\*

2. Let every person in your families be as duly called to an account of their profit-

\* Matt. xxvi. 30.

ing by the word heard or read, as they be about doing your own business. This is a duty of consequence unspeakable, and would be a means to bring those under your charge to remember and profit by what they receive. See Christ's example.\*

3. Often take an account of the souls under your care, concerning their spiritual states, (herein you must be followers of Christ.†) Make inquiry into their condition, insist much upon the sinfulness and misery of their natural state, and upon the necessity of regeneration and conversion, in order to their salvation. Admonish them gravely of their sins, encourage their beginnings, follow them earnestly, and let them have no quiet from you, until you see in them a saving change. This is a duty of very great consequence, but, I am afraid, most fearfully neglected. Doth not conscience say, Thou art the man?

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

5. Let the morning and evening sacrifice of solemn prayer be daily offered up in all your families. Beware you be not found among the families that call not up-

\* Matt. xvi. 11, 13, 15.

† Matt. xiii. 10, 36, 51. Mark iv. 10, 11.

on God's name; for why should there be wrath from the Lord upon your families? O miserable families, without God in the world, that are without family prayer! What, have you so many family sins, family wants, family mercies; what, and yet no family prayers? How do you pray with all prayer and supplication, if you do not with family prayer? Say not, I have no time. What, hast thou not all thy time on purpose to serve God and save thy soul? And yet is this it for which thou canst find no time? Find but an heart, and you will find time. Say not, My business will not leave me. This is the greatest business, to save thyself, and the souls committed to thee. Say not, I am not able; use the one talent, and God will increase it.

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

7. Set up catechising in your families, at the least once every week. Have you no dread of the Almighty's charge, that you should teach these things diligently to your children, and talk to them as you sit in your houses, and train them up in the way wherein they should go? Hath God so commended Abraham, that he would teach

\* Luke xi. 1, &c.

his children and household, and that he had many instructed servants, and given such a promise to him thereupon, and will you not put in for a share, neither in the praise nor the promise? Hath Christ honoured catechising with his presence, (Luke ii 46) and will you not own it with your practice? Say not, They are careless, and will not learn. What have you your authority for, if not to use it for God, and the good of their souls? You will call them up, and force them to do your work. And should you not at least be as zealous in putting them upon God's work? Say not, They are dull, and are not capable. If they be dull, God requires of you the more pains and patience.

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

THE END



