THE

WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

EZEKIEL HOPKINS, D.D.

SUCCESSIVELY LORD BISHOP OF RAPHOE AND DERRY:

NOW FIRST COLLECTED.

ARRANGED AND REVISED,

WITH A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR, AND A COPIOUS INDEX,

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ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

TO

SAVE SINNERS:

WITH THE

PREVALENCY OF HIS INTERCESSION.

THE

ALL-SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST TO SAVE SINNERS, &c.

HEB. vii. 25.

WHEREFORE HE IS ABLE ALSO TO SAVE THEM TO THE UTTERMOST, THAT COME UNTO GOD BY HIM; SEEING HE EVER LIVETH TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR THEM.

INTRODUCTION.

THE general design of the Apostle in this Epistle, is, to shew the dignity of Christ, above the Levitical Priesthood: which he doth, as by many other deep and accurate arguments; so, likewise, by affirming him to be a priest, *after the order of Melchisedec*, in the last verse of the foregoing chapter.

In this chapter he prosecutes the argument, by drawing a long parallel, between the priesthood according to Melchisedec's Order, and the priesthood according to Aaron's Order: and, in every comparison, he gives the pre-eminence to the former above the latter; and thereby proves, that Christ, who was a priest *after the order of Melchisedec*, obtained a more excellent priesthood than they, who were priests according to the Order of Aaron.

I. Now because, in this parallel, there are many things hard to be understood, I shall give you a brief EXPLICATION of them, and thereby bring you to the Text.

Concerning this Melchisedec, there is much enquiry who he was. Some think him to be Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity; who assumed human shape then, when Abraham returned from pursuing the four kings: but this is altogether impossible, because the Scripture makes him to be the *King of Salem*, a visible and a temporal king over Jerusalem; for, by Salem, that must be implied, as

is clear from Ps. lxxvi. 2. Others conjecture this Melchisedec to be the same with Shem, the son of Noah; but whether it was he or no, it is not much material: this is certain, that he was appointed and raised up by God to be an eminent and illustrious type of our High Priest, Jesus Christ.

i. Now, though the Levitical Priesthood was a clear type of Christ's Priesthood, yet this Melchisedec, who lived four hundred years before the institution of that order, WAS A MORE CLOSE, ADEQUATE TYPE, and far superior to them. And this is here expressed:

1. In that he was *King of Salem, as well as Priest of the Most High God:* v. 4.

Now the Levitical Priests were not kings, as he was: as, in those first ages of the world, it was an usual custom, for the same person that was king to exercise the priestly office; and therefore he was a more express resemblance of Christ, than the Aaronical Priests were.

2. In that he was described to be *first King of Righteousness, and then King of Salem:* v. 2. that is, *the King of Peace.*

Herein, also, he is a most lively type of Christ, who observed the same order. Christ was *King of Righteousness,* to subdue our sins and sanctify our natures: and he was *King of Peace,* to pacify our consciences, through the assurance of pardon and acceptance; for this peace he doth usually bestow upon us, as the fruits of righteousness formerly communicated to us.

3. In that he was *without father or mother, without descent; having neither beginning of days, nor end of life,* as Melchisedec is described in the third verse.

And, herein, he outvies the Aaronical Priesthood: for their birth and death the Scripture records; but, of Melchisedec, it witnesseth that *he liveth:* v. 8. Now, herein, he is a nearer resemblance to Christ, than they: for Christ, as God, was *without mother;* and, as man, he was *without a father:* as God, he hath not *beginning of days;* as God and man, he is without *end of life.*

4. In that *Aaron, who was the father of all the Aaronical Priests, did pay tithe to him:* so v. 4. And he received them from him: v. 6. which denotes that Abraham himself was inferior to him: as v. 7. and much more the children of Levi, the offspring of Aaron, who themselves are said to pay tithes to Melchisedec, being in the loins of their father Abraham: as we

have it in the 9th and 10th verses. As the public acts of the parent are interpretively the acts of a child, so likewise Abraham's paying tithes to Melchisedec is recorded by God, as Levi's paying tithes in Abraham's loins; and, thereupon, they were professedly inferior to him.

ii. That this comparison may be the more clear and evident, we must consider, that MELCHISEDEC WAS A TYPE OF CHRIST, UNDER A TWOFOLD RESPECT:

As he was in his own Personal Capacity.

As described to us in the Scripture.

For there is a great difference, as we shall see anon.

1. If we consider his *Personal Capacity*, so he was King and Priest: he was really, in himself, so: he met Abraham, received tithes from him, and conferred a blessing upon him. But there are other things spoken of this Melchisedec in the sixth chapter, which to understand as really agreeing to the person of Melchisedec were utterly impossible: as, that he was *without father* or *mother*, or *without descent*, or *beginning* or *end of life*; as we have it in the third and eighth verses: and therefore some, considering that this description could not agree to any man, have fondly fancied that this Melchisedec was not true man; but was either Christ or the Holy Ghost, or some angel.

2. Therefore, we must note, that these things were spoken of Melchisedec, not as really he was in himself, but *as he is represented to us in the Scripture*. Therefore he is said to be *without father* or *mother*, because the Scripture mentions nothing of them; records nothing of his parentage or pedigree, nothing of his birth or death, but is purposely silent in these things: v. 3. that he might be *made like unto the Son of God*. The Scripture is purposely silent concerning the pedigree of Melchisedec, and the beginning and ending of his days, that he might be a more lively type of the Son of God; who himself, in his divine nature, was without beginning or end of days. So that, though truly and really Melchisedec was a man, born of parents by a long descent from Adam, whose life had a date both when it begun and when it ended; yet it is truly said that he was without these, because they are not mentioned and recorded in the Scripture. Now among these high privileges and prerogatives, Melchisedec doth typify the Priesthood of Christ better than the Aaronical Priests could typify him; for he is one, that *abideth* and continueth *a priest*: v. 3. and *he*

liveth, as in the eighth verse. The Scripture speaks nothing, either of his laying down his office or his life.

Now, in this, he is an eminent and conspicuous type of Christ, our High-Priest. For,

(1) He hath not laid down his Life, so as to lose it: for he was made *after the power of* the *endless life*; as v. 16.

(2) Nor hath he laid down his Priesthood, so as not to exercise it: for he is *a priest for ever*; and, *because he continueth* for *ever*, therefore he *hath an unchangeable priesthood*; as in v. 24.

The words of the Text are a most comfortable inference, drawn from all this discourse concerning the eternity of Melchisedec's Priesthood: the eternity of it, I say; because the Scripture speaks nothing of the cessation of it. So that my Text is a comfortable inference: Christ *is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* Doth Christ for ever live, and for ever sit at the right-hand of God? doth he continually lay open his wounds, repeat over his sufferings, plead his death and merits, claim a right to a sure purchase? is he continually perfuming heaven with the odour of that sweet incense, which he daily offers up with prayers for all the saints? Believe it, such a Sacrifice must needs be acceptable: such an Advocate must needs be prevalent: such a Saviour must needs be all-sufficient. *Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

II. In these WORDS we have,

A Position couched under a Supposition. The Supposition is this: If so be Christ shall ever live to make intercession for the saints. The Position is: That Christ doth live for ever to make intercession, &c. which the Apostle before proves: He is *a High-Priest for ever.*

There is an Inference or Corollary drawn from it: Therefore *he is able to save them to the uttermost, &c.*

First. In the Position observe these two things:

First. The Eternity of the Life of Christ in the highest heaven.

Secondly. The Eternity of his Priestly Office.

The former is this: *He liveth* for *ever*. The latter is, And he liveth for this very end, *to make intercession* for us.

SECONDLY. In the Inference we may observe,

First. The Truth inferred and asserted: *He is able to save.*

Secondly. The Measure and Degree of this salvation: and that is, *to the uttermost*, to all ends and perfections: he is able to save to all perfections; that is, altogether.

Thirdly. The Persons, whom he is able thus perfectly to save: and they are those only, that *come unto God by him.* And these are described,

First. By their Obedience: They *come unto God*; that is, they perform service, obedience, and duty to God.

Secondly. By their Faith: They *come unto God* BY HIM; that is, by Christ.

All the duties and services which they perform, they tender up by faith in Christ, and by Christ to God: They *come unto God by him.*

THIRDLY. And, besides all these, here is a Connexion of the Inference and the Position together, by the word *wherefore:* WHEREFORE *he is able to save, &c.* In the connexion we have also the number of those, for whom Christ makes intercession: not for all men, but for those, *that come unto God* through *him.*

Oh, what a rich vein of Scripture is before our eyes, which lies as an inestimable and unsearchable treasure in golden mines! Though I may seem to have but broken and crumbled the words, yet there is abundance of preciousness in every part and parcel of them. I shall not now stand to raise and insist upon all those observations, that might pertinently and properly be made from the words thus divided; but shall briefly speak to some few.

i. From the TRUTH inferred, *He is able to save to the uttermost,* observe,

Doct. I. That JESUS CHRIST IS AN ALMIGHTY AND AN ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOUR.

He is a High-Priest and a Saviour all-sufficient:

1. By *his Father's eternal designation:* Ps. lxxxix. 19. *I have laid help upon one that is mighty, &c.*

2. By *his own voluntary susception and undertaking for us:* Ps. xl. 7, 8. *Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of* thy *book it is written of me.....to do thy will, O my God.* And the Apostle quotes it in Heb. x. 7.

3. By *the infinite glory and excellency of the divine nature:*

which hath a double influence to make him an All-Sufficient Saviour.

(1) It puts an infinite worth and value upon his sacrifice; and so hath made his offering acceptable, and a full price and ransom for sinners. It is called the blood of God: Acts xx. 28. *Feed the* flock *of God....which he hath purchased with his own blood.* And, certainly, the blood of God must needs be an all-sufficient expiation for the sin of man.

(2) It gave Christ a power and an ability, to appease and satisfy infinite justice and wrath; and to break the chains of death, and the bars of the grave, under which he had been detained, else our salvation had been a thing desperate and deplorable: but, herein, is he manifested to be the Son of God and Saviour of the World, even with power, in that he died and rose again.

4. He is an All-Sufficient Saviour by *his human capacity.* As he would not have been able to save us, unless he had been God; so he would not have been capable to save us, unless he had been Man.

Now Christ's Humanity hath a Twofold influence into the work of our redemption.

(1) In that, thereby, that person, who is God, became passive; and a fit subject to receive and bear the wrath of God.

(2) Hereby satisfaction is made to offended justice, in the same nature, which transgressed and offended. *By man came death;* and *by* the *man* Jesus Christ *came the resurrection* from *the dead:* 1 Cor. xv. 21. And therefore Christ saith, *a body hast thou prepared me:* Heb. x. 5. To what end? The Apostle tells us, *that, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.* Both natures are here required: his Human Nature, without which he could not suffer death; and the Divine Nature, without which he could not destroy him who had power of death.

5. He became an All-Sufficient Saviour, by *the overflowing and unmeasurable unction of the Holy Ghost.*

Thus, Isa. lxi. 1. *The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings, &c.* John iii. 34. *God* gave *not* his *Spirit* in *measure unto him;* yea, *the fulness of the godhead* dwelt *bodily* in him: Col. ii. 9. and all this was on purpose to furnish him with gifts and graces, suitable to the discharge of the great work of his mediatorship. Now, certainly, since he was by God the Father designed, and of his

own self ready and willing, by his Humanity capacitated, by his Divinity fortified, and by the unction of the Holy Spirit furnished to the work of our salvation, he must needs be an All-Sufficient Saviour; *able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him.*

ii. In the next place, for the PERSONS whom Christ is thus enabled to save, they are described by their Faith and Obedience: They come to God by Christ. Observe,

Doct. II. That CHRIST HIMSELF, ALTHOUGH HE IS AN ALL-SUFFICIENT SAVIOUR, ABLE TO SAVE TO THE UTTERMOST, YET HE IS NOT ABLE TO SAVE THE DISOBEDIENT AND UNBELIEVERS.

He only saves those, *that come unto God by him.*

Now this,

1. Is not *for want of merit or virtue in that sacrifice*, which our High-Priest hath once offered up: not for want of any value or preciousness in his blood, or sufficiency in his price; for there is intrinsic virtue enough in the blood of Christ to save the whole world.

2. Nor is it *from any natural dependance, that salvation hath upon faith and obedience;* for God was free, and might have disposed of the eternal inheritance upon other terms. But,

3. It was only *upon the ordination and appointment of God*, who hath instituted the way of salvation to be by the death of Christ, who hath appointed the virtue of his death to be applied to us only by the grace of faith; which faith, without obedience and good works, is in itself dead, and can neither justify nor save us. So, then, without faith and obedience Christ cannot save us: because that virtue, whereby he should save us, cannot without these reach us; faith being the conveyance of the virtue of Christ's merits to the soul.

That is the Second Proposition.

iii. The Third and last shall be raised from the CONNEXION of both parts of the Text put together. Therefore *he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him;* because *he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Observe from hence.

Doct. III. That THE TRUE GROUND AND REASON OF CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY TO SAVE SINNERS, IS LAID UPON THE PREVALENCY OF HIS INTERCESSION FOR US.

And this, because it is the most comprehensive point, taking in both the former, is that, which I choose to insist upon.

In the prosecution of which Doctrine, I shall speak concerning
Christ's Intercession.
His All-Sufficiency to Save, which depends upon and flows from it.

I. Concerning CHRIST'S INTERCESSION, I shall enquire into Three things:
What it is, and wherein it doth consist.
What the Extent and Latitude of it is.
What are the Benefits, that do redound to believers by it.

i. For the opening WHAT IT IS, we must know, that Intercession is a law term, borrowed from Courts of Judicature; and signifies the action of a proxy or attorney, either in suing out the rights of his client, or answering the cavils and objections brought against him by the plaintiff.

Thus doth Christ for believers. He appears for them: Heb. ix. 24. He is entered *into heaven*, appearing *in the presence of God for us.* Nay, he doth, in some sense, carry believers into heaven with him, and there set them before his Father's throne; as we have it, Eph. ii. 6. *And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* Even as the high-priest did bear the names of the Twelve Tribes upon his breast, when he entered into the Holy of Holies; so Christ, when he entered into heaven, bears upon his heart the names and persons of all his, and presents them before his Father. He hath taken their cause, and pleads it with God his Father; as the Apostle speaks: *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:* 1 John ii. 1.

This Intercession is of Three sorts.

1. *Charitative Intercession.*

And, thus, one man is bound by the duty of charity and conscience to pray and intercede for another. And of this kind of intercession we have mention made, 1 Tim. ii. 1. *I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men:* that is, intercession of mutual charity one for another.

2. There is an *Adjutory Intercession*, a helping intercession.

And, thus, the Holy Spirit makes intercession for believers: Rom. viii. 26, 27. *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered, &c.* He makes intercession for us, because, by his holy inspirations, he makes those prayers and intercessions for us, which we make for ourselves. And this is an Adjutory Intercession. We are indigent, and see not our own wants, nor have we tongues to express them; and, withal, we are dull and heavy, and make not importunate supplications; and, therefore, God sends his Spirit into our hearts, to discover our necessities to us, to raise desires in us, and to put words into our mouths and teach us what to pray for, and how to pray as we ought.

3. There is *an Official and Authoritative Intercession.* And this properly belongs to Christ.

And this may be considered under a Twofold respect.

(1) His Intercession, in his state of Humiliation.

And this is in a congruity to that debased state, wherein, *with strong cries, and tears*, and groans he made *supplications* to God: Heb. v. 7. Yea, when he was under the sharpest agonies; when he was bruised by God and broken by men, suffering the wrath of the one, and the wrongs of the other; when his own pains might have made his prayers selfish, or his enemies' malice might have made him revengeful: yet, even then, he forgets not to intercede for them: Luke xxiii. 34. *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* Although he was made in *the form of a servant; despised and rejected of men*, (Is. liii. 3.); accursed of God (Gal. iii. 13.); exposed to reproach and injuries; devoted to death: notwithstanding all this, his intercession was not at all regarded the less, or the less prevalent; but, even in this low estate and vile appearance, he prayed with majesty and authority, *Father, I will that* those *whom thou hast given me*, may *be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, &c.* John xvii. 24.

(2) His Intercession may be considered as performed on out behalf, in his state of Glory and Exaltation.

After his offering up of himself here upon earth as a sacrifice upon the cross, he entered into the Most Holy Place; and there he prosecutes the same suit, which he here commenced: Rom. viii. 34. *It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again*, who is ascended into heaven, where he continually *maketh intercession for us.*

This Glorious Intercession of Christ doth principally consist in these following particulars, which I shall endeavour to illustrate and open.

[1] In his appearing in the court of heaven in both natures, as our Mediator and Advocate; ready to answer any charge laid in against us, or suing out any good thing that belongs to us.

Thus, when Joshua, the high-priest, stood before the angel in filthy garments, Zech. iii. 1. Satan stood at his right-hand to accuse him: the accusation was true: the crime was manifest: now, here, the Angel (that is, Jesus Christ) interposeth: he appears for us, saying, *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan:* what though the garments be filthy, I will take them away: *I have caused* their *iniquity to pass from* them. And this may be for our abundant consolation: though Satan, by his accusations and temptation, stand continually at our right-hand to resist us; yet Christ, in heaven, always stands at the right-hand of God to plead for us and silence Satan. And this was typified to us, by the high-priest entering into the Holy of Holies, to make intercession for the people.

[2] Christ presents, as his own person, so likewise the Persons of all his blessed ones throughout the world, of all believers and the elect ones, to God the Father.

And that, not only in the general or total sum, that they are so many thousands, for whom he obtained mercy, for whom he must obtain salvation; not only as the high-priests among the Jews, who only had the names of the Twelve Tribes engraven upon their breast-plates, but not the name of every particular person of those tribes: but Christ hath every particular saint's name engraven upon his breast, and makes mention of every particular saint in his intercession to his Father: He is *the good shepherd*, John x. 14. that knows every one of his sheep *by name*: v. 3. Let the meanest Christian, who is so obscure that his name stands unknown upon earth, take comfort and rejoice in this, that his name is well known in heaven: Christ hath often spoken, and

God hath often heard it. Yea, though Christ hath so many to hear, so many to relieve and gratify, yet let not the meanest, the most inconsiderable saint on earth think that he forgets him: for he knows him by name; and takes as much care and solicitousness for his salvation, as if there were not a soul in the world to save besides him; making prayers for him, that his faith fail not, as Christ said to St. Peter: and what is said of him may be applied in truth to every believer: Luke xxii. 32.

[3] Christ's Intercession consists in presenting the Performances of his people unto God.

All the duties and services of all the saints on earth do only ascend to God, when as they are presented to him by Christ. For he is that Angel, mentioned in Rev. viii. 3. *having a golden censer*, with *much incense*, which he offers up *with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, &c.* It was a true speech of him, John ix. 31. *God heareth not sinners:* and, therefore, he never heareth us, because we are sinners; but he always heareth his Son, who speaks over for us the same prayers that we have before spoken: and so he hears us, speaking by him; and he is well-pleased with those duties, that otherwise would be an abomination to him.

[4] Christ presents to God as our services, so also his own Merits; and that as the full and equitable price of all the mercies for which he intercedes.

For Christ's intercession is not a bare begging of blessings, to be bestowed gratis upon us; but all his transactions in the court of heaven are in a way of satisfaction and purchase. Is sin to be pardoned? lo here is the blood of propitiation and atonement. Is mercy to be procured? lo here is the price of the purchase. All, that we receive through the intercession of Christ, is, at once, both the effect of free grace and bounty, and yet likewise the purchase of all-sufficiency and of a meritorious price. In respect of us, all is free: in respect of Christ's undertaking; without our pre-ordination, free, as to performance; without our premonition, free, in the effectual application of it to us. But, though all this is free grace, in respect of us; yet, in respect of Christ, it is the purchase of a full price, and cost him the laying aside of his own glory, the obscuring of himself in a vail of flesh, and the assuming of a body to prepare him for the work of our redemption: it cost him the losing of his life, the shedding of his most precious blood to accomplish that redemption: 1 Cor. vi. 20. 1 Cor. vii. 23. *Ye are all*

bought with a price, &c. We are *not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.....but with the precious blood of Christ:* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Now, as Christ once offered up himself upon the cross, so he continually offers up himself in intercession; and presents that blood to his Father, that he formerly shed for sinners: and, therefore, it is remarkable, that where Christ is called our *Advocate*, he is called likewise our *Propitiation:* 1 John ii. 1, 2. *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is* also *the propitiation for our sins:* noting to us, that the validity of the intercession of Christ consists in the merits of his death and sufferings; which price, offered up as a propitiation unto God in his intercession, is for the sins of all those that believe.

[5] Christ also presents his Will and Desire to his Father, in his Intercession: which, by virtue of his merits, is always heard and granted.

And this he doth, not in a supplicatory manner, but by authority; by the absolute dominion, which he hath over those mercies for which he intercedes: *Father, I will that* those *whom thou hast given me*, may *be with me*, &c. All authority is given to the Son: John v. 22. Therefore it is said, Rom. viii. 34. that he *is at the right-hand of God* making *intercession for us:* which phrases import, that all power, both in heaven and earth, is consigned over to Christ; and, therefore, his intercession at the right-hand of God is an intercession with authority; such an intercession as cannot, as shall not be denied.

So, then, in these Five Particulars, we may see wherein the Intercession of Christ consists: in presenting his own Person, and appearing in the court of heaven for Us; in offering up our Duties and Services; in presenting his own Merits, and likewise his sovereign and uncontroulable Will to his Father: by all which we may rest abundantly secured, that all the good things, which we ask in his name and that he asks on our behalf, shall be certainly conferred upon us.

So much for the First thing propounded, what the Intercession of Christ is, and wherein it doth consist.

ii. Let us consider, according to the method proposed, this Intercession of Christ IN THE LATITUDE AND EXTENT OF IT.

I shall do this under a Twofold respect:

In respect of the Time, wherein it is made.

In respect of the Persons, for whom it is prevalent.

1. Consider the Intercession of Christ, *in respect of the Time.* And so we may take notice too, how he performed it before his assumption of flesh, and likewise how it shall be performed after the consummation of all things to all eternity.

(1) As to the former, observe, that though it be most eminently performed since the hypostatical union of both natures in the person of Christ; yet it was also effectually performed before his taking of our flesh upon him.

For, as now Christ intercedes upon the account of those sufferings, which he hath undergone in his body: so he interceded, and his intercession was prevalent, before he was made flesh; though the merit, which made that intercession prevalent, was wrought out in the flesh. Therefore we find, in the Old Testament, Christ interceding before he was God-Man, actually; but, as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, he was afterwards to be made God-Man: Zech. i. 12. *The angel of the Lord* (that is, Jesus Christ) *answered and said, O Lord of Hosts, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, &c.* Yea, the saints then alive made use of the name of Christ, in their prayers to God the Father: so you have it, Dan. ix. 17. *Now, therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, &c. and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord's sake.* So that hence you see, that Christ's intercession began in heaven, long before his abode here upon earth: yea, it was the very first part of the office of his mediatorship that he entered upon: Christ did nothing as Mediator, till after the Fall: and the first thing which he did as in that relation, was interceding for fallen man; to keep him from death threatened, and to restore him to life which he had forfeited.

(2) Consider Christ's intercession, not only as performed from all eternity, but after the consummation of all things.

He intercedes for his Church, not only while militant on earth, but when triumphant in glory: *He ever liveth to make intercession for us.* Christ is said to be a *priest for ever:* Heb. vi. 20. and to have *an unchangeable priesthood,* in the verse before the text. The priesthood of Christ hath two parts, Oblation and Intercession: his Oblation was when he made his soul an offering for sin, and offered up himself as a sacrifice to God upon the altar of the cross: now this part of his priesthood is ceased, Heb. x. 14.; ix. 26. By once offering up himself *he hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified, &c.* Christ being a priest for ever, and not being a priest any longer in respect of his obla-

tion, it remains, that the eternity of his priesthood descends upon his Intercession only; and, therefore, his Intercession is eternal.

But, you may ask me, "What need shall we stand in of the Intercession of Christ, when we are glorified with him; and what then shall he intercede for?"

To this I answer: The Intercession of Christ is twofold, Conciliatory and Reconciliatory. The first is that, whereby mercy and all good things, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, are effectually procured for us, and bestowed upon us: the other is that, whereby pardon, justification, and atonement are freely conferred upon us. While we are upon the earth, we stand in need to receive the benefit of both these Intercessions: for they are aptly suited to our twofold state, of wants and miseries, and of sin and imperfection. Our Wants are supplied, by his Conciliatory Intercession; and our Sins pardoned, by his Reconciliatory Intercession: and of both these we have absolute need while we live here in this vale of tears. But, accordingly as the church and people of God do out-grow the state of want and sin, so likewise these Intercessions of Christ, our High-Priest, cease.

[1] Christ's Reconciliatory Intercession ever ceaseth in heaven, when he hath gathered together the number of his elect into one: for then they shall all be in a full, perfect, and sinless condition. We shall then never more offend God, never more be alienated and estranged from God by sin: and, when we are possessed of such a blessed state as this, there shall be no more need of a Daysman, to make intercession and reconciliation for all distances; and enmity shall be utterly abolished. Therefore, Christ's Intercession doth not last for ever, as to this part which is Reconciliatory.

[2] As for his Consolatory Intercession, whereby he obtains for us mercy and all good things, that is, those good things that are either temporal or spiritual, or that respect either this life or the future state of glory in heaven; the former part of this Intercession of Christ shall likewise shortly cease, because this life itself shall shortly cease, and the saints themselves also: for, when all, that have been translated or that have died, shall be raised to a better life, all the wants which they do now sustain, a want of grace, or a want of peace, or a want of protection, or a want of provision, inward wants or outward worldly wants or evils, shall all cease there: and therefore the Intercession of

Christ, as it respects the mercies of this life, shall shortly cease.

Christ's Intercession for Future Glory, is either for the substance of it or for the continuance of it.

As for the Substance of their Glory, Christ intercedes for that before he crowns them with it: John xvii. 24. *Father, I will that those, whom thou hast given me,* may *be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.* The Beatifical Vision is the very glory and happiness of the saints in heaven; and, when they are brought to behold this glory of Christ, this Intercession ceaseth.

But, then, there is Christ's Intercession for the Continuance of their Glory. And this is that Intercession, which is everlasting; that Intercession, which he ever liveth to make. As our Saviour Christ ever lives, so he ever makes Intercession for the saints; that they may never be cut off from God's presence, nor fall from their happiness, nor forfeit their glorious inheritance: for, in heaven itself though we be there in a most perfect and sinless state, yet, were it not for the Intercession of Christ whereby every moment he procures us a confirmation of that estate, we should have no more security of our continuance than the angels which fell, who were more holy and happy than ever we were; we should have no more confirmation than Adam had in Paradise, who forfeited his happiness by the mutability of his own will. Therefore, I say, the continuance of the saints now in heaven depends upon the Everlasting Intercession of Jesus Christ.

Thus we have considered the Extent of Christ's Intercession, as to the Time wherein he makes it; and that, before his incarnation, and likewise after the consummation of all things.

2. Let us now consider the Extent of Christ's Intercession *as to the Persons,* for whom he intercedes.

And that is for all his, in opposition to the world. We have this plain in Christ's prayer on earth, which is the pattern and draught of his intercession in heaven: John xvii. 9. *I pray not for the world; but for them, which thou hast given me out of the world.* I pray for them; those, that thou designest shall be brought to glory by my merits. Now, of these, some are yet in a state of nature; disobedient, impenitent, unbelievers: others are in a state of grace; actually converted and regenerated: Christ intercedes for both: for these latter he intercedes

throughout the whole chapter. John xvii. 20. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for* all those, *that shall believe on me through their word:* many of which were then living, and received the benefits of Christ's intercession in their effectual vocation and conversion. For unbelievers, Christ prays that they may obtain grace; for believers, that they may obtain more grace, and through it be brought to glory.

And that is the second consideration in respect of the Intercession of Christ, as to the Latitude and Extent of it, both as to the Time and Persons.

iii. Another thing propounded, is, to consider, the Intercession of Christ, IN RESPECT OF THE BENEFITS THAT FLOW FROM IT: and those are very great and manifold blessings, worthy to be obtained by so great an Advocate.

There are but Two things, wherein the office of an Advocate properly consists:

To defend his client from wrongs and injuries.

To procure good things for him.

The first he doth, by answering the accusations and exceptions, that are brought against him; and the latter he doth, by suing out his right and title. Both these the Lord Jesus Christ, our Advocate, doth for us.

1. He *defends us from those Evils, that our adversaries, by their accusations, would bring against us.*

As we are sinners, God's justice, our own consciences, and Satan's malice come in as our adversaries, and all lay their several charges against us. Justice calls for vengeance, Conscience thunders, Satan rages, and all accuse us. God calls to the bar. "Sinner, such and such a sin thou art guilty of, that deserves eternal damnation."—"True, Lord," saith Conscience: "I will witness the same against him, having warned him of it and checked him for it; but he hath fallen upon me, and wounded me, while I, in thy name, have given him these admonitions."—"True, Lord," saith the Devil too: "All this he did upon my suggestions and temptations, therefore resign him over to me for punishment."

Now when the poor sinner stands mute and trembling, his mighty Advocate pleads his cause; and silences all these accusations that are brought against him, and sets him right. And this he doth Two ways.

(1) He doth it by reconciling God and Conscience, through his own blood.

Which blood, as it is the blood of atonement, so it reconciles God and us; and, as it is the blood of sprinkling, so it reconciles our own Consciences to us. As it is the blood of atonement, so we are reconciled to God, and God to us: Rom. v. 10. We are *reconciled to God by the death of his Son:* and it is that blood, which *speaketh better things* for us *than the blood of Abel*; for, as that cries to God for vengeance, so this cries louder for mercy and forgiveness. As it is the blood of sprinkling, so it reconciles our own Consciences to us, and makes them at peace with us: Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, &c.:* an evil conscience, that is, an accusing and an affrighting conscience: it is said to be sprinkled, because the blood of Christ must first produce purity in our souls, before it can procure any well-grounded peace. That is the first particular, how Christ defends us from the accusations of our adversaries, by reconciling the justice of God and our own consciences to us.

(2) Our Advocate defends us, as by reconciling God and our own consciences to us, so by stopping the mouth of the Devil; who, because he can never be reconciled, therefore he must be silenced.

So we find that Christ stopped the mouth of that great accuser, Zech. iii. 2. *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee, &c.* Thus our Lord Jesus Christ, by his powerful intercession, silenceth all the accusations that are brought against us, by the justice of God and our own consciences, reconciling them unto us, and stopping the mouth of our implacable adversary the Devil; so that none of their accusations, though preferred against us, can prevail to our detriment or disadvantage. All this we have summarily collected together in Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he, that condemneth? It is Christ, that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right-hand of God,* making *intercession for us.*

This is the first great benefit, which we receive from the Intercession of Christ: he defends us from those evils, which our

adversaries, through their accusations, endeavour to bring upon us and prefer against us.

2. I now come to speak of those *Good Things, which, by Christ's merits we have a Right and Title to.*

And innumerable are the benefits, that redound to believers by the Intercession of Christ.

If you enquire what they are, I answer,

(1) In General, the whole work of our salvation depends, as well upon the Life and Intercession of Christ, as upon his Death and Sufferings.

Though this may seem strange possibly to those, who are wont to hear our salvation ascribed only to the death and sufferings of Christ; yet it evidently appears from Scripture, that our salvation and all the benefits we are to receive and expect do as much flow from the virtues of his glorious life and intercession, as from the merits of his death and passion.

There are Two things requisite, before any good thing can become ours.

A Meritorious Procurement or Purchase of the thing itself.
An Actual and Effectual Application of it to us.

Now the Purchase is made by his death and sufferings; but the effectual application of them is by his life and intercession. By the former, the mercies are purchased: by the latter, the purchase is enjoyed. Therefore, if Christ had only died, and not risen again, and overcome and triumphed over death in his own empire, and triumphed over the grave as in his own territories, his undertakings had redounded to his own disappointment, but not at all to our salvation: but, herein, saith the Apostle, doth he declare himself, *to be the Son of God with power.....by* his *resurrection from the dead*: Rom. i. 4. our hopes of salvation had been all buried in the same grave with him, but that what he died to purchase he lives to bestow: for *he ever liveth to make intercession.*

There was no one prejudice, that hindered the Gospel so much from taking place in the hearts of the Heathens in the primitive times, as the death and cross of Christ; for they believed that he was lifted up upon the cross: but would not believe, that he was raised from the grave. Their natural reason herein taught them this inference, That, to expect life from Christ, was to hope for it from him, that could not preserve his own, or restore it again after the loss of it.

It is true, it seems to natural reason, to be folly thus to hope for life from a dead person: were it not that his life applied what his death purchased; and our salvation, which was begun on the cross, is perfected on the throne. And therefore we have it in Acts ii. 24. God raised him from the grave, because it was impossible that he should be held of it.

"Why was it not possible that Christ should be held of the grave?" I answer, upon these Two accounts.

One impossibility was in regard of his Person; another, in regard of his office: for, as he was man, so he abhorred death, and a separation from his body; and, as he was God, so he was able to reunite them, to overcome death, and burst asunder the bars of the grave: so that, as man having a desire to live, and as God having power to live, it was impossible for him to be detained prisoner in the grave.

But this is not all: there is another impossibility in regard of his Office. He was appointed to redeem lost man, to rescue him from eternal death: and therefore it was impossible for him to be kept under the power of any temporal death, because this could not be done while he lay under a restraint of the grave; his death would have been but a dead thing to us, without his resurrection: it was his life, that put virtue into his death.

The obedience of Christ hath a Twofold virtue.

As it is a Satisfaction to Offended Justice.

As it is a Purchase of Forfeited Mercy.

Both these become benefits to us, by Christ's life and intercession.

[1] His Satisfaction to Offended Justice, whereby we are reconciled to God and God to us, that satisfaction which was purchased and procured by his death, becomes beneficial to us by his life.

So we have it, Rom. v. 10. *For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.* But the actual application of this is by his life: therefore it follows, in the same place, *much more shall we be saved by his life.* We were fully reconciled by his death, in respect of merit; but we are much more reconciled by his life, in respect of the effectual application of that merit to us.

[2] Christ purchased those Blessings and Mercies, which we had forfeited; and they are made effectual and beneficial to us by his life.

There are three great and principal mercies, which Christ purchased for us; Justification and Pardon, Sanctification or Holiness, and the future Inheritance of Life and Glory. These three become effectual to us by Christ's life.

1st. Justification and the Pardon of our Sins become effectual and beneficial to us by the life of Christ.

Rom. iv. 25. He *was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* If he had not risen from the dead, he himself could not be justified; much less could we be justified by him. And, therefore saith the Apostle, 1 Tim. iii. 16. *And, without controversy, great is the mytery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, &c.* that is, he was *manifested in the flesh,* in his incarnation: he was *seen of angels,* in his glorious ascension: but he was *justified in the Spirit,* in his resurrection. Had he never been raised from the dead by his Spirit, that is, by the almighty power of the divine nature, he had not been declared just, nor could he ever have justified us.

2dly. Sanctification and Holiness is the powerful effect of the life of Christ, though it was the purchase of his death.

Therefore saith the Apostle, Phil. iii. 10. *That* ye *may know him, and the power of his resurrection:* that is, that power, which, through his resurrection, he doth apply to us, and by which he raiseth us up also to newness of life. And this he calls our being *planted together in the likeness of his resurrection:* Rom: vi. 5. *For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

3dly. Our future Inheritance of Life and Glory, is likewise ascribed to the life of Christ, though it was purchased by his death.

John xiv. 19. *Because I live, ye shall live also:* that is, because I live eternally in heaven, ye shall live eternally in heaven also.

So then, in the General, you see that there is no benefit redounding to believers by the death of Christ, but the same doth redound to them likewise by the life of Christ: which life is ever employed in the work of Intercession: *He ever liveth to make intercession* for us. See what the Apostle saith: *Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.* It might happily be inverted to us: Whether the Lord lives, he lives for us; or, whether he dies, he dies for us; and, whether the Lord lives or dies, it is for our advantage.

But this is only in the general; and, therefore,

(2) To come and descend to Particulars: there are very many great benefits, that do redound to believers by the Life and Intercession of Christ.

[1] Hence we obtain the mystical union, both to God and one another.

John xvii. 21. Christ prays, that his saints *may be all one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.* And from this union flows all that fellowship and communion, which they have either with God or with one another: their communion with God depends upon their union to him in the sameness of spirit; and their communion among themselves depends upon their mutual union to the same body; and both depend upon this prayer of Christ.

[2] The inestimable gift of the Holy Ghost, likewise, is the benefit of Christ's Intercession.

John xvi. 7. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you:* so, John xiv. 16, 17. *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever.* All the motions, breathings, evidences, and supports of the Holy Spirit which you enjoy, as they were the purchase of Christ's death, so also are they benefits obtained by his life and intercession for us. Hence also was it, that, in the first age of the Church, there were those extraordinary and miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; the gifts of tongues and healing, &c. Acts iii. 33.

[3] Through this Intercession, we have boldness and confidence at the Throne of Grace.

Heb. iv. 14, 15. *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God.....let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Eph. iii. 12. *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence* through *the faith of him.* Who would not be encouraged to go boldly to God, that hath an Advocate to plead for him, that never yet had the least denial?

[4] Hence, also, we receive all our strength and growth in grace.

John xvii. 17. *Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* Grace, together with all the measures and degrees of it, is derived to us, as from Christ's fulness, so by his intercession: it is received by our prayers, and conveyed to us by his prayer.

[5] Hence we obtain, likewise, perseverance and continuance in grace.

John xvii. 11. *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. I have prayed,* saith Christ to Peter, *that thy faith fail not:* and, upon this incense of Christ's prayer, is built the perseverance of the saints in grace.

[6] Hence, likewise, we are preserved both against temptation; and, from sin, when under temptation.

John xvii. 15. *I pray.....that thou shouldest keep them from the evil:* that is, from the evil of temptation, so that Satan never come near us; or, from the evil which he tempts us to, so that though he assault us he may never prevail: that we may be either free from temptation, or at least victorious over it. So, Luke x. 17. The Devil is bound up by this almighty prayer: and, though there be no saint on earth, that enjoys perfect freedom either from sin or temptations to sin; yet these temptations would be much more frequent, and always prevalent over us, did not Christ's prayer interpose by mighty force and strength, and beat back Satan's fiery darts that they cannot reach us, or rebate their force and sharpness that they cannot hurt us.

[7] From Christ's Intercession we, likewise, do obtain acceptation of all our duties.

He sees the iniquity of our holy things, and cleanses us from all the imperfection, corruption, and sinfulness, that adhere to them: even by that incense, that he offers up with the prayers of all the saints, he makes them acceptable and a sweet savour to God the Father. Not that the incense of the Intercession of Christ casts a mist before God, that he should not discern the faults and infirmities of our best services: yea, he clearly sees them, and fully knows them; yet those performances, which in themselves were abominable and sinful, through the perfume of his incense become a sweet savour to God, and he accepts of them with as much complacency and delight as he doth of the perfect services of the angels themselves.

[8] From the Intercession of Christ we receive the benefit of the Spirit's making intercession for us in our hearts; with prayer for us, that we, through the Spirit, may be enabled to pray again.

All our prayers are, indeed, but the echoing back of his own Spirit: Gal. iv. 6. *Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father.* The Holy Ghost is here called *the Spirit of his Son,* because Christ

hath purchased him for his by his death, and sent him into the hearts of his by his authority and commission.

Thus you see there are sundry great Benefits and Privileges, which we receive by the life and intercession of Christ in heaven.

But you may say, "Doth Christ's Intercession always prevail? Is he never denied? And may we be certain to obtain all these benefits by him?"

I answer, we may: and this certainty is grounded upon Three things.

First. In that the Father always hears and grants him all his desires: John xi. 41, 42. *I* know *that thou hearest me always.* He is the well-beloved Son of God: and, therefore, as we are bid by that heavenly voice, Mat. xvii. 5. to hear him, in all his commands; so will his Father hear him, in all his requests.

Secondly. The Father himself loves us; and is willing and ready to give forth those good things to us, that we stand in need of. So we have it, John xvi. 26, 27. *I say not.....that I will* intercede *for you:* you may be fully assured I will; and, therefore, whatsoever I ask shall be granted: *for* my *Father..... loveth you,* and will deny me no request that is for your good.

Thirdly. That all these benefits are at the command and disposal of Christ himself: and, therefore, as he intercedes that these benefits may be bestowed upon us, so he himself will bestow them; for they are at his command, and under his authority: Mat. xxviii. 18. *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth:* and, therefore all these things shall certainly be conferred upon you in their due time and order, through the prevalency of the Intercession of Christ.

Thus I have cursorily run over these things, which might have been much dilated upon, because I will hasten to that, which is more practical.

Thus much for that Position, That Christ *ever liveth to make Intercession for us.*

II. The next thing, that remains to be treated of, is the Inference deduced and drawn from the Position: Therefore, *he is able to save to the uttermost* those *that come unto God by him:* from which I shall handle CHRIST'S ALL-SUFFICIENCY TO SAVE; and, therein, labour to set forth the freeness and fulness of divine grace in the salvation of sinners.

In order whereunto I have already shewed you, that Christ

was made thus an All-Sufficient Saviour, by the Father's designation, and his own voluntary susception; by the capacity of his human nature, fitting him to receive wrath; by the power of the divine nature, enabling him to reluctate it; and by an unmeasurable unction of the Holy Ghost, furnishing him with all endowments requisite to perfect our redemption.

Christ, being thus every way qualified for this great work, is made all-sufficient to save: and his all-sufficiency to save will appear in these following particulars.

i. IN THE GREATNESS OF THE NUMBER AND THE HEINOUSNESS OF THE NATURE OF THOSE SINS, FROM WHICH HE IS ABLE TO DELIVER.

Though your sins be as many as the sands, and as great as the mountains, swelled up with fearful aggravations that make them out of measure sinful; yet he can say to the mountains, "Be removed, and cast into the bottom of the sea" even the red sea of his own blood; and it shall be done. This was prefigured by the Scape-Goat, Lev. xvi. 21. upon which the iniquities of all the children of Israel were laid, that he might carry them into the Land of Forgetfulness. And, as the Scape-Goat, so the Paschal-Lamb represented Christ, and his all-sufficiency to save: and therefore we have that speech of John the Baptist, John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* Yea, this was alluded to by the imposition of his name: Mat. i. 21. *Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

There are Two things in sin, which we stand in need to be saved from.

From its Pollution; which, of itself, is enough to exclude us out of heaven, into which no unclean thing shall ever enter.

From its Condemnation; by which we are excluded out of heaven, and adjudged to hell.

From both these, he is able to save to the very uttermost.

1. Christ is able to save you *from the Pollution and Defilement of your foulest lusts and sins;* and that, *by the washing of regeneration, and* the *renewing of the Holy Ghost:* Tit. iii. 5.

Those spots of defilement, that have so polluted and stained your consciences, that no tears, though your eyes were turned into ever-running streams, would ever be able to wash out, yet the sprinkling of the blood of Christ can. It can purge the heart and conscience *from dead works:* Heb. ix. 14. and change

the scarlet and crimson complexion of it into whiteness and purity. There is no sinner here this day, though his heart be as foul and black as hell, though his life swarm with abominable lusts of all sorts, yet, Christ, by his Almighty Spirit and efficacious grace, can in an instant transform and new mould him; and, of a desperate and outrageous sinner, make him an humble and broken-hearted saint. See that black catalogue, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. *Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers.....nor thieves.....nor drunkards.....shall inherit the kingdom of God.* What saith the Apostle concerning such? *Such were some of you:* why, is it possible that grace should change, or mercy pardon, or the Devil lose such great sinners as these are? Yet *such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified.....in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Yea, and this all-sufficiency of Christ to save and sanctify the vilest and most flagitious sinner, is made more eminently glorious in these particulars.

(1) In that he is able to effect this mighty change in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, without waiting upon the methods of previous preparations or dispositions.

The Spirit doth not always stand knocking by common motions, persuasions, and convictions, and legal terrors: but, sometimes, forceth and breaketh open the heart; and, by his irresistible efficacy, suddenly surpriseth the soul, and seizeth on it, and captivateth it to the obedience of the Lord Christ. As, at mid-day, when we remove the shuts of our windows, light doth not enter in by degrees, first dawning and darting in some weak beams of light, and then some further degrees; but it springs in at once, and at one moment irradiates and enlightens the room with a perfect and full-grown brightness: so, sometimes, the Sun of Righteousness doth arise upon the heart, without the circumstances of a dawning; though this is not, indeed, God's usual method in converting sinners. Nay, sometimes, it darts both light and warmth, at once, through the whole heart; by which our Almighty Saviour can, in a moment, work a greater change by far, than God wrought in all the Six-Days' Creation: he can, at once, melt down the hard heart and subdue the stubborn will, tame headstrong passions and violent affections, and demolish the strong-holds of iniquity that have many years been fortifying against him: he can both wound and heal, kill and make alive, destroy sin and plant grace; and that, with such

dispatch, as can prevent, not only the endeavours, but the observation of a sinner.

(2) The all-sufficiency of Christ to save and sanctify appears in this also, that sometimes he works this mighty change at such an unlikely season; when the sinner is the hottest and the most eager in the prosecution of his lust.

It is easy to shew, by some remarkable instances, what he is able to do, by converting a sinner to himself, not only without preparations to assist him, but against the strongest preparations that the sinner and the devil have made to resist him. Some have been surprised by grace in the very act of sin, that might have provoked justice to have damned them: mercy hath made it an opportunity for their salvation: some circumstances in their sin have proved to be the beginning of their conversion. Thus St. Paul, in the midst of his threatening, in the height and heat of his persecutions, when he was going to Damascus, to hale and imprison those that made profession of the name of Christ, was, by the almighty grace of Christ, turned to be an Apostle. And so, in Isaiah lviii 18. Notwithstanding that he goes on to add sin to sin and iniquity to iniquity *I have seen his ways*, saith God, *and I will heal him;* by my efficacious and almighty grace breaking in upon him in a moment.

(3) Christ's all-sufficiency to sanctify and save a sinner appears to be eminently glorious, in that he is able to work this great and mighty change by such contemptible means, as, to the eye of human reason, is altogether insufficient to achieve it; and that is, by the preaching of the word.

Should God himself speak out of heaven in thunder; should we hear the voice of his terrible majesty in the clouds, "Repent, Repent, or eternally perish;" should some angel, that is now ministering among us, make himself visible, and from this place denounce wrath and vengeance against impenitent sinners, and promise peace and pardon to all that shall believe, repent, and reform their lives; should some damned wretch be released out of hell, and sent hither on purpose to warn you to repent, or for ever to be swallowed up in fiery wrath, if you should see him speaking flames at every word, this were a likely course to move you: for who would be so senseless and obdurate, as not to be convinced at such a sermon as this? But know, that God hath committed the word of reconciliation not unto them, but unto us, *earthen vessels* as we are. And yet, alas! what can we do? we can but stammer out a few words, that are soon lost,

that are soon scattered: we can but reprove men for their sins, threaten them with wrath, admonish them to fly to Jesus Christ for his righteousness, and beseech them through him to be reconciled to God. Now, that this should be of such force as to persuade conscience, to break the heart, to ransack the bowels, even of those very sinners, who perhaps came with prejudices, contempt, and scorn; what is this, but a plain and evident demonstration of the almighty power of God, who, *by the foolishness of preaching*, saveth those *that* do *believe;* thereby convincing the world that there is nothing so weak and contemptible, but God can by it bring to pass things wonderful and miraculous.

That is the First thing, whereby it doth appear, that Christ is all-sufficient to save sinners: the greatness of the Number, the heinousness of the Nature, and the Pollution of those sins, from which he is able to deliver; as I have shewed in these Three particulars.

2. Christ is able to save, not only from the pollution of the foulest, but *from the Guilt and Condemnation of the greatest sins;* and that, by a free pardon and remission of them.

What greater sins than blasphemy and persecution? yet, saith St. Paul concerning himself, 1 Tim. i. 13. I *was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor.....but I obtained mercy.* Therefore, we cannot say with Cain, as the marginal note renders it, "*My iniquity is greater than can be forgiven:* I have out-sinned mercy; and there is nothing remains for me, but the fearful expectation of the fiery indignation, which will certainly devour me." Is not that blood of infinite value, which God shed for thee? Hath not this all-sufficient Saviour borne the whole wrath which thou shouldst have borne? Hath he not *brought life and immortality to light;* and wilt thou be so injurious as to think thy sins more vile, than his blood is precious? or, that there is more venom in them to destroy thee, than there is virtue in his blood to save thee? Let not the Devil persuade thee, before the commission of thy sins, that they are so little, that they need no pardon; nor, after the commission of them, that they are so heinous, that they cannot be pardoned. Man is in nothing more provoking to God, than when he believes that his sins cannot be pardoned.

There are but two sins which are unpardonable. The one, is the dreadful Sin against the Holy Ghost; and the other, is Final Unbelief. Final Unbelief cannot be pardoned, because the

death of Christ, by which all pardon is obtained, can be applied to the soul by no other means than faith. The Sin against the Holy Ghost cannot be pardoned, because it is a malicious rejection of the blood of Christ, and all pardon by it.

Hast thou reason to think thyself guilty of either of these sins? Thou canst not say thou art guilty of Final Unbelief; for that cannot be, until the last moment of thy life.

But that, which most of all troubles the despairing soul, is, lest it hath committed the Unpardonable Sin against the Holy Ghost. And this many are afflicted with: this they fear; and so, in the extreme anguish and horror of their souls, they cry out that they are lost, that they are damned, that there is no hope, no pardon for them. If it be so indeed, that there is no pardon for thee; yet this outcry confutes itself: for the Sin against the Holy Ghost is, of all others, the least jealous and suspicious. I am persuaded, that the consideration of the nature of this sin will persuade us, that there is no man guilty of it, but he, that is also given up by God to a reprobate mind and a seared conscience, and so grown quite past feeling as never to complain of his miserable condition.

Thy very troubles, therefore, thy very despairing thoughts, shew that thou hast no reason to despair, and that thy sins are not unpardonable: and, therefore, be they what they will, the deformity of them never so ugly, the guilt of them as ghastly as thy guilty conscience represents them, yet there is an all-sufficiency in Christ to save thee fully.

Is it the numberless number of them, that affrights thee? Were they yet more, Christ can save thee from them: 1 John i. 7. *The blood of.....Christ.....cleanseth from all sin.* Dost thou complain, O Soul, that thy sins are as many in number as the sand upon the sea-shore? yea, but dost thou not know likewise, that the sea can cover the sands? so the overflowing blood of Christ can reach the uttermost borders and extent of all thy sins; and keep them from the sight of God, that they shall never more appear.

Is it the greatness and the heinous nature of thy sins, that afflict thee? Possibly thou mightst think I flatter thee, to tell thee thou shouldst gather ground of hope rather than of despair: for thou hast now a plea for pardon. See how the prophet David urgeth this as an argument with God, for the forgiveness of them: *For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity:* why? It may be they are so great, that they cannot in justice

be pardoned: Yea, *O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.* It is a very strange argument, one would think, thus to plead with men: "Pray pardon me, because I have done you a great injury": and yet, with God, whose thoughts are not as the thoughts of men, and whose ways are not as the ways of men, this strange argument is very forcible and prevalent: "Lord, pardon me, because I have sinned greatly:" thou speakest more reason by far, than if thou shouldst say, thy sins are great and heinous, and therefore there is no hope of pardon for them.

3. Now *Christ's all-sufficiency to save the greatest and the worst of sinners appears in these following particulars.*

(1) In that he is able to save the Oldest and most Accustomed Sinner; and to make the last hour of his life the first of his eternal happiness.

And, in this, if in any thing, the almighty power of Christ to save is made most wonderfully glorious. When an old sinner, that hath trudged on apace to destruction, and hath arrived even at the very brink of hell, when there were but a few steps between him and eternal death, nay when he stuck there, and there was nothing to recover him, for Christ then to give him a lift over that vast gulph, and then give him another lift over to everlasting life, what can be said in this case, but what the Psalmist saith in Ps. lxxxix. 13. *Thou hast a mighty arm: strong is thy hand?* Such a man's condition is very sad and dangerous: and, if any thing were too hard for all-sufficiency to achieve, it were altogether desperate.

Now there are several things, which advance the power of Christ in saving Old Sinners. As,

[1] That the Devil's possession of an old overgrown sinner is mightily confirmed both in strength and title.

In Strength; in that he hath had time to fortify every stronghold of iniquity, and to make them impregnable. In Title; because, through long possession, the Devil pleads right by prescription, and time out of mind over the soul, so that it seems almost a vain attempt to rescue that soul from sin: and, though all things were made by and for God, yet here you see God's title seems as it were to fail, and the Devil's takes place; for, by a long custom in sin, such outstand the offers of grace, abuse the patience of God, and provoke him to give them up judicially to hardness of heart; by long delay, they more strengthen the Devil's title, and make their salvation the more difficult and hazardous.

[2] Old Sinners are so soaked and drenched in the cares and concernments of this world, that, by a strange sottishness, the nearer they approach to the evil day, the further they put it off from them; never thinking of eternity, until they are irrecoverably swallowed up in it.

As those, that work in deep mines, see not the sun, and know not how the day passeth away: so those earth-worms, that toil and drudge to load themselves with thick clay out of the bowels of the earth, never consider how far their day is spent, nor how near their sun is to setting; never consider once how the day goes over their heads, but still work deeper and deeper till they have opened a passage through earth into hell, into which at last they fall headlong.

[3] Old Sinners have long built up and supported themselves with false and flattering hopes.

Either presumptuous conceits of God's mercy, or proud conceits of their own merits, or some such rotten principle or other: and, because, with these, they have worne out many storms of conscience and many powerful convictions, they will not forsake their hopes, nor let go their vain confidence; but cry out peace, peace to themselves, till they and their hopes perish together.

[4] By a long course of sinning incorrigibly, they have wearied out divine patience, and all the strivings of the Blessed Spirit of God; till, at last, they have provoked the Lord to pronounce a curse and a judicial hardness upon these Old Sinners.

And, because they would not be purged when he would have purged them, therefore they shall never be purged from their iniquities, till wrath seizes upon them, and seals them, and sets them aside for the Devil.

The condition therefore of Old Sinners is very dangerous and deplorable, and very seldom are such converted and saved.

But, yet, this is not the cause: the oldness or customariness of their sins makes them not unpardonable, nor sets them out of the reach of Christ's all-sufficiency to save; but, because they are so tough and stubborn, that they will not come to God through Christ, that they may be saved by him. Yet, notwithstanding their case is thus forlorn and desperate, the all-sufficiency of Christ may be extended unto such as these, to bring them to salvation, and to cure and heal them, and save them from those sins that would deprive them of it.

Poor sinners! did you never read that Christ staunched an

issue of blood that had run twelve years? Mark v. 25. and how he straightened a woman that was bowed together eighteen years? yea, how he healed an impotent man, that had an infirmity thirty-eight years? John v. 5. And shall a miracle of power be able to cure an old disease, and not a miracle of grace be able to cure an old sinner? Though your bloody issue of sin hath run long; though you have lain bound under sin not seventeen or eighteen, but perhaps eighty years; yet come, though it be in the last hour of the day. Though your sins are old, yet they are not so old as those mercies that are everlasting. You are not too old for grace, nor too old to be new-born. Lazarus riseth again, though he had lain four days in the grave; and the same hand, that raised him, can raise you from the power of the Devil, though you have lain there not four days, but fourscore years, dead in sin and trespasses. The Thief on the Cross Christ saved, not many hours before his death: as though Christ would shew the world, by this example, what he can do in a desperate case. And could he thus save, when he suffered; and cannot he much more save, now he is glorified and triumphant? Old houses, many times, are repaired and made meet habitations again: so you, though you have been an old tenement for the Devil, may be so repaired by grace as to become a temple for the Holy Ghost. Be persuaded, therefore, yet at length to accept of the tenders of an all-sufficient Saviour. Your day is almost spent, and your life stands upon the brink of the grave: if you now neglect so great salvation, as the Lord Jesus in the Gospel proffers to you, your death may be so soon as to prevent another offer of him to you; but it shall not, nay it cannot be so soon, as to prevent salvation by Christ, if you accept of this offer.

(2) Christ is able to save those, who have Frequently Relapsed into the commission of the same sin.

This is that, I know, which galls and stings the consciences of many sinners. It is not so much the multitude of their sins that affrights them, as the frequent commission of the same sins. "Oh," saith one, "I am guilty of reiterated and oft-repeated sins. I have committed the same sin, again and again; notwithstanding I have been convinced of it; notwithstanding I have prayed, resolved, and vowed against it. Notwithstanding all the convictions and overtures which I have had, and notwithstanding all the resolutions which I have made, I have

again relapsed into the same sins; and those, not of ordinary infirmity and human frailty, but sins of a gross and scandalous nature. And are such sins pardonable?"

I answer, These relapses, although they are very dangerous, yet they are not altogether incurable. It is hard, to soften a heart, that is treacherous to God and to itself, and very deeply engaged in some particular lust; when we are frequently overcome by the same corruption, by the same temptation: but, yet, this is not such an aggravation, as should leave our sins unpardonable, or us desperate. The Jews, indeed, have a tradition among them, that the fourth relapse into the same sin makes it an unpardonable offence; but we know that the mercy of God and the infinite merit of Christ, are not stinted by any number of sins, nor by any number of the same sins. It is not with us as with drowning men, that if they sink the fourth time they never rise again. Certainly, that Christ, who bids us to forgive our brother, though he should offend us to *seventy times seven* offences, and hath not excepted reiterated provocations, will, upon our repentance, so much oftener forgive us, as his great mercy is above our charity. Though we have committed those sins and provocations against himself; though it be matter of bitter and deep humiliation, that any corruption should be so prevalent as frequently to overcome us, and that notwithstanding conviction, contrition, and heart-breaking confession: yet it is no cause of despair of mercy. The grace of Christ can subdue such rooted sinners as these. And what sins soever the grace of Christ can subdue, the mercy of God can pardon.

(3) Christ can save the profoundest and most notorious Backslider.

And backsliding is the greatest obstruction to a sinner's hope. This is that, which fills him with fears and terrors: "Oh, I have been guilty of apostacy. I have *tasted* of the sweetness *of the heavenly gift, and* of *the powers of the world to come:* yet I have fallen back to my carnal temper, from the holy ways of God; and have again backslided and wallowed in my former pollutions, from which I seemed sometimes to be cleansed and refined. And is this Apostacy pardonable?"

I answer, There is indeed an unpardonable apostacy, described in that dreadful place, Heb. vi. 8: it is impossible for such a one to be renewed by repentance, &c.: this is the same with the Sin against the Holy Ghost: and this no man is guilty

of, but he, that hath cast off all means tending to salvation and eternal life, and all desires after it. There is also an apostacy from great attainments, both of gifts and graces: when a man's zeal to God's glory cools, when his vigour in holy duties faints, when his relish to spiritual objects vitiates, and he returns to a lukewarm and indifferent temper, and it may be to a sinful and wicked life: though this be very sad and dreadful, yet the man is both pardonable and recoverable: see that most comfortable place, Jer. iii. 22. *Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.*

I shall not instance in any other aggravations, which make sin out of measure sinful, and make the sinner out of measure dangerous; since, if the Old Sinner, if the Relapsing, if the Apostatizing Sinner be pardonable and saveable, none then have reason to exclude themselves from the hopes of eternal life.

Indeed, the only danger is, lest the wickedness of men abuse this most comfortable doctrine; and turn that into presumption, which is only intended to arm them against despair.

Indeed, both Presumption and Despair do tend, in divers manners, to enrage and harden men in sin.

The Despairing Person judgeth, "If I must not be saved, if my sins are such as that there is no pardon for them, to what purpose do I then live strictly, and vex, and cross myself, and perplex my life? I will let loose the reins, and enjoy myself; and reap as great a crop as I can of pleasure: and, if I must to hell, I will make the way as delightful as I can."

And the argument, on the other side, that encourageth and hardeneth the Presumptuous Sinner, is this: "Christ is able to save to the uttermost the vilest sinners. We hear no sins are beyond his all-sufficiency to save: therefore," say they, "what need we trouble ourselves to repent and reform? We will yet awhile indulge ourselves in sin: for the efficacy of Christ is as able to save in the last moment of our lives, as after many years' preparations."

We see iniquity every where fearfully abounding: and, though we use to say despair kills its thousands, and presumption its ten thousands; yet, if we narrowly consider, possibly it may be found that this kind of despair in men, arising from sloth and carelessness, is as great a source of impiety as pre-

sumption. Whence else is it, that many, who are convinced, and whose consciences are blackened with the sense of wrath, persist still to add iniquity to iniquity; but because they think that there is no salvation for them, that their doom is fixed, and that their state is determined? and, therefore, since they must pay so dear as eternal damnation, they are resolved to make up their pennyworths in their present pleasures of sin: like those in Jer. xviii. 12. *And they said, There is no hope: but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart.* I should judge it one of the most conducible means to promote men's endeavours after godliness, if I could but bring them to a serious and settled belief that their salvation is attainable: for, certainly, so good a thing as salvation is, cannot but stir up affections and industry proportionable to our apprehensions of the valuableness of it.

Hence, then, to tell men what great sins Christ can pardon, what great sinners he can save, is no encouragement to presumption, but rather to the exercise of holiness: for, since the way to heaven is cleared from impossibilities, it is most unreasonable for men to stick at difficulties. But, if any abuse this doctrine of Christ's all-sufficiency to save the greatest sinners to sloth and the support of their wickedness; promising themselves peace and happiness in the end, though they go on in sin presumptuously, adding iniquity to iniquity; let me only tell them, and it will be enough to damp all their vain hopes, that, though Christ be able to save to the uttermost, yet he is not able to save them in their sins, but only from their sins.

That is the First Demonstration of Christ's All-sufficiency to save sinners, in these particulars. He is an All-sufficient Saviour, because he is able to save men from the greatest Number, and from the most heinous sins in their Nature; though they be as many as the sands, and as great as the mountains: he is able, by his sanctifying grace, to remove the Filth of our sins; and, by his justifying grace, to remove their Guilt: and he is able to convert and change the sinner at such an Unlikely Season, when he is hottest and most eager in the prosecution of his lusts: he is able to do this by the most contemptible Means: he is able to save the Oldest Sinners; those, that have frequently Relapsed into the same sins, and the greatest and most notorious Backsliders, if they do but at last repent and return to him.

ii. Another Demonstration is this: Christ's all-sufficiency to save appears in this, that HE IS ABLE TO BESTOW UPON US ALL-SUFFICING MERCY.

He is able to instate us in the choicest and richest blessings, that we are able either to receive or imagine; and, therefore, *he is able to save to the uttermost.* If I should now mention temporal blessings in this account, the instance would sink too low. The world stands but as an empty cypher, and signifies but a great round nothing, when it is reckoned up with blessings which flow in upon us through Christ's all-sufficiency: and, yet, what a big vanity is this world, in the estimation of most men! If they have but a little part of it to bestow; it may be some slavish office, some slight and trivial gift; what a distance do they keep at! how are they overwhelmed with suitors and floods of attendance! and, when they see how many stand in need of them, they are apt to think themselves sufficient, and to stand in need of none. Should I say to the ambitious and proud man, Christ is able to make all the princes of the world crouch and humble themselves unto thee, and lick up the dust of thy feet: should I tell a covetous person, that Christ is able to make gold and silver not only as plenteous as stones, as in Solomon's time; but that he can turn stones into diamonds and dirt into gold, that he can sequester the estates of all men in the world and bestow them upon him; I need say no more unto such; for these men would believe, that Christ, by this, would prove himself an All-sufficient Saviour: this is that little, which they most regard and admire. Indeed Christ can do all this, for he is Lord of the whole World, and of all things in it: they are at his beck, and at his disposals. Yet had he no other, no better treasures to bestow than the whole world, it would not be satisfactory, since the whole world itself is but a poor insufficient thing: but Christ will have his all-sufficiency to be seen and glorified, by giving that to his people, which is an all-sufficing good.

Three things, therefore, Christ doth bestow upon them, which indeed are all-sufficient.

Christ giveth unto his people,

An Interest in an All-sufficient God.
A Possession of All-sufficient Grace.
An All-satisfactory Inheritance.

1. He gives them *an Interest in an All-sufficient God.*

All-sufficiency is God's most comprehensive attribute; that,

which speaks out all the rest in one word. Wisdom, Power, Justice, Mercy, Goodness, Truth, are several perfections of the Divine Nature, that shine gloriously, each of them in its own sphere; but All-sufficiency is as it were the gloss and lustre, that doth redound or result from all these attributes combined together. Other attributes are like several stars, that shine with their proper and distinct light; but All-sufficiency is like a constellation, when all the stars make but one light. Therefore, when God proclaims himself to Abraham to be God Almighty, or God All-sufficient, Gen. xvii. 1. it was as much as if he had said, "I am Wise in heart, Mighty in power, Merciful in disposition, Just in proceedings, Good in promises, Faithful in performances:" for All-sufficiency is the issue and product of all the rest of God's attributes. Oh what a rich portion have they, that have all God's attributes for their own! This All-sufficiency, by Christ, becomes ours: Heb. xi. 16. *God is not ashamed to be called* our *God.* What can Christ do more to approve himself to be a Saviour to the uttermost, than giving unto his an infinite boundless good? If the power of God, the wisdom of God, the salvation of God can save them, they are sure to be saved to the uttermost: and hence David so often glories, that God is his portion: Ps. xvi. 5. lxxiii. 26. cxix. 57. And what conclusion doth he draw from all this? Ps. xxiii. 1. *The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want.* "No, Soul: it is impossible for thee to want; all things are thine own: God is thine, and all God hath is thine: while others seek to quench their thirst at the broken, leaky cistern; thou mayest lay thyself at the fountain and spring-head of living waters, and there find complete satisfaction. Certainly, unless All-sufficiency may fail, unless God's attributes moulder and drop away from him and leave him a destitute and indigent God, thou canst never be impoverished and without supply." God's wisdom is full of counsel, his power is full of protection, his mercy is full of pardon, his truth and faithfulness is full of security: and those, certainly, must needs be ravenous and unsatiable desires, which such an All-sufficient God as our God is cannot fill and satisfy.

2. Christ also *instates the soul in an All-sufficing Portion of Grace.*

Grace hath a double signification. It may either be taken for Subjective or Objective Grace; or, what is the same, for Relative or Real Grace.

Relative Grace is that, whereby a change is made in the relation in which we stand to God.

In a state of nature, we stood in a threefold sad and wretched relation to God. We were Strangers to God, Rebels and Enemies, and also Guilty Malefactors; and, as such, were liable to eternal condemnation. But, the grace of God intervening, makes a blessed change in all these relations: of Strangers, we are brought near, and enrolled in the family of heaven; and so are made children of God and heirs of glory, by the grace of adoption: of Enemies, we are made friends and intimates; and accepted through the Beloved, through the grace of redemption: of Guilty Malefactors, we are acquitted, and pardoned, and accepted to eternal life, by the free and absolute grace of Justification. Now this Relative Grace is not that, which is wrought in us; but it abides in God, and is only terminated upon us: indeed it is nothing else, but the acting of God's special love and favour towards us; and the word grace, in Scripture, is very seldom taken in any other sense but for Relative Grace, the acting of God's love and favour determined to us.

Subjective or Real Grace is that, whereby a change is wrought upon our natures, in our first regeneration; and whereby it is carried on gradually to perfection, in our further sanctification.

Universal habits of holiness are infused in our conversion by God; which, in Scripture, are called the New Man and the New Creature: we usually call them the Principle of Grace, and the Working of Grace. Those specifical habits, which are as so many branches of this universal habit, are, as I may so speak, the several limbs and members of the New Man: and are commonly called the Graces of the Spirit, as the grace of faith, love, and hope; and likewise the Spirit's acting of these graces, is called the Acting of Grace. Of these two kinds, the former is properly called Grace: the latter, improperly; because, wherever it is wrought, it denotes the special favour and grace of God towards that soul.

Now both Relative and Real Grace have an all-sufficiency in them, and are of an all-sufficing nature.

(1) A Christian's portion in Relative Grace is an All-sufficing and Satisfactory Portion.

It is so great, that you can desire no more: for this grace admits of no degrees; and he, that hath any of it, hath as much as any can have. Here, therefore, the weakest Christian may have abundance of comfort: others, possibly, may have

greater measures of gifts and parts, and of the sanctifying graces of the Holy Ghost; but, in Relative Grace, all stand upon the same level. Adoption, Justification, Reconciliation, Mystical Union, all the privileges which Christ hath purchased for believers, are all common; and no more belong to the strongest, than to the weakest and most feeble Christian. An infant may be as much a son and heir, as a grown man. Others may, possibly, have greater measures of the Spirit of Adoption, whereby they cry *Abba, Father;* but none can have a greater measure of the Grace of Adoption, nor is God more a Father to one than he is to another, no more to the strongest than to the weakest Christian: and, though one may have a greater measure of the Spirit of Adoption, yet all believers have the like measure of the Grace of Adoption: others may have a greater familiarity and acquaintance with God, but none can be more reconciled to God than thou art, if a true believer: others may have a more comfortable sense of this adoption, yet none can be more adopted and more justified than thou art. We do not usually beg of God further measures and further degrees of these things; but, if we stand under these relations to God, and have but the evidence of it in our own consciences, then we rest fully satisfied; therefore what Philip said to Christ, *Shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us,* may every true Christian say, "Lord, shew me my Father, shew me that God is my Father, that I am adopted into the number of his children, and this sufficeth: I have no more to ask, no more to receive, in that particular."

(2) As the Christian's portion in Relative Grace is satisfactory; so, likewise, is his portion in the Sanctifying Graces of the Holy Spirit an All-sufficient and Satisfactory Portion.

"How can that be?" may some say. "Are not Christians always unsatisfied in their present attainments; and think they have got nothing, if they fall short of absolute perfection? Either they are not sufficient, or else their desires are most unreasonable."

I answer, Though the truth of grace wrought in a Christian makes him always desirous of more than what he hath already; yet is that grace sufficient and satisfactory, in Three respects:

[1] The least degree of true grace is sufficient to make the heart upright and sincere; sufficient to break the reigning power of sin, and to cast Satan out of his throne: it is sufficient to sway the heart to God, as its chiefest good; and to make his interest in the soul victorious and prevalent over the interest of

the world and flesh. This sufficiency the weakest degree of true grace hath.

And, herein, is Christ's power and ability to save most eminently glorious. Grace is a creature, in its own nature, mortal and corruptible; and, should Christ but for a moment suspend his influence, every temptation, every corruption would easily destroy it: now for Christ to preserve this weak and helpless creature in the midst of so many strong and mighty corruptions that oppose it, argues as all-sufficient a power, as it doth to preserve alive a single spark of fire in the midst of the raging and foaming sea. Now Christ not only preserves this weak grace alive, but makes it victorious and triumphant over all the powers of hell: they are not able to stand before it: it batters down their strong-holds: it routs armies of lusts and temptations: it alters and changes every faculty of the soul, and reduces them all to obedience; as if it were Christ's design, not only by his power to save the soul, but to do it in such a way as should most of all shame the Devil, baffling and subduing him by such a weak and contemptible thing as grace. And therefore St. Paul, when he prays against that temptation which sorely buffetted him, 2 Cor. xii. 9, God answers him, *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect* through *weakness:* as boisterous and as raging as thy temptations are; yet it shall appear, that thy weak grace, through my strength, shall at length overcome them.

[2] The least degree of true sanctifying grace is sufficient to entitle the soul to heaven and glory.

Let weak and doubting Christians, therefore, know this for their comfort, that the promise of eternal life is not made to the degrees of their grace, but to the truth of it; not to grace as strong, but to grace as true. Now the truth of grace may be in the least and in the weakest degree. That grace, to which our salvation is principally ascribed, is our faith: now it is not said, he only, whose faith is so strong as to overcome all temptations and all doubts and to flourish up into assurance, he only shall be saved; but, whosoever believes shall be saved, though his faith be very weak and very wavering. And the reason of this is clear: for faith doth not save us as it is a sanctifying, but as it is a justifying grace; for, if it saves us as it sanctifies, then must all perish, since the faith of the strongest believer is mixed with so many imperfections, that render him worthy of eternal death. Faith therefore saves, as it justifies; and justifies, as it

entitles us to Christ's perfect righteousness: which title we obtain by being united to him and made one with him, through this grace of faith. But a weak faith is a most sure and inviolable bond of union to Christ, as well as a strong faith: a weak faith can make a full conveyance of the righteousness and merits of Christ to the soul, as well as a strong faith: therefore, the weakest faith of the most trembling and timorous Christian doth as firmly entitle him to heaven and glory, as the most strong and undaunted faith of the most assured Christian. Thus, then, though the children of God complain sadly of the weakness of their grace: yet, in the very least and meanest degree of grace, there is a twofold sufficiency; a sufficiency to break the reigning power and dominion of the strongest lust, and a sufficiency to give a firm title to heaven and glory. And what would you have more? Hath not Christ approved himself an All-sufficient Saviour, in giving and dispensing such grace, that the weakest and lowest condition of believers hath such a great sufficiency as this is?

But this is not all: for

[3] The least degree of true grace is a sufficient ground of joy and comfort; for comfort and satisfaction, for joy and assurance.

These overflowing joys, this glorious assurance, believers may abound with, even then when they most of all complain of the poverty and weakness of their grace. It is not the degree of our graces, that gives us comfort and satisfaction; but it is the knowledge and evidence of the truth of them in our own consciences. The sun may be in a black and dismal eclipse, when many glittering and twinkling stars are not: the tallest cedars cast the longest shade: and so, many times, that Christian, that is the tallest and the most eminent in godliness, may be under the blackest and saddest desertions. The measures of comforts are not stinted by the measures of grace; but the meanest grace is a ground of true and inward joy and satisfaction, when the Spirit's witness doth irradiate it to us, as well as the greatest degree of grace. Joy and satisfaction flow from grace: both as it is the possession of that which in itself is very desirable; and because, more especially, it is the earnest of a future glorious inheritance. And hence it is, that there may be, at once, in the same heart, a complaining for the want of grace, and yet joy unspeakable and full of glory for what we have. As grace in itself is the most desirable good, so a Christian sadly

complaineth that he hath no more, but is stinted and kept so short in his allowance: but then, as grace is the earnest of future glory, so it yieldeth joy in the very possession; as knowing that a penny is as good an earnest as a pound, and the weakest grace may as firmly assure a Christian of eternal glory as the strongest.

Thus I have shewn that there is an all-sufficiency and satisfactoriness in the weakest and lowest degree of grace, if it be but sincere. For, it is sufficient to make the heart upright and sincere: it is sufficient to break the reigning power of sin: it is sufficient to cast Satan out of his throne: it is sufficient to sway the heart to God: it is sufficient to entitle the soul to heaven and glory: and, consequently, is always a sufficient ground of true joy and comfort.

3. *If an imperfect state of grace be of an all-sufficing nature, what will it be, when grace shall mount up into Glory? If there be so much in the earnest, what will there be in the Inheritance itself?*

And this declares the all-sufficiency of Christ indeed, since he is able to instate us in such great and rich possessions, that the *eye hath not seen*, nor the *ear heard, neither* hath it *entered into the heart of man* to conceive what they are, as the Apostle speaks. St. Paul, who once suffered a translation, and himself gives us a relation of his voyage into the other world, tells us no more than this, that he was caught up into paradise, and that he heard words unutterable, that it was not lawful or possible for him to utter: 2 Cor. xii. 4, to 11: the happiness of heaven is so great, that it cannot be fully known, till it be fully enjoyed: it is a remaining rest, an inaccessible light, fresh and overflowing pleasures, an incorruptible crown, an eternal kingdom, too much for me to utter or you to conceive. Nevertheless, if the sight and full fruition of God, if the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect, if everlasting songs of praises and hallelujahs, if eternal raptures and ecstasies can be accounted a supporting and an all-sufficing good, all these serve to extol the all-sufficiency of Christ our Saviour, who can bestow upon us this ravishing, satisfying joy and glory. God is now to us the spring-head and fountain of all our mercies and comforts; and we lie below at the fall of this spring, and draw refreshments from him only through the conduit pipes of providences and ordinances, and live upon second-hand enjoyments; but, in heaven, we shall be laid close to the fountain itself, and drink in

divine communications as they flow immediately from God, without having them deadened and flattened in the conveyance. Now, we behold him through a glass darkly: then, we shall see him face to face, see him as he is, and know him as we are known by him. And, if it causeth now such raptures of joy in us, when he sometimes darts in half a glance of his eye upon the soul, oh then within what bounds can our joy contain itself, when we shall constantly fix our eye upon God, and stedfastly behold his face; that face, from which the most glorious angels, as conscious of their own unworthiness to behold it, cover and veil their own! If now, when God gives us some glorious discoveries of himself, we are ready to faint and melt down under them, certainly, in heaven, when we shall lie under the glorious rays of the Deity beating fully upon us, they will be so great, that there were no living there did not the same God strengthen as well as fill our capacities. This is that Beatifical Vision, that heaven of heaven, that glory, wherein the angels are satisfied; that sight, wherein God shall bestow upon us a clearer eye than that of faith, and be always present with us in a nearer way than that of comfort. This is that all-sufficient and all-satisfying state, which the Lord Jesus Christ can and will bring all his unto: a state of inconceivable and endless felicity, far surmounting in glory whatever our narrow conceptions can now apprehend: a state, wherein we shall for ever join with angels in singing praises to the Lamb, who hath redeemed us with his own blood, and manifested himself to be an All-sufficient Saviour, *able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him;* purchasing so great and glorious an inheritance for them, and bringing them to the possession of it.

That is the Second Demonstration.

iii. Christ's all-sufficiency to save doth appear in this, that HE IS ABLE TO SAVE FROM THE GREATEST MISERY, AND TO SUPPLY THE GREATEST WANTS.

1. There is but one *Estate of Misery*, out of which Christ cannot save; and that is a state of damnation. And yet the damned spirits are not finally irrecoverable, for want of intrinsical value and satisfactoriness in Christ to deliver them; but because Christ never intended to purchase salvation for them: had his sacrifice been intended for them as it was for us, and the means applied to them as well as to us, those chains of everlasting darkness, which they are now reserved in, would have dropped

off; and they would have been snatched as brands out of the fire, in which, for want of this, they must burn for ever. Suppose what estate you will short of hell, we are by Christ recoverable out of it.

I shall instance in two particulars, wherein the very depth and bottom of our misery doth consist.

We are, by our sins, forfeited to the Justice and Vengeance of God: and he, that can imagine a greater misery than this, never knew what it was to fall into the hands of the Living God.

We are in the possession of the Devil; and he is that strong man, that rules with rigour; and, unto him, we are all naturally become slaves and vassals.

Now when we are thus liable and obnoxious to the Wrath of God as our judge, and fallen into the hands of the Devil as our jailor, will it not be acknowledged, that Christ saves from the uttermost misery, if he can rescue us? Is there any, that can deliver us, when both God and the Devil and all the powers both of heaven and hell set themselves against us? Yes, the Lord Christ hath done it already.

(1) In respect of God, and of Divine Justice to which we stood obnoxious, he hath fully satisfied and paid down an all-sufficient price for our deliverance.

Therefore saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 20. We are all *bought with a price, &c.* 1 Pet. i. 19. *The precious blood of Christ.* And this is such a price, as hath discharged for us the very utmost farthing of all that we owe to divine justice. And, therefore saith God, in Job xxxiii. 24. *Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom:* I have discharged him from the guilt of his sins, and obligation to punishment: I am fully satisfied.

(2) But, though the judge be thus satisfied, yet the Devil, the jailor, would fain retain the prisoner, and is resolved not to part with him upon these terms: he hath possession of him, and he rules in him and over him, and therefore rescue him who can. Therefore Christ saves us by conquest and plain force, in respect of the Devil. After he hath satisfied God, he subdues Satan, and completes the work of our redemption.

And, therefore, in Scripture, we read of the sufferings of Christ, by which our salvation is achieved, under both these notions. As Christ paid the price to God's justice: Mat. xx. 28. He gave *his life a ransom for many.* 1 Tim. ii. 6. He *gave*

himself a ransom for all. And as a victory gained over the Devil: *Through death,* Christ destroyed *him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil:* Heb. ii. 14. Col. ii. 14, 15. *Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances, that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.* He hath exposed the Devil and all the black host of hell to shame and infamy, in having their prey so strangely plucked from them: and he *triumphed over them in* his cross; v. 15.

And thus he saves us, by ransom in respect of God, and by conquest in respect of the Devil; he saves us from the greatest misery imaginable, from the dungeon of the lowest hell. So long as your case is not so desperate as to be in hell, be your misery more or less, this makes no difference in respect of Christ, though it calls for greater love and thankfulness from you to him for your deliverance.

Seeing, therefore, that Christ is thus able to save us from the utmost and greatest misery, it appears that he is an All-sufficient Saviour.

2. As he is able to save us from the greatest misery, so he is able to relieve us *in our greatest and most pressing Wants,* be they inward or outward, be they corporal or spiritual.

My God can abundantly *supply all your need, according to* the *riches* of his *glory by Christ Jesus:* Phil. iv. 19. Is it pardon you need? in Christ *we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace:* Eph. i. 7. Is it peace with God? we have it with him, through Christ: Rom. v. 1. *We have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Is it peace of conscience? *The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus:* Phil. iv. 7. Indeed Christ is such an overflowing fountain of all good, that he fills the empty and satisfies the thirsty: and all that rely upon him, *He is able to save to the uttermost,* yea all *that come unto God by him.*

iv. Another Demonstration of Christ's all-sufficiency to save appears in this, in that HE IS ABLE TO SAVE, WHEN NONE ELSE CAN.

He appears to save those, that come to God by him, when neither men nor angels dare stand up in their behalf; and, if

they did, they could not relieve or help them: then Christ interposeth.

And, as Christ alone procures salvation for us, so he alone can apply that salvation to us. And this he doth, more especially, at Two Seasons; when all others are but miserable helpers or comforters to us. As,

1. *When the dreadful Terrors of the Almighty surround us.*

When God brandishes his sword over our heads; when he makes deep wounds, and, instead of balm, pours into our consciences fire and brimstone; oh, what Saviour can then deliver us? then, when those insolent hopes and vain confidences of salvation, with which we formerly supported ourselves, forsake us? then, when our own righteousness, in which we formerly trusted, is as filthy garments; or, like a searcloth, encreaseth our torments? then, when all the pleasures and debaucheries of the world, that men have formerly delighted in, are only to them as if a person stung with wasps should apply honey to assuage the smart? So, truly, when their waspish consciences stung them with the guilt of sin, they sunk to the honey, to the sweet delights and pleasures of the world: but, now, this honey is turned into gall and wormwood: God and they are enemies: he hath dipped his arrows in the lake which burns for ever, and hath shot them all flaming into their souls; so that they are all of them but one wound: and what relief is there for them? *A wounded spirit who can bear?* Yet Christ bare it upon the cross, when he cried, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And he, that cured himself, can also cure another: this blood, poured into these wounds, is present remedy, and gives present ease and relief. And, therefore, as he designs to make peace between God and us, so likewise between man and himself; giving him that peace of conscience, which quiets and appeases: Isa. lxi. 1. It is no less work to reconcile man and conscience together upon good and warrantable grounds, than to reconcile God and man together: and it is only Christ's all-sufficiency, that can do either.

2. Another season is, *when we shall appear before the Tribunal of God, at the Last and Terrible Day.*

What a dreadful sight will it be, to behold and see heaven and earth all wallowing in flames; and angels flying through the air, and driving whole shoals of men before them to judgment; the Judge being set, the books opened; God, Conscience, and the Devil accusing; and all the world crying out, "Guilty,

Guilty;" and the sentence passing on them accordingly, and millions of them dragging to execution from the bar where they were condemned! You cannot then cry to your honours and dignities to save you; for you must all stand upon the same equal level. It is not your righteousness, that can then save you: no; the defects of it shall then be found part of your charge. What then is there to save you? your guilt is manifest; your judge impartial: and, if once sentence is passed, the execution is speedy. And, certainly, now it is time for an All-sufficient Saviour to appear, when the whole world is burning about them, and hell under them; God frowning in their very faces, and the Devil attending them at their backs ready to hurry them away to torments. And, now, when there is no pity to be expected from angels or men, then Christ appears to be an Advocate, to answer for his, and to silence all the accusations produced against them: and, by his satisfaction and perfect righteousness, he brings them off with shouts, and the applause of glorious angels and saints.

And thus it appears he is able to save them, when none else can.

v. Christ is able to save to the uttermost, in that HE IS ABLE TO SAVE THOSE, THAT CONDEMN THEMSELVES, AND THINK THEIR OWN SALVATION A THING IMPOSSIBLE.

There is a twofold judging and condemning of one's self: one, in point of merit and desert; the other, in point of issue and event: the one judgeth himself, as one now deserving condemnation; the other, that he must suffer it: the one, as due; the other, as unavoidable. Now Christ saves from both these; and that gloriously.

1. He saves those, *that judge themselves worthy of eternal death.*

Yea, indeed, he saves no other: 1 Cor. xi. 31. *If we....judge ourselves, we* shall *not be judged.* And why is this self-judging so necessary, in order to our being acquitted by God; but only because it is Christ's design in saving sinners, to glorify his exceeding great and all-sufficient power? and, therefore, we must acknowledge ourselves to be lost in ourselves, that so God's power may be owned to be exceeding great and glorious in saving us.

2. Christ can save those, who do not only judge themselves worthy of eternal death, but those *who judge themselves appointed to it.*

He can save those, who think it impossible that they should be saved. And, questionless, there is now many a soul in heaven, who on earth cried out, there was no hope, no mercy for them; that hell and wrath was their only portion. And this shews what an All-sufficient Saviour Christ is, who can save beyond our hopes, and contrary to our expectations.

And thus I have arrived at the end of the Demonstrations of Christ's All-sufficiency, to save from the greatest Misery, and to relieve us in our greatest and most pressing Wants. He is able to save us, when none else can; and he is able to save those, that condemn themselves, and think their own salvation a thing impossible: he is able, both to save those, that think themselves worthy of eternal death; and those, that think themselves appointed to it.

III. Having thus displayed, though weakly, the all-sufficiency of Christ to save, we will proceed to close up the subject, with some brief APPLICATION of this doctrine.

USE I.

This should teach us, TO HAVE MOST HIGH AND HONOURABLE THOUGHTS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO IS THUS ALL-SUFFICIENT TO SAVE.

Omnipotency, though it were but to destroy us, were justly the object of our dread and reverence; but omnipotency to save, deserves our most affectionate esteem. It should raise wonder in us, when we consider God's power and goodness in the works of creation; but, when we contemplate the work of redemption it should raise our wonder to an ecstasy. Christ's almighty power was not so glorious, then, when he spake the world out of nothing; then, when he lifted up the sun into the firmament, and kindled the stars as so many shining torches that dart forth light upon the world and extend their influences to the whole universe; as when he appeared in flesh, despised and of no account, in the form of a servant, to accomplish the wonderful work of our redemption. What he did in the former, was by the association and joint-workmanship of the other persons of the Blessed Trinity; but, in this, the whole work lay upon him: he trod *the wine-press* of his Father's wrath alone. In the former, though he shewed his power to be great, yet he did not put it

forth to the uttermost: he could have created more worlds, and he might have made more of each sort of creatures, and these far more beautiful and glorious than they are; but, in the work of redemption, Christ's infinite power is extended to the uttermost: his person was infinite, and his sufferings were infinite; one proportionable to the other. His omnipotency as our Redeemer is far more glorious, than his omnipotency as our Creator. Christ first gives the honour of his all-sufficiency to this end, that, for his undertaking so great an employment as the accomplishment of the work of our redemption, we might honour him in his own person, as we honour the Father in his: John v. 23. Certainly, there is good reason why we should ascribe honour to him, from whom we receive salvation.

USE ii.

Is Christ an All-sufficient Saviour? WHY DO WE THEN RELY UPON THAT, WHICH IS ALTOGETHER INSUFFICIENT?

What the Prophet said, in another case, 2 Kings i. 6, 7. *Is it....because there is* no *God in Israel, that thou sendest to enquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron?* the same may I say: Is it because there is none deputed to be a Saviour, because there is none appointed, none able to save, that men betake themselves to false refuges? to broken reeds, that are so far from supporting, that certainly they will both betray and wound them? It is a strange folly, that most men are guilty of, that, when God hath provided them a Saviour to their hands, one that is able to save to the uttermost, yet, with a great deal of toil and labour, they seek to set up other saviours of their own: as if it were just reason to distrust the mercy of God, because they have deserved his wrath. There is not one here, who has not hopes of heaven and a blessed eternity; and something we all rely upon, as sufficient to heart us up in it. If I should go first to one, and then to another, and put the question, "Do you hope to be saved?" where sits the person, that will not shew his strong hopes; and almost disdain that such a question should be asked him? "Yes," would every one say: "we have all good hopes; and, though the most perish and few are saved, yet we have all hopes that we are of the number of those few." Were but the grounds and reasons of men's hopes made visible, we should find, that that, which they most support themselves upon, is no

better than that mentioned in the book of Job, to say of gold, Thou art my hope; and of *the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.*

1. Some *trust presumptuously to the Mercy of God to be saved.* And this is the plea of many ignorant persons: here, it may be, it is a secret to those who can pretend more knowledge in the mysteries of salvation, that God is merciful and gracious, and that the world is but scared out of their wits, when we represent God in such furious shapes as if he were all vengeance! his mercy is infinite; and who would not hope? It is true: but his justice and severity are as infinite as his mercy: why then dost thou not fear? Must God remit the attribute of his mercy, if he doth not save thee? Why thou thyself judgest he is infinite in mercy, though he hath condemned thousands of others. "But we will never believe, that that God, which made us, will destroy us." If this be all, know that the devils have as good a plea as this: were not they the workmanship of God? were not they more glorious creatures than thou art? and he, that *spared not the angels* which fell, will least of all spare thee: doth not the Prophet direct us against this plea, Isa. xxvii. 11? *It is a people of no understanding: therefore, he, that made them, will not* save *them; and he, that formed them, will* not *shew them* mercy.

Quest. "But how can it consist with the goodness of God, to punish momentary sins? Those, that are but as a flash, and gone in the twinkling of an eye, how can he punish with everlasting destruction?"

Ans. It is true, the act of sin is momentary and transient; but yet there is something in sin, that is permanent and eternal: and that ariseth from the guilt of it. God doth not punish for the act of sin, that is past and gone; but for the guilt of it, that remains: the black guilt of that sin, which was committed a hundred years ago, remains still upon the souls of the damned; and therefore God justly punisheth them and will do so eternally, because all their eternity of sufferings can never satisfy the offended justice of the divine majesty. These hopes, therefore, are all vain.

2. Some *trust to their own Righteousness*: and set up their own good works and duties for their All-sufficient Saviour.

There is nothing harder than to persuade men to look beyond themselves for life. As they have been their own destroyers, so they would fain be their own saviours: and yet what is this, but a delusory sottishness? and those are hardliest beaten off from

relying upon their own righteousness, who have the fewest good works. But this is a weak ground of hope, which men venture their souls upon for eternal happiness. It is observable, that the hope of a hypocrite is compared to *a spider's web:* Job. 8. 14: spiders' webs, you know, are spun out of their own bowels: when the spider hath made its web with much pains, and set itself in the midst of it, it is but a weak and defenceless thing, easy to be swept away: so is it with these vain hopes of sinners; they are spun out of their own bowels, out of their good works and righteousness, and, when they set up themselves in the midst of them, expecting to catch heaven in their web, they will find it but a weak and indefensible thing: for conviction of sin will break this web; if not, death and judgment will; and then the sinner will unexpectedly drop into hell. Now from the consideration of all this, it greatly concerns us not to trust to or rely upon our own, but Christ's righteousness, lest we fall into condemnation.

Christ hath done Two things for us as our Saviour:

He hath made a full Satisfaction and Expiation of the Guilt of our sins.

He hath procured Acceptation of our Persons and Performances with God.

Now if we trust to our own righteousness for either of these, we make that our Saviour, and not Christ.

Examine yourselves now; and search what it is, that you propound to yourselves when you perform duties towards God.

Do none of you perform duties to this end, that thereby you may be freed from the Guilt of sin, and pay down a price for your former transgressions? When you commit sin, many times, do not you think you will make amends to God by the next prayer and confession, and bemoaning of yourselves for it? That, which men rely upon for the satisfying of their consciences, they rely upon for the satisfying of divine justice. Now when conscience grows vexed and angry, what are the methods that men use to quiet it? If they can but reckon up the number of their good works and duties, they value them, instead of the blood of Christ.

Do none of you rely upon your own righteousness and good works, to procure Acceptation with God? For mark, upon what account men hope their duties shall be accepted, upon the same they hope themselves shall be accepted. Put it to the trial: do not you hope that your duties shall be accepted for their own

sake? True it is, you pray that God would hear and answer you for Christ's sake: but yet the generality of men rest upon the excellency of their prayer to make them acceptable; for consider, have you not different hopes of the acceptation of your duties, upon your different performance of them? If your hearts are sometimes drawn out in prayer and mightily enlarged, do not you rise up and say with full confidence, that your prayers are accepted with God as a sweet savour? but, at other times, when your hearts are more dead and flat, and your prayers hang heavy upon your lips, when you can but groan and chatter, then you conclude you are afraid that God doth not regard that prayer nor accept of it. This is an evidence, that you measure the acceptance of your duties, by the worth and excellency of them: the one is dull and sluggish, and that you give over as lost and vain; the other vigorous and sprightful, and you doubt not but that pierceth heaven, and obtaineth audience with God: never thinking of the intercession of Christ, which alone can make them acceptable. If this be the end which men make of performing their duties, to make them their Christs, and rely upon them for salvation; though it be a means to it, yet it is insufficient of itself to obtain it.

USE iii.

Is Christ an All-sufficient Saviour, able to save to the uttermost? LET US THEN BE PERSUADED TO COME TO HIM, TO ACCEPT HIM FOR OUR SAVIOUR.

Were I now to press you to some hard and difficult duty, to the exercise of self-denial and mortification, to be willing to lay down your lives for Christ, I might rationally suspect that these exhortations should be rejected; unless they came with great power, strong arguments, and prevalent motives: but, when it is only to accept of that Christ who hath laid down his life for you, and of that salvation which he hath laid up for you and tenders to you; certainly, such an exhortation as this carries argument and motive enough in itself to prevail. But, because men are wedded to their own sins, and because they are resolved against their own happiness, I shall lay down some considerations, which, if they do not persuade them to close with Christ, may at least convince them how unreasonably they put away salvation from themselves.

And, here,

1. Consider, that *you all stand in most absolute need of an All-sufficient Saviour.*

You are lost, beyond all the power and skill of men and angels to recover you; and God protests that he will save you no other way but by Christ: Acts iv. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name given under heaven.* There is no choice for you, but either Christ, or eternal damnation; either the Son of God, or the Wrath of God. You are all under guilt, and there is no other way of satisfaction to divine justice, but either his blood or yours. You now hear these things; and, possibly, slight them: but that day and hour are coming, and will not tarry, when death shall snatch you away to judgment; and when you shall lift up those hands at the great bar, with which you thrust away salvation from you. That Christ, whom you have scorned and contemned, as a merciful Saviour; you will then tremble at, as a most severe and just Judge.

2. Consider, *If you now come in to Christ, he is willing and ready to receive you.*

He himself tells you so: John vi. 37. Those, that come *to me, I will in no wise cast out.* Indeed, all-sufficiency to save, without willingness, serves only to increase the anguish of our ruin and destruction. But this may be for our comfort, that Christ hath no more power in his hand to save us, than willingness in his heart. It is not indeed Christ's power, that despairing souls use to object against; but his will. "We know," say such, "that Christ is able to save us: but how know we that he is willing?" Truly, his all-sufficiency gives us good security of his will. Hath Christ left the bosom of his Father, hath he undergone no less than infinite wrath and sufferings, and all for this end, that he may be an All-sufficient Saviour? and shall we yet doubt, after all this, whether he is willing to save us or not? Certainly, if it stood Christ in so much to procure to himself ability to save, we have no reason to doubt, that, since he hath obtained that ability, he should now want a will to do it. Therefore, since Christ was appointed by the Father to save sinners, and since he was fitted with an all-sufficient power to effect salvation, and since this all-sufficiency wants not willingness, be persuaded to accept of him; and be as willing to be saved by him, as he is willing to save you.

3. Consider, that *though Christ be an All-sufficient Saviour, and able to save to the uttermost; yet he is not able to save those, that refuse and reject him.*

A medicine doth not cure, because it is compounded of such and such precious ingredients, though never so well suited to that distemper; but because it is applied: so neither doth Christ save us, as he is compounded of many precious ingredients that qualify and fit him to be an all-sufficient Saviour, as his Deity, Humanity, unction of the Holy Spirit, and his own willingness; but as received, as believed on, and applied to the soul by faith: and, therefore, whatever he hath done or suffered in his life, death, or resurrection, will all be but in vain to us; and his precious blood will run waste, if, through impenitency and unbelief, we reject this All-sufficient Saviour, and keep at a distance from him.

4. Consider, *If you do not accept of Christ and salvation by him, you will be rejected by him to your greater and sorer condemnation.*

Think you not, that it will heighten your sin here, and your misery hereafter; that, when God hath been at so much cost and so much care to furnish an All-sufficient Saviour for you, you should be found to neglect so great salvation? Think not, that the tenders of Christ and salvation, which are made to you, are indifferent; that, though you slight and neglect them, you shall be in the same condition you were before: no; but the despising of Christ, and the abusing of grace, and the neglecting of so great salvation, are those things, that inspirit and enflame hell-fire, and make the never-dying worm to gnaw more cruelly; and will sink you deeper into that scalding lake that burns with fire and brimstone, where you shall be burnt in streams and drowned in flames. It had been better for you, that there never had been a Christ tendered, grace exhibited, and salvation purchased for you by Christ. If we neglect this salvation, we are without hope or possibility of recovery for ever. Pray observe what the Apostle speaks, after he had been comparing Christ and Moses, together with the wrath that should follow upon the despising of the one and the despising of the other: Heb. x. 28, 29. *He, that despised Moses' Law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God; and hath counted the blood of*

the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace? These shall not have so much mercy afforded them, as to die without mercy.

And, thus, I have handled this excellent portion of Scripture, concerning Christ's Intercession, and his All-sufficiency to save all that come unto God by him.

THE

EXCELLENCY

OF

HEAVENLY TREASURES.

THE

EXCELLENCY OF HEAVENLY TREASURES.

MATT. vi. 20, 21, 22.

BUT LAY UP FOR YOURSELVES TREASURES IN HEAVEN, WHERE NEITHER MOTH NOR RUST DOTH CORRUPT, AND WHERE THIEVES DO NOT BREAK THROUGH NOR STEAL: FOR WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is not a soul in the world so destitute and beggarly, but it hath somewhat that it may call, and doth esteem, its Treasure. Not only he, that hath, as the Psalmist speaks, all that his heart can wish, who grasps in possession whatever his covetousness and unbounded desires grasp in imagination; but he also, that possesseth nothing but his own poverty, that hath no abundance but want and misery, such a one whom you would never suspect to be a hoarder, yet hath he that, the hopes and enjoyment of which he counts precious and his soul's treasure.

In dangerous and difficult times, what is the first and chief care of every man, but so to dispose of this his treasure, that, whatever losses he may sustain in other accessary good things, that are but lumber and utensils to the soul, yet his Treasure may be secured both from corruption and violence?

Our Saviour here throws open before our view two Repositories, or Common Treasuries: Vast ones, they are; wherein all the good things, that ever any man in the world enjoyed, are laid up: and they are Earth and Heaven. If you have any treasure, as certainly every one of you has, it must belong to one of these two places: you must deposit it either on earth or in heaven. "Look now," says Christ: "take a view of Earth's Exchequer; and what see you there? There, indeed, is the World's Treasure: all, that many millions of men have been gathering together, and hoarding up for several ages." If you

would have an inventory of all this store, St. John hath exactly cast it up, in 1 John ii. 16. and it amounts to this sum: *All, that is in the world*, saith he, is *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life:* that is, there are Pleasures, suiting the propension of *the flesh:* there are Riches, for the greediness of *the eye;* for, *What*, saith the Wise Man, *is laid up for the owners thereof, save the beholding of them with their eyes?* and there are Honour and Dignity; that planetary, airy, good thing, that puffs up; that is *the pride of life:* and this is the world's all; and that, which many thousands make their treasure. Yea: but, saith Christ, do not you see how rusty and worm-eaten these things are? do you not see what a bustle there is among the men of the world to get them? one pulls and hales them from another, and they are never certain in any man's possession: *moth and rust corrupt* them, *and thieves break through and steal;* and, therefore, *lay not up* your treasure here: there is another treasury for you to store up your good things in, and that is Heaven; a sure and safe place, where no corruption doth infect, nor any violence intrude: therefore, lay up your treasure there: lay up your treasure in heaven.

And thus you have the scope of our Saviour in these words.

In the words themselves, you have,

A Command or Exhortation; and that is, to lay up treasure in heaven.

You have the Enforcement of this command.

And that is from a double reason:

FIRST. From the Security of that treasure, that is laid up in heaven. It is there safe and free from all danger; which it could not be, were it any where else deposited.

All hurt and danger, that can befal a man's treasure, proceeds either,

First. From Inward Principles of Corruption, that do of themselves cause decay in it.

And thus it is with all Earthly Treasures. They are, of themselves, fading and perishing. Riches perish with the using: they rot out and wear away, while we are using them. All earthly manna, the sweet and luscious things of this world, breed worms, that eat upon and devour them. All the riches and treasures of the world have rust, that attends on them, and consumes both them and their beauty and substance. But spiritual manna never turns into worms: treasure, laid up in heaven, is never eaten with rust. No, saith Christ, there rust doth

not corrupt: that is, they are free and safe from all inward decays and perishing, from their own inward principle and nature. And

Secondly. Treasure may be unsafe, as from an inward principle that may corrupt, so also from Outward Accidents, that may consume them.

And thus we see oftentimes it comes to pass. Sometimes,

First. Insensibly, through a secret blasting curse of God, wasting them by little and little, and unperceived decays; so that, while we hold them in our hands and look upon them, then they perish. And this is here compared to the eating of a moth. A moth makes not a sudden rent in a garment, but spoils it by unseen degrees: so fares it oftentimes with the things of this world: if they be not torne and rent from us, yet are they moth-eaten comforts: the moth is got into them, and destroys them unperceivably. And, sometimes,

Secondly. By sudden violence; compared here to thieves breaking through and stealing good things and treasure away. An unexpected turn of providence doth, at once, many times snatch away all that men here prize and set their hearts on: and then, where is their treasure? In Hos. v. we find God threatening, both these ways, to destroy Ephraim. In v. 12. *I will be unto Ephraim*, saith God, *as a moth; and to the house of Judah as rottenness:* that is, the Lord would consume them silently and unperceivably, as a moth eats out in the spots of a garment. And, v. 14. *I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah:* and *I, even I, will tear and go away: I will take away, and none shall rescue:* that is, I will destroy him by a violent and sudden destruction.

But, treasures laid up in heaven are secured, both from insensible decays, and also from sudden violence; secured, both from the corruption of the moth, and from the stealing of the thief. It is rich and sure treasure, that is laid up there. And now is the time of your laying up: some few years hence, and it cannot be long first, but you shall have these treasures opened to you, and you let in, to see how rich you are. And you will find them augmented above what you could believe: there is not the least of all that you have laid up lost or diminished. And then you will wonder and question with yourselves, who laid up this and that part of your treasure: you will then ask, "Is this glory mine, and that glory mine? this throne and that brightness, this diamond and those stars, this robe and that sun-

beam, all this precious and unconceivable treasure, are they mine? I cannot remember that ever I laid up so much and such precious treasure: my faith sometimes pried through a crevice into this treasure, and it told me that there were great and glorious things stored up, and it told me also that they did belong to me; but, O my dim-sighted grace, that could not discover to me the one half of that glory, wherein I am now lost and swallowed up!" Thus a Christian will then admire how he came by so much treasure, when he comes to the possession and enjoyment of it. There is a saying recorded in Plutarch, of a rich Roman, Crassus, that he did not think that man rich, that knew all that he had: truly, in this man's account, a Christian is truly rich: he hath laid up more treasure, than himself knows of. But, though a Christian knows not how much he hath, yet he shall lose none: it is safe, being laid up in heaven: every star is as a seal set upon the treasure-door, that none may break in and violate it.

And that is the first argument: Lay up treasure in heaven, because there only it is safe: there, only, the moth doth not corrupt, and thieves do not break through and steal.

SECONDLY. And then, secondly, another enforcing reason you find in the next verse; and that is, because, by laying up treasure in heaven, you lay up your Hearts also in Heaven: *for, where your treasure is*, says Christ, *there will your hearts be also*; and where your hearts are, there are you.

What an argument is this, O Christians! Would you yourselves be laid up safely in heaven, before you come to be laid down in your graves? would you pre-occupy your own immortality and glory? would you send all your thoughts and all your desires, as spies into the Land of Promise, to discover the riches and beauty of it? Then lay up your treasure there: this will centre all your thoughts, this will fix all your affections on itself; and, though now you are on earth and walk on earth, yet this will make your conversation to be in heaven, if your treasure be there. It is impossible that you and your treasure should be at a distance. If your treasure be on earth, your minds will be there also: you will grovel here below; the serpent's curse will be upon you; *Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.* But, if your treasure be laid up in heaven, it will attract and draw up your hearts unto it; and make them heavenly hearts, as itself is a heavenly treasure.

Now all this is backed with another consideration, in the beginning of the words; and that is, *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.* You may indeed lay up treasure on earth, but it is a hazard whether it be for yourselves. Here men sweat and toil to get estates, and heap up treasures; but they know not who shall enjoy and possess them: they labour all their days to purchase a few uncertain riches; while, usually, by that time they purpose to reap the fruit of them, death comes and snatches away their souls; and the greatest use they can make of them is, only to bequeath them unto others. He only, that *is rich towards God, layeth up treasure for himself;* and lays up those riches, that he needs no legacy to dispose of. A Christian is his own heir; and, what himself hath gotten, he himself shall eternally enjoy and possess.

And thus you have the parts of the text: *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.*

There is nothing in the words, that needs much explication: I shall, therefore, only in brief enquire into Two things.

What is here meant by Treasure.

What is meant by Laying up this treasure in Heaven.

First. What is here meant by Treasure.

I answer: It is a metaphorical expression; and denotes to us that, which we set the highest rate and value upon; that, the getting of which we most endeavour, the enjoyment of which we most prize, the loss of which we most bemoan. In a word, that, which we account as our greatest and best good, is our treasure, be it what it will.

Secondly. The next enquiry is, what is meant by laying up this treasure in heaven.

I answer: It is nothing else, but to esteem heaven and the things of heaven, thus to be our treasure; to rate and value them above all things else, and to look upon them as our chiefest good, and accordingly to seek and labour after them.

I might now propound many Observations to you, as indeed every word of this precious Scripture is pregnant with them: but I shall only mention one; intending only to insist upon that: and it is this:

Doct. That HEAVENLY AND SPIRITUAL THINGS ARE, AND OUGHT TO BE, OF THE GREATEST VALUE WITH EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN.

Or thus:

A TRUE CHRISTIAN DOTH ESTEEM, AND HE OUGHT TO ESTEEM, HEAVENLY THINGS ABOVE ALL THINGS.

What are these heavenly things, but God and Christ, grace and glory, spiritual and eternal concernments? These are the choice things of a Christian: whatever else he may possess, yet these are his treasure.

See how Abraham stings Dives with a sad item of what he made his treasure on earth, in Luke xvi. 25. *Son*, says he, *remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things*: but did not Abraham himself, in his lifetime, receive good things also? Might not Dives have retorted back again, "Wert not thou, Father Abraham, rich and potent on earth? Hadst not thou great power, and great possessions in the world? And, must I be tormented and thou glorified, when thou hadst a greater portion of them than myself?" No, the emphasis cuts off this exception: *Thou, in thy lifetime, receivedst* THY *good things*. "I received good things; but not my good things; not the chiefest that I valued. Comforts they were; but not treasures: and, while I possessed these good things, I sought after better; and therefore I now possess and enjoy them also."

So holy Asaph views this treasure, that here he had got, in a divine rapture, in Psal. lxxiii. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth, that I can desire, besides thee.* He was so far from desiring any thing above God, that he desires nothing besides God. What is there on earth, that I can *desire besides thee?*

See St. Paul also, in 1 Cor. ii. 2. *I determined not to know any thing among you*, but *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*; but, especially in Phil. iii. 8. *Doubtless*, says he, *I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I* suffer *the loss of all things; and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.* Observe how the Apostle doth there contemn all, that the world counts its treasure: he reckons it but *dung*, in which a man may rake long enough, before he finds any true treasure: nay, not only *dung*, but *loss*, in comparison of Christ. "And, what tell you me of losing all things

for him? It is true, I have done so; but, in doing so, I have but lost a loss, I am but rid of a damage. I count all things but loss; and I suffer the loss of all things, for Christ."

This is the low and villifying account, that a child of God makes of every thing that is not his treasure. God and Christ, and the things of eternity, are his chief and choice good; and whatever he hath besides, is but *dung*, but *loss*, but a damage. In the heart of a carnal man, all things lie in a confused order; heaven below, and earth a-top: earth seems to him to be vast and infinite; but heaven a little inconsiderable spot. But, in the heart of a child of God, every thing keeps its natural posture: there earth sinks, as being the dregs of his thoughts and cares; but heaven shines above, very bright and glorious: earth, to him, seems to be but a little spot, as indeed it is, which is seldom seen or noted by him; but heaven is as an infinite boundless sea of mercy, which he is still looking into and admiring. Thus things keep their natural posture, in the heart of a child of God; but they are all disordered, in the heart of a wicked man.

I. To prosecute this farther, I shall endeavour to OPEN TO YOU THE RICHES OF THIS HEAVENLY TREASURE; that it may appear how rationally the children of God act, in valuing this above all things, and in making it their choice good and chief treasure.

And,

i. It is an evident demonstration of the preciousness of this treasure, in that IT MAKES THOSE THINGS PRECIOUS ALSO, THAT ARE BUT CONVERSANT ABOUT IT; and therefore, certainly, it is mighty precious itself. It bestows a lustre, excellency, and beauty upon every thing, that lies near it, or that hath any relation to it.

I will mention but Two things.

1. *The Deeds of Conveyance, whereby this treasure is made over to us and becomes ours, are therefore precious, because they convey such a treasure.*

And what are they, but the Promises? Every promise is a ticket, given us by God, to take up mansions of treasure in heaven: it is vocal glory: it is happiness, in words and syllables: it is eternity, couched in a sentence. And, therefore, no

wonder that the Apostle speaks so magnificently of them: *Whereby*, says he, *are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.*

Tell me, therefore, O soul! didst thou ever see the glory and riches, that there are in a promise? Wert thou ever ravished with that infinite sweetness and deliciousness, that thou suckest from them? Didst thou ever sit down amazed at the free and boundless love of God in them; that spake good to thy soul, *for a great while to come*, as David speaks? Didst thou ever find the excellency and preciousness of these things? Think, then, how precious that glory itself is, that fills these promises. If a star be so bright and sparkling, that shines only in a borrowed brightness, how transcendently bright then is the sun, that lends so much light to it! If the conduit-pipe be ready to burst, through the abundance of streams that flow from it; how inexhaustible is the fountain and spring-head, that supplies this treasure! If the gleanings be so rich and full, what will the vintage be? The glory and happiness of heaven is so great and boundless, that it overflows and spills itself abroad in Promises; and, if the overflowing drops be so sweet, what then will the ocean itself be? What says the Apostle, in 1 Pet. ii. 7? *Unto you*, that *believe*, Christ *is precious:* How is he now precious unto believers, but as he is held forth in a promise? that is all the way, in which he becomes precious to us now. And will he not be far more precious to us, when we shall no more stand at the distance of a promise from him? when we shall no more need the hand of faith; but shall clasp and cling about him, in the immediate fruition of him? Will he not be more precious to us, when all our hopes shall be made good to us in actual present possession? And, therefore, if the promises be so *exceeding great and precious*, it argues, certainly, that that treasure, that makes these promises to be so, is wonderfully and infinitely glorious and precious.

2. As the Deeds of Conveyance, so *the very Eye, that sees and views this treasure, is made precious by the sight of it.*

And what is that eye, but the eye of faith? and, though it be but weak, yet it is that, with which, by the help of a promise as by a prospective-glass, we look into heaven itself, to see that mass and those heaps of treasure laid up there for the soul. The eye of faith sees them: the hand of faith tells them out: and, therefore, St. Peter calls it precious faith: 2 Pet. i. 1.

To them, that have obtained like precious faith with us. You may look upon earthly treasure till your eyes be dazzled, yea, possibly, till they be weakened and wearied by it; but never will they be made more rich and precious by it: but, by looking upon this Heavenly Treasure, the eye that sees it becomes a jewel itself; *more precious*, saith the same Apostle, *than the gold that perisheth:* 1 Pet. i. 7.

And that is the First excellency of this heavenly treasure. It is precious treasure, in that it makes those things precious, that are but conversant about it; Precious Faith, and Precious Promises.

ii. Heavenly Treasure is SOUL TREASURE, SUITED TO THE SOUL. And, therefore, look how much more noble and excellent the soul is than the body, so much more excellent is Heavenly Treasure than Earthly Treasure. For what serve these things on earth, but to clothe and feed the body; and yet, for all this, the soul may be naked, and miserable, and want suitable provision. Truly, we may lament the condition of the richest sinners on earth; and say over them, in compassion, O poor souls, what husks and swine's-meat do you give your souls, while you set the whole world before them! for, all in the world is no better. There is nothing in it, whence you can pick out suitable nourishment for them: and therefore Christ justly brands the rich man in the Gospel for an arrant fool, who, when he had filled his barns with corn, said to his soul, *Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.....eat, drink, and be merry.* A fool, indeed! to reckon his soul's goods by barns'-full! he might as wisely have boasted, that he had provided barns full of thoughts for his body, as barns full of corn for his soul. And, yet, such is the provision, that most men make for their precious souls. Tell me, Sirs, do you really believe, that this is such provision as your souls can live upon? or, do you think your souls need no provision? What! must your bodies, that at first were kneaded out of the dust and must ere long be crumbled into dust again, must these bodies engross all your care, how to provide for them, and to please them; and shall your spiritual and everlasting souls be wholly neglected by you? It is not long hence, before your bodies shall never more know a difference, between treasure and poverty, between fulness and hunger; and,

then, what serve all these things for, that, with so much pains and industry, you have laid up? Truly, it is a long journey into the other world; and gold, and silver, and Earthly Treasure are too heavy a portage to be carried with you thither. Those, that now make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience to get them, will, ere it be long, make shipwreck of them also. When you come to launch out into eternity, you shall carry nothing with you of your earthly treasure into the other world; unless it be the rust of it, to witness against you: nothing of your gold; unless it be the guilt of it, to condemn you. These are unfit things, therefore, to be laid up by you as your souls' treasure.

But Heavenly Treasure is suitable treasure; suitable to your souls: and that, in a Twofold respect.

Heavenly Treasures are suitable to the Nature of your Souls. And,

They are suitable to the Necessities of your Souls.

1. Heavenly Treasures are *suitable to the Nature of your Souls.* And that, in these Two respects.

They are Spiritual Treasures, for an Immaterial Soul. And,

They are Durable Treasures, for an Immortal Soul.

And, therefore, they are suitable treasures.

(1) Heavenly Treasures are Spiritual; and therefore suited to a soul, that is of a spiritual and immaterial substance.

Hence the Apostle, Eph. i. 3. blesseth God, *who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly* things *in Christ Jesus.* Truly, heavenly things are these spiritual blessings, refined from all dull and earthly mixtures. God himself, who is the total sum of all the treasures of all the saints on earth, is a spirit himself: his love and favour, interest in him, communion and fellowship with him, are all spiritual things, that a carnal eye cannot see, neither can a carnal judgment value. The most suitable are they, therefore, to a soul, that is a spirit. Of all things belonging to a man, the breath of a man is the most subtle, invisible, and spiritual: but the soul is called the Breath of God metaphorically, Gen. ii. 7. and, therefore, is of a very high degree of spiritualness. Now, bring spiritual things to spiritual: debase not thy spiritual and high-born soul, by matching it to the low and inferior things of the world: let not thy pure and spiritual soul be unequally yoked with the dregs and dross of any worldly enjoyment. God and Christ and the things of

eternity are suitable to the soul: they are spiritual, like thy spiritual and better part; and, though to a carnal heart these seem but empty and notional things, yet a child of God tastes more sweetness and comfort in these things, than in whatever the world can present unto him. The love of God, the consolations of his Spirit, actings of grace, hopes of glory, these invisible things, these are the true riches.

And, then,

(2) Heavenly Treasure is the only Durable Treasure, and therefore suited to an immortal soul.

The things of this world will not go one step with you beyond this present life. And, what a sad parting hour will that be to the soul, to go into another world, and to leave all its treasure behind in this world! How will it protract and linger; and how loth will it be to enter upon so great a journey, without a treasure to defray the charges of it! How ghastly will the soul look back upon those things, that it made its treasure! "What!" will it say, "must not I carry this estate and that treasure out of the world with me? Must we thus part for ever?" Yes, O Soul, for ever: for none of these things canst thou carry with thee. And, oh what a sad thing will it be, for the poor soul to be set ashore upon the vast ocean of eternity, and to have nothing at all to relieve and support it, all its treasure being in another world!

But Heavenly Treasure is durable treasure. It is current not only in this, but in the other world which is to come. In Prov. viii. 18. says Wisdom, *Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness.* Indeed, righteousness is this durable riches. When all things in the world stare on thee, and thou on them, and so take leave of one another eternally; yet then the love of God, interest in Jesus Christ, his divine and heavenly graces, these will then stand by thee and keep thee company, yea and enter into heaven, and there abide with thee to all eternity. It is true, thy faith, that is now a busy and active grace, that like Moses doth here get up to Mount Pisgah and there take a view of the Land of Canaan, must itself die before it comes there: yet this is no lessening of thy treasure, though thou dost lose thy faith; for, indeed, it is not so much the loss of thy faith, as the swallowing of it up, a changing of it into sight and vision; faith and fruition are inconsistent one with another. But all thy other graces, love, joy, and delight, which are now often eclipsed and faint, and languish in their actings, shall then keep an eternal jubilee. Never fear the

failing of thy happiness. It is true, here, the waters do only bubble, and they may and often do fail; but, there, thou shalt bathe thyself in an infinite ocean of delight: there, thou shalt lie at an ever-bubbling fountain of sweetness: God shall be eternally there, and thou shalt be eternally there: he will be eternally glancing and smiling on thee, and thou shalt be eternally warming and cheering thyself in that sunshine. Therefore, think with thyself, if indeed God can be exhausted, if heaven itself can be impoverished, if infinite riches of glory can be all spent and consumed, then and not till then, can thy treasure fail thee: never shall one star of thy crown twinkle, much less shall it ever be eclipsed. 1 St. Pet. v. 4. We *shall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away:* it shall be for ever as glorious, orient, and flourishing, as it was at its first putting on. Indeed, eternity will be the perpetual beginning of thy happiness.

And thus you see how suitable this treasure is to the Nature of the Soul; in that it is Spiritual Treasure, for a soul that is a spirit; and it is Durable Treasure, for a soul that is immortal.

2. As Heavenly Treasure is suited to the Nature of the soul, so also *to the Necessities of the Soul.*

What is it, that the soul can stand in need of, that it cannot be supplied withal from hence? Doth it need a price to redeem it? here is laid up the precious blood of Christ, that was shed for the sins of many. Is it pardon and forgiveness that it needs? here is abundant mercy. Is it sanctification and holiness? here are riches of grace. Is it joy and comfort? here are abundant consolations. Is the soul wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked? here is gold to make it rich: here is white raiment to clothe it, and eye-salve to recover its sight. Indeed there is nothing, that the soul can want or desire, but you may have supplies for it from your own treasure; from that treasure, that you have laid up in heaven. See that rich place, Phil. iv. 19. *My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus:* all your needs; not only your corporal needs and necessities, but also your spiritual necessities. Here, all Earthly Treasures fall short: the exigences of the outward man they may relieve, but the greatest abundance of them cannot quiet a troubled conscience, nor appease an angry God, nor take off the guilt of sin; nor can they redeem the soul from eternal wrath: no, *the redemption of the soul is precious,* yea, too precious to be purchased by all these things, *and it*

easeth for ever. When God frowns upon the soul, and conscience lours, and hell-fire flashes in the face of a sinner, how truly poor and miserable is that man, that hath no better support and comfort than these unsuitable things! All the world, as great as now it seems to be, will be judged too vile a price to procure one minute's ease. What would the soul then give for a Saviour, for a slighted and despised Saviour, to interpose betwixt it and justice? Believe it, then you will have other thoughts of the favour of God, of an interest in Christ, and of this heavenly and spiritual treasure, than now you have. Now, in your peace and prosperity, possibly, these appear to you to be no better than fancied treasures and airy riches. but, when the days of sorrow and darkness overtake you and come upon you, when God shall drop into your souls a little of his wrath and displeasure, then it will be in vain to seek ease from the world: all your pleasures, treasures, and enjoyments here below, will all tell you it is not in them to relieve you: you may as well seek to cure a wound in your flesh, by laying a plaister to your clothes: no; it is grace, that can then stand you in stead: it is that only, that can reach the necessities of the soul; and, without this, all your riches and treasures are but dear vanities, precious vexations, that will stand by and see you perish, yea and perish eternally, but cannot supply and help you.

iii. I come now to a Third thing, wherein the excellency and the riches of this Heavenly Treasure do appear: and that is, because they are SATISFYING TREASURES; and so are not the treasures of the world.

Solomon himself, when he had reckoned up many items for honours, and pleasures, and riches; yet, at the bottom of the bill, at the foot of the account, he casts up the total sum by two great cyphers: *All is vanity and vexation*, saith he: *vanity*, in themselves; and *vexation* also, in the use and enjoyment of them: they, that make more reckoning of this treasure, will be mistaken in their account. And is this the price of thy sweat and care? Is this the price of thy early and late endeavours? Nay, is this the price of thy sins, for which thou destroyest thy soul and forgoest eternity? What! to hoard up vanity and emptiness, to grow rich in vexation! Wilt thou stretch thy conscience for that, which will never fill, but torment thee? Are these the great stately nothings, that the whole world admires, and runs mad after? Alas! you may as soon grasp

your arms full of dreams, and hug your own shadows, as fill up the vast and boundless desires of your souls with these earthly things; that have scarce any proof of their reality, besides the vexation and torment that they bring with them. These things are to the soul but as wind to the stomach: gripe it they may; but they can never fill nor satisfy it. It is true, indeed, that you will find Esau, in Gen. xxxiii. 9. seemingly satisfied with his present condition, when he tells Jacob, *I have enough, my brother*; but this was rather because he was ashamed to acknowledge his want, by receiving from a fugitive; than any real satisfaction, that drew this speech from him: no; there is such a paradox in an earthly mind, that makes it true, that though oftentimes they have too much, yet they never think they have enough. But Heavenly Treasures are filling and satisfying Treasures: though riches are empty, though honours and dignities are flatulent and windy, and crowns are lined with troubles, and sceptres are made massy with cares set on them; yet heavenly riches are substantial: the crown of glory and immortality is lined throughout with the down of eternal contentment and satisfaction.

Now these Heavenly Treasures are satisfactory in Two respects:

They are satisfactory in Themselves. And,

They put Satisfactoriness into Earthly Enjoyments.

So that the soul, that possesseth Heavenly Treasure, finds contentment and satisfaction in every condition.

1. Heavenly Treasures are *satisfactory in Themselves.*

He, that enjoys them, needs look out no where else for happiness and contentment.

(1) The Treasures of Grace are thus satisfactory, where there is the light and evidence of assurance, to tell the soul how rich it is.

Grace, indeed, is this treasure, that may sometimes lie deep hid in the heart. When the soul is in the dark, under some gloomy fears or in a state of desertion, it doth not then know that it hath such a treasure; and, therefore, it cannot receive contentment and satisfaction from it. But, when the Spirit of God darts in a beam of evidencing light into the dark vault, this rich treasure discovers itself by its own shining. Now, this shine of Heavenly Treasure is Assurance; and, when the Spirit darts in a beam of light to discover it in the heart, when it sees how rich it is in love, in faith, in hope, and in all other precious

graces of the Spirit, it cannot sufficiently prize and value its own estate. It is true, indeed, that a gracious heart never thinks it hath enough: still, it is craving and labouring after more: still, it complains, that its graces are too weak, and those weak ones too few. Yet this holy covetousness carries no tormenting, perplexing anxiety and vexation with it: while it complains of the poverty of its graces, yet it prizeth them above all the world; and thinks its estate to be infinitely blessed and happy, if it hath but any degree of assurance: and, though the man be but poor and despicable in the world, yet ask him, whether he would change conditions with the greatest and the richest sinner on earth, he will tell you no: he values his present estate above ten thousand worlds; nay, he would not lose the least degree nor the least filing of his graces, for whatever enjoyments a poor world could proffer him. Such satisfactoriness there is in the Treasures of Grace! and well may it be so, for grace with assurance is no less than heaven let down into the soul. And, therefore, it is remarkable in Heb. x. 34. *Knowing in yourselves*, saith the Apostle, *that ye have in heaven a better and* a more *enduring substance:* so our Translation renders it; but, in the Original, it is, *Know, that in yourselves you have a better and a more enduring substance in heaven:* those, that are assured of the truth of their own graces, have a heaven in themselves, a better and a more enduring substance in themselves; such discoveries of God, such sweet peace and tranquillity of soul, such overflowing joys of the Holy Ghost, that heaven itself is never able to bestow other kind of happiness than this is, though there they shall have it in fuller degrees and measure.

(2) The Treasures of Glory are infinitely satisfactory.

If there be so much in grace, that is but the earnest, how much more abundant satisfaction is there in glory, that is the inheritance itself! Psal. xvii. 15. *When I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness. When I awake:* that is, when I awake in glory, after the short slumber of death, then I shall be satisfied with the likeness and similitude of God.

Consider, here,

[1] The true reason of the vanity and unsatisfactoriness of all earthly things.

It is, because none of them are so good as the soul is; nor are any of them so great, as to be able to fill up the vast capacity of the soul. The soul is like a wide gulf: throw in pleasures, and profits, and honours, nay the whole world; yet there is a

vast hollowness in the soul still, that can never be filled up by these things. Your souls are of a noble and excellent being; and, excepting angels, they are the top and flower of the creation: and, therefore, it is a debasement of them to cleave to any thing here that is worse than themselves. Now, so long as all things here below are less than the soul and worse than the soul, the soul cannot possibly receive satisfaction and contentment in them. But God is infinitely great; and, therefore, He can fill the soul: and God is also infinitely good; and, therefore, He can satisfy the soul, so that it shall not desire any thing above or besides him.

Consider,

[2] The soul is to be made happy, with the same happiness, wherewith God himself is to be for ever blessed.

And must not this be infinitely satisfactory? Wherein doth God's infinite blessedness consist? Is it not in the close, near, intimate, and immediate enjoyment and fruition of himself? Is not God himself his own happiness? Why this also is the happiness of the saints; a close, intimate, and immediate enjoyment of God. Enlarge then, O Soul: spread forth thyself wide: make room for thine own glory: thou art to be made happy, with the same happiness, that God himself is blessed with. He is blessed, in the eternal enjoyment of himself; and thou shalt be blessed, with the eternal enjoyment of God also. Enlarge then, O Soul: spread forth thyself wide: stretch out thy desires as wide as heaven itself; for the God of Heaven will fill them. And is not here enough to satisfy? Certainly, that soul must be very necessitous, that an Infinite God and an Infinite Good cannot fill up and satisfy.

And, thus, you see that Heavenly Treasures are satisfactory in themselves.

2. As they are satisfactory in themselves, so *they make Earthly Comforts and Enjoyments to be satisfactory also.*

That soul, that hath laid up and made sure of Heavenly Treasure, finds satisfaction and contentment in every outward condition. He, that enjoys most of heaven, enjoys most of earth; though others may possess more than he: and what he hath not, contentment makes him not to want. What says the Apostle, in Phil. iv. 11.? *I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* And what can any man have more? If the Lord afford him but a little of these things, he is content; and, if he n-creaseth them too much, he can be but content. O what a

blessed condition is this, that exempts a man from a possibility of being under affliction, as to outward things!

Thus it will be with you, if you have laid up your treasure in heaven. It will satisfy you, and make every outward condition satisfactory also; and that, for Two reasons.

(1) It will beget in you mean and light thoughts of all things here below.

You will rate them no higher than the Apostle doth; but *loss* and *dung:* and will any man be discontented or troubled what befals such things; what becomes of his losses, and of his dung and dross? Suppose a sweeping shower should upon a sudden fall, and wash away the loose dust that lies upon your ground, would you count this a loss of your land? would any of you be troubled at this, as being bereaved of part of your estate? Truly, to a child of God all the things of the world are no other; and, if a tempest of Providence suddenly sweeps them away, he is not troubled at it: he counts it no loss of his inheritance: the dust only is washed away, but the land is safe still. Truly, none in the world abound more with superfluities, than a Saint doth. Take a Wicked Man, upon whom all the store and abundance of the world do empty themselves; upon whom riches, and honours, and pleasures flow in, in a full tide, and all unburthen themselves into his bosom; yet, poor man! he hath no more than he needs: and it is no wonder that he calls them by great names, this thing a Crown, and that thing a Kingdom and Treasure: alas! these poor deceits are all, that he hath to please himself with, to call little things by great and swelling names. But to a Saint, that hath nothing but food and raiment, even they are superfluities, whilst God and Christ is his: and, if God casts in more to him, he values them as mercies, but not as his treasure; or, if God calls them back again, he looks upon them not as a loss, but as a riddance. If you make a thousand cyphers, yet they amount to nothing: and add a figure of one to these, still they stand but for one: such are the things of the world to a child of God: all worldly enjoyments are but as so many cyphers in his accompt: he reckons only upon one God; and, therefore, he is at a point how God deals with him as to these things: if he gives or if he takes away, he says, *Blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Thus, Beloved, if you have laid up your treasure in heaven, you will have but mean and slight thoughts of all other things besides.

(2) Treasure laid up in heaven will make all things satisfactory to you, because every condition that you are in will be to your advantage.

Nay, you will look upon any condition that you are in, as a condition of love. Every mercy, that is bestowed upon you, is a love-token sent you by a gracious Father: the soul, that once can say "God is mine," will be able to say, "This comfort and that mercy were given me from the love of God: I have his heart with it; I observed the countenance of my Father; and I saw him smile upon my soul, when he gave it me". Nay, are you deprived of these enjoyments? it is from love, and it shall be for your advantage: God saw that they lay too near your heart, and justled him farther from his seat and throne; and he would not suffer you to make so bad an exchange, as to quit heavenly things for earthly: he takes these from thee, that so he may take thee off them, and wean thy heart from them; and that he may strengthen thy faith and dependance on himself, that he may enflame thy affections after him, and that he may exercise thy patience and humility in the want of them: nay, he then gives in the clearest, and brightest, and fullest discoveries of himself, and of his love in Christ to the soul: what advantageous losses therefore, O Christian, dost thou sustain! yea, to use the Apostle's phrase, thou hast *but gained* in *this harm and loss*. And, therefore, in every state and condition, a Christian, that hath laid up his treasure in heaven, may well be content and satisfied; for all is to his advantage and gain, whatever it be.

And, so much, for the Third particular.

iv. Treasure laid up in heaven WILL SECURE TO YOU THE ENJOYMENT OF ALL EARTHLY COMFORTS, SO FAR AS THEY SHALL BE FOR YOUR GOOD.

This depends upon the latter part of the former particular. Our Saviour hath passed his word for it, in Mat. vi. 33. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and* the *righteousness* thereof; *and all these things shall be added unto you.* First, seek the kingdom of heaven: that is, lay up first your treasure in heaven, make sure of heavenly riches first; and, then, all these things shall be added to you. When the great bargain is concluded in heaven, betwixt God and the soul, God never stands upon these petty things of earth, but throws them in, as vantage and overplus;

into the bargain. Yea, and as Christ hath passed his word, so God hath given you a pawn, that so it shall be, in Rom. viii. 32. *He, that spared not his own Son, but* hath given *him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?* Is the *heir of all things* ours; and can there be any thing, that shall not be ours also? Hath God freely given you his Son; and will he think much to give you other things, which are of no value and esteem, in comparison of that great gift, Jesus Christ? Hath he given thee *hidden manna*, angels' food; hath he clothed thee with the robes of Christ's righteousness; and shalt thou want food and raiment? Are not these things convenient for thee? Or, doth God prize worldly things at a higher rate, than the things of heaven? thou canst not think God doth so, for thou thyself dost not prize them so. Or, doth God so much disregard them, as to take no regard to supply your outward concernments? *No*, says Christ, *your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* God doth take special notice and regard of all your wants: he knows you have need of these things. Thou needest not, O Christian, therefore envy the grandees and potentates of the earth, that rustle and make a noise with their greatness: believe it, were it for thy good, thou shouldst be exalted up to their pitch and they should be brought down to lick the dust of thy feet.

Consider but these Two things:

1. *All earthly things are to be accounted good or evil, only as they concern our eternal state and condition.*

You will greatly be deceived, if you look upon things as they appear in themselves. Then you will call prosperity, and riches, and worldly abundance, good things; and want, and poverty, and affliction, evil things; if you account and esteem them as they appear in themselves. But consider these things as they relate to eternity, and then poverty may be a mercy, and riches a judgment: God may bless thee by afflictions, and curse thee by prosperity: he may bestow more upon thee in suffering thee to want these things, than if he did give all the world's abundance to thee. It may be, prosperity may puff up thy soul, and make it grow more estranged from God; adversity may humble thee, and bring thy soul the nearer unto God, and so conduce more to the eternal good of thy soul: adversity, in this case, is good; and not prosperity. This present life is nothing, but a preparation for and a tendency to eternity: all, that we here do, or

receive, or suffer, is in order to eternity; and, therefore, all must be measured by it. That is good, that tends to our everlasting happiness, be it want or misery. Whatever it be, that encreases our grace, that augments the stock of our heavenly treasure, that promotes the everlasting salvation of our souls, that alone is to be esteemed by us as good. What dull folly is it, for men to roll and wallow in the profits and pleasures of this world, and hug them as good things, when indeed they are only snares and traps to their souls; and are only given to fat them for the day of slaughter; and may every moment deliver them up to an eternity of torments, which will fearfully be heightened and enraged by the enjoyment of these things that they account good things! Abraham tells Dives, that, in his lifetime, he received *good things;* and Lazarus *evil things:* a strange dispensation of God, to bestow good things upon a hated Dives, and to inflict evil things upon a beloved Lazarus! but yet read on, Luke xvi. 25. *But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.* Oh, never call Dives's purple and delicious fare *good things;* for these end in torment: never call Lazarus's sores and rags *evil things*; for these end in everlasting comfort: "No," might Dives have replied with horror: "when I was *clothed in purple and fine linen,* I then received *evil things:* O cursed be all my pomp and bravery: I see now the end of my purple, it was but to wrap me up in redder flames: my sumptuous fare served only to make the never-dying worm the more to feed on me: Oh, happy was the poverty of Lazarus, for he awaked in ease and happiness: then, was he truly happy, and not I, though I thought myself so; for, though I received an abundant measure of worldly things, yet received I no good things." This, within a while, will be the judgment of all of you, when you come to be stated in an unalterable condition to all eternity: oh, therefore, be persuaded to pass the same judgment upon them now.

Consider,

2. *If God deny any comfort or enjoyment to his people, he therefore denies it, because it is not good for them; because it will not conduce to their eternal happiness, which is the only rule and measure of earthly things.*

Psal. lxxxiv. 11. *The Lord will give grace and glory:* and *no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. No good thing:* if any thing be withheld, you may conclude on it, that it is no good thing; but that it would be either prejudicial

or inconsistent to grace or glory, had God bestowed it upon thee: and wilt thou thyself be content, to abate the least degree of grace or glory, for the greatest accumulation of worldly enjoyments? if thou wouldst, thou never yet madest grace or glory thy treasure. In Psal. lxviii. 19, says the Psalmist, speaking of God's mercies, *Blessed be* God, that *daily loadeth us with his benefits:* the people of God are still complaining, that they are loaded with miseries and afflictions: there is as much of these laid on them, as possibly they can bear: but, how few are there, that take notice how God loads them with his benefits! in Exod. xvi. 18. *He, that gathered much, had nothing over; and he, that gathered little, had no lack:* so is it with the children of God: he, that hath more of these outward comforts, hath but his load; and he, that hath less, hath his load too; every one as much as he can bear: and what he hath not, God withholds, lest it should hurt him; lest it should break him, instead of adorning him. Every vessel cannot bear up with so much sail as another; and therefore God will keep it from topling over. There is nothing, that a child of God hath not, but, if he had it, for the present it would be worse with him than now it is: and, therefore, so much as you do now wish were added to your present condition, so much you do virtually wish were taken off from your present grace and from your future glory; because God doth most wisely and exactly proportion these things here, so as that they may be most conducible and serviceable to your true happiness hereafter.

II. I come now to enquire, WHENCE IT IS, THAT THE CHILDREN OF GOD MAKE HEAVEN AND HEAVENLY THINGS THEIR TREASURE AND CHIEF GOOD?

We see that our Saviour doth here distinguish them from earthly and ungodly men by this character: One lays up on earth, and the other in heaven. He, that lays up his treasure on earth, is an earthly, ungodly man: he, that lays up his treasure in heaven, is the true Christian.

i. Here, first, take notice, that, THAT, WHICH MAKES ANY THING DEAR AND PRECIOUS, THAT, WHICH MAKES ANY THING TO BE A TREASURE TO THE SOUL, IS THE SUITABLENESS AND SUBSERVIENCY OF IT TO THAT SELF, THAT IS IN A MAN.

Self is the great rater of all our treasure: the value of it is

reckoned according to this standard: when heaven, and earth, and all things are laid before a man, Self comes in, and views them all, and sees what is useful for it, and accordingly sets a price upon it; and all things are slighted, and nothing is current with the soul, but as Self hath stamped and printed its own image upon it. And, therefore, in Luke xii. 21. you find this expression, *So is he, that layeth up treasure for himself:* if any man lays up treasure, he lays it up for himself. Whatever may preserve self, whatever may answer the propensions and inclinations of self, whatever may promote the cause and interest of self, that is a man's treasure and nothing else.

ii. CARNAL AND UNREGENERATE SELF RATES EARTH AND EARTHLY THINGS AS ITS TREASURE, BECAUSE THERE IS A SUITABLENESS AND PROPORTION IN THE ONE TO THE OTHER.

Earthly treasure for an earthly self. And, therefore, the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. vi. 13. meat is *for the belly, and the belly for* meat: that is, they are suited each to other. So are earthly things suited to carnal self; the things of this world, to a worldly mind; and a worldly mind, to the things of this world. Carnal self relishes no other things: bring spiritual things to him, he tastes no sweetness in them: you may as well please a brute beast by whispering into his ears the deep discourses of reason, as you can a carnal man by the discoveries of God and Christ: talk to him of the world and of carnal concernments, his ear tastes and relishes such discourse as this is; and the reason is, because these things are accommodated and suited to that carnal unregenerate self, that is in man. The Apostle tells us, *All, that is in the world,* is *the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life:* that is, Pleasure, Profit, and Honour: all centre in this, to please and maintain carnal self, as all its interest, and all its concernments; therefore, this is made by wicked men their treasure.

iii. IN THE SOUL'S CONVERSION UNTO GOD, UPON THAT GREAT CHANGE THAT IS MADE IN A MAN'S SELF, THERE WILL ALSO BE ANOTHER RATE AND VALUE SET UPON THINGS THAN FORMERLY THERE WAS.

Conversion is the great shipwreck of the Old Man, and all his goods.

1. *In Conversion, there is a great Change made in Self.*

The Apostle, in Rom. vii. 17. tells us it was no more he, but

sin that dwelt in him. Formerly, before his conversion, "It was I, that breathed out threatenings: I persecuted the Church: I raged and was mad against them: still, it was I myself, that acted then. But, since my great change, it is not I that am guilty; no, not so much as of infirmities: no, it is not I, that fail in the performance of what is good; not I, *but sin that dwelleth in me.*" So that, in conversion, there is a mighty change passeth upon self: so that a man may say it is not he, but sin; that body of corruption, that dwelleth in him. It is true, in a regenerate man there remains much of corruption, and of the old self: but yet, grace being the supreme prevailing principle, it will be that, that gives the self to a man; and then that, which before was a man's self and was loved, now is become a traitor, and rebel, and enemy to that new self that is wrought in a Christian by regeneration.

2. *Man's self being changed, his Treasure must also necessarily be changed.*

The new regenerate self cannot subsist and live upon its old treasure: all is but husks and swine's-meat to the soul now, that is begotten anew, and born of God: the seed of God dwelleth in it; and, therefore, now it looks after that, that is conformable to its divine original and constitution What the Apostle presseth the Colossians to, in Col. iii. 1. *If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above,* is truly the necessary practice of every heaven-born soul: whoever is born again, whoever is risen with Christ, will infallibly seek the things that are above. He will do it: there is a natural instinct in the new creature, that carries it out naturally to spiritual and heavenly objects: as the infant, that is new-born, doth by instinct seek after the breast, though it never before received nourishment that way; so the new-born Christian, that hath imprinted upon it the divine nature, hath such an impulse and instinct in it, that naturally moves it to spiritual objects, as the only suitable nourishment and good for the soul: and, therefore, to intimate the tenderness of this new infancy, the Apostle tells us, *as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word:* the new-born babe receives nourishment no longer from the navel; and so the new-born Christian no longer creeps upon his belly, and licks the dust of the earth, but feeds upon and desires the sincere milk of the word. *That, which is born of the Spirit, is spirit,* and therefore will long and breathe after that which is spiritual; because it is spiritual, and bears a proportion to its own being. In John vi. 63. says Christ,

The words, that I speak, they are spirit and they are life: that is, they are able to maintain you in life, that you may live upon them as sustenance: why so? because they are spirit and life: they are spiritual words suited to a spiritual soul, to a soul that is born again of the Spirit; and therefore fit to nourish you, and such as will keep you alive. Look, as the angels live, so lives a Christian's spiritual part: it is the same good, that is common to both; and that, which they both desire, embrace, and twine about: can you bribe an angel, by all the profits of the world? can you effeminate him, by all the pleasures of the world? can you elevate and puff him up, by all the honours and dignities of the world? no; all these things are below his nature, and he cannot descend to them: they are not suitable to him: he lives in his God, and eternally suns himself in the light of the beams of his countenance. So lives the new creature also: it is spiritual; and, therefore, clasps only about spiritual things: the world bears no more affinity and proportion to the spiritual part of a Christian, than it doth to angels: but bring God, *the Father of Spirits*, and here both angels and it cling about the divine essence, and nestle themselves about him for ever, and fill and satisfy themselves in him: here is meat suitable to their natures; a spiritual God, for spiritual things. Indeed, sometimes the carnal part may throw in so much earth and rubbish, that may for a time bury the new creature under it; but, when it is in its own element, it never ceaseth heaving and working, till it hath got above earth, and got into the enjoyment of its God again.

So, then, because the soul is not self-sufficient, because it is an indigent creature, therefore it must have the addition of some other good to it, to eke out and supply its defects. And because the indigent and necessitated soul hath, in regeneration, a supernatural principle implanted in it, therefore spiritual and heavenly objects only comply and suit with it. These, therefore, are the treasure of the soul: and you see whence it is, that the soul doth account heavenly and spiritual things to be its treasure; because suited to that heavenly and spiritual principle, that is implanted in the soul in conversion.

Now, these things are its treasure:

(1) God himself.

So God tells out, and gives himself unto Abraham, Gen. xv. 1. *I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* So David reckons up to you, what a large and great estate he had, in the

possession and enjoyment of God, in Psal. xvi. 5. *The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.*

(2) Jesus Christ is its treasure also.

Buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: Rev. iii. 18. His blood, his righteousness, his merit, are an inexhaustible treasure; and all becomes ours, upon which we may live and subsist. *In* him *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge:* but what is this to us? yes, these treasures of wisdom, that are hid in him, are made over unto us also: 1 Cor. i. 30. He *of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* Oh, how rich is a true Christian, that hath such a treasury; and such a treasure, as Christ is, to be his treasure! You find, Heb. xi. 26. that Moses esteemed *the reproach of Christ greater riches than* all *the treasures in Egypt:* certainly, if the reproach of Christ be such a treasure, what then is Christ himself; and all those glorious benefits, that do accrue unto the soul in and by him?

(3) The Promises also are a Christian's treasure.

They are the veins, wherein this gold runs; the mines, wherein this unsearchable treasure is: and the work of faith upon the promises, is, to stamp this golden ore into ready money, for the present necessity of the soul: so faith lives on the promises.

(4) A Christian's Graces also are his treasure.

Yea, though *we have this treasure in earthen vessels;* yet is it heavenly and precious treasure. Yea, though there be much dross mixed with this gold; yet, still, it is precious faith, rich love, firm hope, tried patience. Yea, every grace, that shines in a Christian, is glorious: the crown of grace, as well as the crown of glory, hath not a sparkle in it, but what is more precious than the world itself.

These are a Christian's treasure.

III. I come now to make some IMPROVEMENT of this; to bring down what hath been said to some Practical Use.

USE I. Hast thou so rich a treasure laid up in heaven? Then, O Christian, BE CONSCIOUS OF THINE OWN WORTH. Henceforth know thyself to be no contemptible person.

Shall worldly men ruffle, and brave it, and think none comparable to them, only because their heap of dung is bigger than

another's? And shalt thou be low and abject-spirited, that hast God himself for thy portion, and Christ for thy Husband? Indeed, if you will value yourselves according to the world's estimation of you, then you are no better than the dross and dung of the world, and *the off-scouring of all things.* But see how the Scripture accounts of poor, persecuted, despised Christians: Heb. xi. 37. *They wandered* up and down *in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented:* a strange generation of despicable persons! but, says the Holy Ghost, *of whom the world was not worthy.* And how doth David prize them, and call them, the excellent ones of the earth: Psal. xvi. 3! My delight is in the saints, and in the excellent ones of the earth! Therefore, O Christian, begin to know thyself. Know what great relations thou hast: thou art no less than the son of a Great King. Know thy great possessions: thou hast no less, at present, than the love and favour of God; and every thing thou hast, thou hast it with a blessing: yea, though thou hast nothing in the world besides afflictions, yet thou hast that Nothing with a blessing; and thou rather enjoyest, than sufferest, those afflictions, that lie upon thee. Know thy great reversions also: thou art an heir of glory, a co-heir with Jesus Christ; and, what he hath purchased for himself, he hath also purchased for thee: and thou, in due time, shalt be instated into that inheritance, whereof Jesus Christ is heir, and thou also shalt be co-heir. Wilt thou now, who hast so vast a treasure as this amounts to, go drooping and disconsolate, as a helpless and hopeless person, when thou wantest nothing less than to pity those that scorn thee? Let the world know, that a Christian hath self-sufficiency; and that, at all times; and that he can live plentifully and splendidly upon his own stock: let the world know and see this by thy conversation. It was a noble and gallant speech of St. Paul, when he stood in bonds and fetters before king Agrippa, who sat upon the judgment-seat to sentence him: *Would to God,* says he, that thou wert *such* a one *as I am:* what! such a prisoner as thou art? a strange compliment for a prisoner to use to a judge! yet you see how he values himself: he was not dazzled with Agrippa's crown and pomp, and all that fancy that he came with into the judgment-hall; for he said not, "Would I were as thou art!" but, "*Would to God* thou wert *such* a one *as I am,* and then thou wouldst be truly happy."

This is the value, that every true Christian should set upon himself, when he is assured of the truth of his graces. He

should not count any man in the world better than himself. This is to honour grace.

USE ii. LET THE WORLD HENCE LEARN ALSO, TO BEWARE, HOW THEY DESPISE THE MEANEST OF GOD'S CHILDREN.

Men are apt to esteem of others, according to their visible estate in the things of this world: and, if here they be low and poor, they trample upon them as vile and inconsiderable. But, let such know, that every one of these slighted and despised ones is a great and rich person: they are rich towards God: they are God's jewels and peculiar treasure; and God also is their treasure and portion for evermore. It is wealth, I confess, that makes all the noise and bustle in the world; and challenges all honour as due to itself alone: says Solomon, *The rich* man *hath many friends:* well, let respect go by wealth; we are content to go and stand by this trial. Solomon tells us, *The heart of the wicked is little worth:* it is of no price nor value; and shall his estate be of worth and value, when his heart is not? The poorest Christian may vie estates with all the world: let the world drop down millions of gold and silver, boundless revenues, and crowns and sceptres: a poor contemptible Christian comes and lays down one God against all these, and beggars them: and shall this great and mighty Christian be contemned and slighted? You do not know him, now; but, hereafter, you shall see him sitting on a throne, clothed with robes of glory and awful majesty; daunting the grandees of the world, who shall then stand shivering before him, while he boldly sets his hand to the sentence of their damnation, and sends them to hell with a shout: how will they, with horror then cry out, "Is this that poor and despicable creature, that we mocked and despised? Behold, now he is exalted, and we are thrown down to hell." Certainly, you will have other esteem and opinions of men at the last and great day, than now you have: those, that are honourable now, will be despicable; and those, that are despicable now, will be truly honourable, if they belong to Christ.

USE iii. This might also serve TO DISCHARGE THUNDER IN THE FACES OF ALL THOSE, WHO ARE SO FAR FROM LAYING UP TREASURE IN HEAVEN, THAT THEY LAY UP TREASURE IN HELL.

Such treasures as these are, the Apostle speaks of, in Rom. ii. 5. who, after the hardness and impenitency of their hearts, treasure up unto themselves *wrath against the day of wrath and*

revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Such, who sin as though the ephah of their iniquities would never be full enough, and the heap of their sins never great enough; let these know, that, when they have done treasuring up sin, then God will begin to empty the treasures of his wrath and indignation upon them. For every sin they commit, God sets down so much wrath upon their scores; and he will be sure to pay them all, at the Last Day, to the full.

USE iv. Which is the Use I principally intend; and that is for EXAMINATION.

Let us now put it to the enquiry: "What is it, that we make our treasure? What is it, that we account our good things?" Our Saviour, I told you, hereby distinguishes between wicked men and the children of God: the one lays up his treasure in heaven; the other, on earth: and, therefore, the query is, What is thy Treasure? It is of great weight and moment.

Now, because usually a man's treasure is kept hid and secret, therefore we must the more inquisitively enter into the search of it: and, before the ransack be thoroughly made, few men, I fear, will be found rich and substantial men; but, more especially, those, that glitter most in the world, will be found to be but poor and despicable creatures.

1. Therefore, *take that character, that our Saviour gives in the text: Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

Put it now to the question: Where are your hearts? Truly, man's heart is not in his own keeping: no; but it will go along with his treasure; and where that is, this will be also. And, therefore, says the Prophet, speaking of them that made worldly things their treasure, *their hearts run after their covetousness.* Worldly possessions were their treasure; and their hearts did run after them, in covetous desires of them. The worldling seals up his heart, in the same bag with his treasure: and a child of God sends his heart to heaven before him, where it lies as a precious *depositum* among all the rest of his treasure; and, when he comes to heaven, there he finds his heart among all those precious things that he shall enjoy. That, which thy heart is most busied about and most taken up with, is thy treasure. Dive down now into the bottom of thy heart, and see how the musings and imaginations thereof do work: are they chained only to the things of this world? do they trudge to and fro, every one of them loaden only with burdens

of earth? and, when they come thronging about thee, do they buzz nothing in thine ears but intelligence, either from some base lust or some worldly profit? If this be the constant and only employment of thy thoughts, assure thyself thy treasure is not laid up in heaven: no, nor on earth; but, which is worse, it is laid up in hell. The thoughts of a child of God are still taking wing, and flying upward towards heaven; and every one of them carries up his heart, richly fraught with divine grace: one thought is laden with the actings of faith; another, with the actings of hope; another, with the actings of love: and they never leave ascending, till they are got into the presence of God, and lay their rich treasure in his bosom: and God again fills them with Heavenly Treasure; and bids one thought carry a smile to the soul, and tell the soul how dear it is to him; by another thought, he conveys strength; and, by another, comfort; and sends all away laden with precious treasure to the soul. If your thoughts traffic only in the world, your treasure is there; if in heaven, then your treasure is in heaven.

But you will say, "How can we judge of our treasure by our Thoughts? Is not the far greater swarm of every man's thoughts vain and sinful?"

I answer: It is true they are so. Some are vain and sinful: some are idle and impertinent: some are worldly: and some are wicked; and few, comparatively, are the holy and spiritual thoughts, that any man sends up to heaven. We must not, therefore, judge by the crowd or numerousness of our thoughts; but, by the entertainment which they find in our affections, by the stay and abode which they make in our hearts. Jer. iv. 14. *How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* It is not, what the sudden flashings of our thoughts are; though that indeed should deeply humble us: but, mark what it is that thy heart fixes and dwells upon; what flowers these intellectual bees, thy thoughts, suck most sweetness and honey from: when thy thoughts have been foraging abroad, and bring home some sin, and present it before thee, doth thy heart rise against it, and shut it out of doors, and dost thou shut thy heart upon it? but, when thy thoughts bring home God and Christ, and the things of heaven and eternity in their arms, do thy affections clasp and twine about them? doth thy heart enlarge and expatiate to entertain them? dost thou give up thyself, in full strength

and latitude, to such heavenly thoughts as these are? This is a good sign that thy treasure is laid up in heaven, because thou art so much there thyself.

But others again will say, "My thoughts are necessarily taken up with the world; my calling devours them; so that I have no opportunity to sequester myself for heavenly meditation: must I therefore be excluded from having my treasure in heaven, because my thoughts are necessarily employed in the world?"

I answer:

First. Thoughts, of all things in the world, are most free.

There is no man's calling doth so confine him, but, were his heart and affections heavenly and spiritual, his thoughts would force a passage through the crowd of worldly businesses, to heaven. Ejaculations are swift messengers, that need not much time to deliver their errand, nor much time to return again to the soul. You may point your earthly employments with heavenly meditations, as men do their writings with stops; ever now and then sending up a thought unto heaven; and such pauses are no hindrance to our earthly affairs.

Secondly, It is the property of grace and holiness, when there are no actual explicit thoughts of God, then to be habitually in the fear of God; possessing the heart and overawing it, that it shall not do any thing that is sinful or misbecoming a Christian.

And therefore says the Wise Man, excellently, Prov. xxiii. 17. *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* Whatever business you have, the fear of the Lord may constantly abide, overawe, and possess your heart.

Thirdly. Observe how your thoughts work, when you have vacancy and remission from your employments.

Are they spiritual, then? Do they betake themselves to God? Do they lock up themselves in their Heavenly Treasure? Dost thou spiritually improve the times of thy leisure? David called to mind his *song in the night*, and his *spirit made diligent search:* when he awaked, he was ever with God: he slept with God, in his thoughts; and he awaked with God again, in his thoughts. Whatever employments a man hath, he hath some time of leisure. When thou hast been drudging in the world, and hast gotten a little vacancy and freedom from it, dost thou spend that little time in the thoughts of God and of the things of eternity? or, do the world and the things of the world interpose and take

up thy thoughts? if so, how canst thou say thy treasure is there, when thy thoughts and thy heart are never there? as Delilah said unto Sampson, *How canst thou say* that thou lovest me, *when thy heart is not* towards *me?* so, how canst thou say, that thy treasure is in heaven, when thy heart and thy thoughts are not there?

2. A second mark, whereby you may know where your treasure is, is this: *That, which bears the chief sway and command in a man's affections, is a man's treasure.*

Affections are the wings of the soul, that carry it forth to its several objects: and these move to nothing more swiftly, strongly, and constantly, than to what is the soul's treasure. When your souls take these wings and fly abroad, follow them, and see what it is upon which they light: as the eagle will hover over the carcass, so the affections will be still hovering over the soul's treasure: see now whither it is your desire and love, your joy and delight, do carry you forth. Is it only to the things of this world? certainly, if these wings be clotted only with mire and dirt, if they only flutter up and down the surface of the earth and mount up no higher, your treasure is not a Heavenly Treasure. The affections of the children of God still ascend upwards; and bear up their hearts with them, till they lodge in that Divine Bosom where first they were enkindled: I need not tell those happy ones, what it is to have their hearts so extended in love to God and the things of God, as to cause a kind of loss, pain, and torture: what it is to have that joy springing up in the soul, that is unutterable; yea, such unsupportable joys, as have melted them into ecstasies. How infinitely would they now disdain, that any soul should be so grossly foolish, as to prefer the world before, or equalize it with, God! ten thousand worlds are not so much to them, as one momentary glimpse of God, in communion with him: nay, they think their happiness so great, that, though they do believe, yet they cannot conceive how it should be more and greater in heaven itself. Then the soul claps its wings, and fain would take its flight and be gone: it breathes, and breaks, and pants after God. See what an agony holy David was in: Ps. xlii. 1, 2. *As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the Living God: when shall I come and appear before God?* Indeed the whole Psalm is the most mournful and pathetical composure in all the Scripture, of a heart, that beats and throbs after God, with vehement love and desire after

the enjoying of him: and whence was this, but because God was the portion and treasure of his soul? he was *the health of* his *countenance, and* his *God:* v. 11. Wheresoever God and the things of God are made the soul's treasure, there will be proportionable affections drawn out to these things. Never was it known, that a treasure wanted affections.

"But alas," may some say, "I fear then that I have no share in this Heavenly Treasure. Never was I so strongly affected with the discoveries of God and Christ and the things of heaven, never was I so taken and ravished, as with some temporal mercies and enjoyments. I could never feel such transportations of spirit in communion with God, as you speak of; no such ravishments of love, nor such meltings and vehemency of desires to the things of heaven, as I have often found to the concernments and in the enjoyments of the world. Never do I remember, that I rejoiced so vehemently in God, as in some new unexpected mercy; or that ever I mourned so bitterly for sinning against God, or for the hiding of the light of God's countenance from me, as I have done for some cross outward providence: and how then can I say, my treasure is laid up in heaven, since earth and the things of earth have the sway and pre-eminency in my affections?"

This may, possibly, trouble some.

To this, therefore, I answer, That there are two things, by which the predominancy and sway of a man affections may be judged.

By their violent Passionateness:

By their judicious Valuation and Esteem.

Thou complainest, that earth and earthly things have the predominancy and sway in thy affections. But look what sort of affections they are: are they only thy fondlings, thy violent and passionate affections? this may be so, and yet heavenly things be thy treasure. Many times, so it is, that, what is superior in these may be inferior, nay almost contemptible, in thy rational and judicious affections. Men may be fond of those persons, for whom they have not such solid and judicious affections, as they have for others. So is it here: a Christian's fondness may be more to the things of this world; when yet his judicious affections may be far more to the things of heaven.

"But how shall we try this?"

(1) Observe, as you must not judge of your value and esteem of earthly things by your passionate affections to them; so neither must you judge of your valuing heavenly things, by your speculative judgment of them.

It is not enough, when you compare heavenly things with earthly, barely to pronounce heavenly things to be infinitely better and more desirable than earthly. Truly, every man's conscience tells him thus much. There is no man, whoever he be, that thinks of heaven, but is withal verily persuaded, that it is infinitely more glorious than earth is; and, that the enjoyment of God, a crown of life and immortality, is infinitely more to be preferred than all the trash and trifles here below. And there is no worldling, when his conscience beckons him aside and whispers these things in his ears, but is convinced, and assents unto these things as truths: and yet this man's treasure is not therefore laid up in heaven, because he judges, in his speculative judgment, that heavenly things are better than earthly: this is to say they are better, and to judge them so; but not to esteem and value them so.

And, therefore,

(2) The true valuation of heavenly things as the soul's treasure, lies in the practical part of the soul.

Valuation is a practical thing. I cannot be said to value an object, unless that esteem hath some influence upon my actions, as relating to that object: either it will put me upon endeavours to obtain it, or stir up care in me to keep it. Mark that place in St. Peter: 1 Pet. ii. 7. *Unto you, which believe, he is precious: but unto them,* who are *disobedient*.....he is *a rock of offence:* in the 6th verse, he tells us, Christ was precious in himself: *I lay in Sion a...corner-stone, elect* and *precious:* in the 4th verse, he tells us, he was precious to God, *chosen of God, and precious:* and, in the 7th verse, he comes to shew what esteem men had of him: to believers, saith he, *he is* also *precious; but unto them,* who are *disobedient*,...he is *a rock of offence.* What is the reason, when he opposes wicked men to believers, that he calls them disobedient persons, and not rather unbelievers? the reason is, because we must not look to men's outward acknowledgment, whereby they judge what is precious to them; for all will so pronounce God, and Christ, and the things of heaven in their speculative judgment: they will pass this sentence: but you must look to their practice, and see what influence this valuation hath there. And, thus, Christ is not precious to unbelievers,

because that esteem they have of him doth not enforce them to obedience to him.

Examine, therefore, which hath most influence into your life and practice: whether your Passionate Affections for the things of this life, or your Judicious and Deliberate Affections for the things of heaven; for, thereby, you may, in part, guess what is your treasure. A small torrent runs very violently, and makes a loud noise; yet hath not that strength in it that a river hath, though it move silently. So it is with the affections of a child of God: though they may run out violently towards the things of the world; yet have they not that strength in them, which there is in his sober affections for the things of heaven.

How violent soever your affections be to temporal mercies; suppose friends, children, estate, or the like: yet if you do value and esteem heavenly things as your treasure, this valuation and esteem will have the sway and pre-eminency in Two things especially.

[1] It will enforce the soul to use more diligence and care to increase its spiritual treasure, than to increase any temporal good thing whatever.

That is a man's treasure, to which he is still adding and throwing one precious thing after another; nor will he ever think it can be too full and too rich. And therefore you have that expression, in 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. *Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity.* See here how the Apostle strings up these pearls. Now, what is it you are most careful and industrious to add unto? Truly, that, which most men make their business, is to add house to house, and land to land, that their names may dwell alone upon the earth. Suppose we had lived in Solomon's time, when silver and gold were as common as stones in the street, if one should spend all his time in gathering up straws and feathers, could you in reason think, that he made God his treasure? yet this is the foolish and busy care of worldly men, that, though they might gather up that which is far more precious than gold and silver; yet they rather employ themselves in picking up straws and feathers, and think with them to build their own nest. But, there is a holy covetousness in a child of God, that makes him still to be gathering up heavenly riches: still, he is adding grace to grace: and, though he thinks, to be the meanest Christian in the world is

more worth than the world; yet he would not be content to be the meanest. As to outward respects, he is well content to keep the station wherein Providence hath set him: if he stand at a stay in worldly enjoyments, it is no great trouble to him. But he cannot bear a standing at a stay in grace: there, he must be growing and thriving, and going forward: let his affections be set never so eagerly upon his outward comforts, yet he is not so eager to increase them as he is his Heavenly Treasure.

And, that it is so, appears in Two things:

1st. In that he sets a higher price upon opportunities, for the increasing of his Heavenly Treasure, than upon any other seasons and opportunities whatever.

Oh, what gain and enriching doth he make on a market-day for his soul! Sabbaths to him are precious: ordinances to him are precious: why? but because, in them, he sees the glory of Christ displayed, and the fulness of the promises unfolded? because, by them, his faith is strengthened, his love is inflamed, his hope confirmed? He goes far more wealthy from them, than he came to them; and therefore it is an argument, that he labours to increase his Heavenly Treasure, because he sets a higher price and value upon opportunities, to increase that treasure, than he doth upon any other whatever.

2dly. It appears, in that he is willing to stand at a stint in outward enjoyments, but he cannot bear a stint in grace.

He cannot live upon a set allowance there. Let God deal how he pleaseth with him in outward things, let him reduce him to a morsel of bread and to a cup of water, it is enough; so he gives him but a Benjamin's portion in himself: let him seize upon all his temporals and take them away, if so be he doth but instate him in a great possession of spirituals, he is content. "My body," says he, "can subsist with a little; but my soul cannot. My spiritual charges and expenses are great, and multiply upon me daily: I have many strong temptations to be resisted, and many prevailing corruptions to be mortified, and many holy and spiritual duties to be performed; and how shall I be able to defray all this with no better a supply? my present stock is not able to maintain it." Still he is complaining, that he hath too little to maintain him in his work, that he may be such a Christian as he aims at and would be: and, therefore, he cries out, "Lord, though I thank thee for what I do possess;" yet he still craves more of himself: "Thou art infinite, and what is it to enjoy a little of an infinite God? More of thy

Son: he is all-sufficient: and what is it to have an insufficient portion in an all-sufficient Saviour? More of thy grace: that is free: and what is it to enjoy a limited portion of unlimited and boundless grace?" This is the property of heavenly riches, that they make them that have them still to be covetous after more: the worldling adds heap to heap: and the Christian adds grace to grace, and one degree of grace to another; and thinks he hath attained to nothing, till he hath attained so far, as that there is nothing farther to be attained; and therefore he goes on labouring after more, till he doth insensibly ripen into glory, and hath nothing more for him to desire. If you value heavenly things now as your treasure, you will still be adding to this treasure; growing every day richer than other towards God.

[2] And, then, if you do practically value and esteem heavenly things as your soul's treasure, you will sooner part with all other comforts and enjoyments, than with this.

It may be, you cannot say that ever you felt such pangs of joy and delight in the enjoyment of God, as you have done in some outward mercy: you never felt such comfort in spiritual mercies, as you have in some outward comforts, that providentially were bestowed upon you: and, therefore, you have cause to fear, that your treasure is here below, and not above. But this is still to judge by the passionateness of your affections, that is as a disturbed water that cannot reflect your face aright. If you would judge truly, then put this question to your soul: "Soul, now that thou dost so vehemently delight in this comfort and in that enjoyment, which wouldst thou rather part with; this delightful comfort, or thy God?" Certainly, a child of God would have a holy indignation against himself, should he but debate the question. "Oh," will he say, "though God take every thing from me but himself, yet he leaves me enough to make me happy; and, in the enjoyment of other things, I were truly miserable, could I be made so by their loss." A saint's rational affections, consisting in the due valuation and esteem of heavenly things, will triumph over his more eager and passionate affections to the things of the world. Think with thyself now what is dearest to thee in the world, and then set God and heaven in the balance against them; and then thou shalt see, though earthly comforts may engross too much of thy affections and lie near thy heart, yet that God and heavenly things still have the greatest sway and predominancy in thy affections, if thou dost truly value them. And, so, for

the commission of a sin: it may be, some outward affliction may cost thee more passionate grief and tears, than the commission of sin hath done: thou never mournedst, it may be, so bitterly for thy offending of God, as thou hast done for God's afflicting of thee; and this thou lookest upon as a bad sign that thy affections are not so much to the honour of God, as to outward comforts and prosperity: yea, but let me ask thee, wouldst thou rather fall into the same affliction, or commit the same sin again? certainly, if thou art a saint, thou wilt soon resolve the question: "No misery or plague is so great as sin; and, though it be my folly thus passionately to lament under this cross and affliction, yet I would rather bear it, yea I would rather bear whatever God can lay on me, than knowingly to commit the least sin against my God." This is the judgment of a child of God: and, therefore, Job makes it the character of a hypocrite, that he chooseth iniquity rather than affliction.

And so much for the Second Mark or Character.

(3) See *what it is, that you most trust unto and live upon, when all other things fail you.* That, certainly, is your Treasure.

Men usually reserve their treasure to be their support at the last pinch and extremity. See the case of Asaph: Psal. lxxiii. 26. *My flesh and my heart faileth:* and must not he therefore fail? hath he any thing else to support him? Yes: now comes in relief from his treasure: *But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever:* he is my treasure; a treasure, that will never fail me, and that never can be spent: he is my portion for ever. And, thus, every child of God, when other things fail him, when other props are taken from under him, will then support himself from his God, that is his portion for ever. Micah had a true notion of God, though falsely applied to idols: *Ye have taken away my gods.....and what have I more?* Take from a saint all worldly comforts and all earthly enjoyments; and, if you ask him what he hath more, he can truly say, "Yes: still I have more than I have lost: I have my God left me still." But, were it possible that his God should be taken from him, then indeed what hath he more? he hath nothing then left him, to support him and to live upon. Can you, therefore, in all your distresses, find relief and comfort in your God? can you, when all props fail you, betake yourselves to him; and find enough in him to support and bear up yourselves, when you have nothing in the world to depend upon? can you then find enough in him, to live comfortably and splendidly? If so, it is a sign God is your

treasure. When all other things fail, God comes in as the relief and support of that soul, that makes him to be his treasure.

4. Look, not only what it is which you value in itself; but *that, by which and according to which, you value both yourselves and others.* That is your Treasure.

And, here, I shall lay down Two things.

(1) If the soul hath assurance, and knows beyond all doubt and fallibility, that Heavenly Treasure is his, he will value himself according to that treasure.

Would to God, says the Apostle to king Agrippa, that thou wert *such* a one *as I am.* And so, 1 Cor. xv. when he had spoken of himself in the 9th verse, *I am the least of* all *the apostles.....not meet* and worthy *to be called an apostle;* there he values himself as in himself: but yet, in the 10th verse, *By the grace of God I am what I am:* and what was that? why, says he, This grace received I *not in vain,* for *I laboured more abundantly than they all:* low was his esteem of himself; considered in himself, *less than the least of* all *the Apostles:* but, considering himself in respect of grace, *By grace,* says he, *I am what I am;* and I am such a one also, as have received grace to labour more than all of them. And so, Jer. ix. 23, 24. *Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom,* nor *the mighty man in his* strength, nor *the rich man in his riches:* he excludes all boasting from themselves, *But, let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he.....knoweth me, that I am the Lord:* let him value and esteem of himself according to that. Now, do you not prize yourselves by some outward privileges or worldly advantages? do you not think yourselves somebody, because you have riches and estates, or the like? do you account yourselves nothing worth, more than what you are in respect of grace, more than what you are in respect of your interest in God, and in that Heavenly Treasure and riches? This is a sign, that you do indeed make heavenly things to be your treasure, when you rate yourselves so much worth as you have of that treasure.

(2) If the soul want assurance, and so cannot value itself according to its interest in that Heavenly Treasure; if it cannot see its right and title to this Heavenly Treasure, then it values others according to their interest in that treasure.

It is not according to their estates or honour in the world, but according to what they have of Christ, and God, and heavenly things. A child of God, that values heavenly things as his treasure, will value the men that have this treasure and these riches.

USE V.

Several characters have been laid before you, for the Examination of yourselves, whether you do value heaven and heavenly things as your treasure. If now by those characters you have taken an account of your estate, you either find yourselves rich in this Heavenly Treasure, or not. If you cannot say, God and Christ and the great and glorious things of eternity are yours; if you doubt that heaven is your exchequer, and of all that rich and precious treasure it contains there is any thing that you can call yours; let me then direct you to a Twofold word of EXHORTATION.

That, above all gettings, you would chiefly labour to get a portion in this Heavenly Treasure.

That you would never rest satisfied, till you have got a full assurance that this treasure is yours, and that you are enriched by it.

The one, is to them, that are indeed poor; but think themselves rich and increased in goods, and to stand in need of nothing.

The other, is to them, that are indeed rich; but yet think themselves poor and miserable.

1. To *them, that have no share in this Heavenly Treasure.*

Is there such an infinite mass of riches exposed, not to sale, but to gift; riches inestimable, invaluable, and unsearchable; such riches, that he, who would worthily describe them, must first suffer a translation, and learn the tongue of an angel to speak whole God at every word? and shall not this stir up and quicken your desires to get these riches? What! Sirs, is there not a covetous person among you all? Is there not one, that cares how to be rich? Is wealth grown such a vile and contemptible thing with you, as to stand in need of other exhortations and motives besides itself, to commend it to your acceptance? No, certainly, riches have not lost their allurements, nor have men lost their covetousness. If I should tell you this day, of rich purchases and large donations, of gainful bargains and the speediest and easiest way to grow great in the world, and of invaluable treasures that you might have for fetching; how would most men's ears drink in such golden eloquence as this is!" "Oh, where, and how?" would be the question of all of you.

What then is the reason, that, when we set before you the glorious excellencies of this Heavenly Treasure, the least dust and filings of which is enough to bankrupt all that the world calls precious; since it gives no less than crowns, robes, and sceptres, God, and Christ, and glory, and immortality: what is the reason, that men's hearts generally are so frozen and cold towards these things? Why are they not covetous and earnest, in seeking after these things?

Truly, the grand comprehensive reason is flat atheism. So many as are careless of this Heavenly Treasure, so many atheists are there in the world. Saint Paul hath told us, that he, that is covetous of earthly things, is an idolater: I may tell you, he, that is not covetous after heavenly things, he is a flat atheist.

But, more particularly;

(1) Men are not thoroughly convinced that there is indeed such a treasure; or that this treasure is so rich, and so precious and glorious as it is described.

And why is this, but because it is hidden treasure? Here they see what pomp and advantages earthly riches bring with them; but they never saw the state, that an angel keeps: they never saw the glory of *the spirits of just men made perfect:* they never saw the court and attendance of the Eternal King: they have heard, indeed, mighty and strange things concerning all these; but what shall they do, if they prove but dreams and fancies? and why then should they trouble themselves about uncertainties? possibly they are such as are described; possibly, they are not. Truly, these are men's atheistical principles; and, though they dare not own and profess it, yet this is at the bottom of all that deadness and indifferency, that is in most men to the things of heaven. Now, although the bare possibility of the truth of these glorious things, and the little danger there is in attempting to obtain them, might prevail with rational men to put them upon earnest endeavours after them; yet, carnal desires and earthly affections striking in with these loose atheistical and carnal opinions concerning the certainty of these glorious discoveries, they sway them so powerfully to earthly things, that all their thoughts and care and contrivances are laid out upon them, to the neglect, yea to the contempt of heavenly and spiritual things. Ps. xiv. 1. *The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God:* it was but in his heart: it was but a thin film of a thought, that scarce arrived at the form of a conception; yet see how this hath influence into his life: *They are corrupt: they*

have done abominable works: there is none, that doeth good. Oh beware, therefore, that you never entertain a thought in the leastwise derogatory to the infinite glory of heaven: doubting or unworthy thoughts of heaven will insensibly make you careless in your endeavours after it: be, therefore, firm and unshaken in this belief, that heavenly glory is unsearchable, that heavenly riches are invaluable: yea, believe that whatever belongs to heaven is before and beyond all that is here below: the more the eye, though but of a historical faith, discovers and sees of these things, the more will the hand labour and be diligent in the obtaining of them.

(2) Another reason why men do not labour after this Heavenly Treasure, is, because they are not thoroughly convinced, that they stand in need of this Heavenly Treasure.

They say, with the church, Rev. iii. 17. that they are *rich, and increased* in *goods, and* stand in *need of nothing; and* know *not that* they are *wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.* They know not, and therefore they care not for looking after, this Heavenly Treasure. They do not see their need of grace to sanctify them, their need of mercy to justify them, their need of the promises to support them, and their need of Christ to save them. Who is it, that cries out, they are undone, eternally undone, without these things? Who is it, that is sensible of these things? They think a little of these things will go far, and what they have already is enough: and it is altogether as hard to make these men discontented with the poverty of their spiritual condition, as it is to make them contented with the abundance and fulness of their temporal condition. Oh, that men were but once awakened to see the necessity that they stand in of this Heavenly Treasure!

But how should they be awakened?

Consider,

[1] The great cost and expense, which you must be at, if you will be saved.

It is true, if you resolve to perish, as poor as now you are, yet you are too rich a prey for the Devil: but, if you intend happiness and your own salvation, you must have a large and rich stock to trade withal. A poor and beggarly professor will never set up in Christianity: no, salvation is a costly thing: many powerful corruptions must be subdued: many divine graces must be acted: many holy duties must be performed:

and what have you to bear out all this charge with? See that expression, Titus iii. 8. that they *be careful to maintain good works:* such good works, he means, as are conducible to salvation: to maintain such good works is so great a charge, as will beggar all the ability of nature, if you have not a Heavenly Treasure to defray it: you cannot, by the power of nature and all natural endowments, maintain good works: are they able to act faith, and love, and patience, and humility, and self-denial? I know it is both easy and pleasant, to think and hope that you shall be saved: but, sit down first, and consider what it will cost you: can your present stock carry you through good and evil report, through reproaches and afflictions? will it carry you through all? if not, will you yet say, you are *rich, and increased* in *goods, and* stand in *need of nothing?* Be convinced, therefore, that you are poor and insufficient creatures; and that you stand in need of abundance of supply from this Heavenly Treasure, to discharge this cost and expense that you must be at, if ever you will be saved.

Consider,

[2] The desperate debts you have contracted with the justice of God, and the deep arrears you are run into with the wrath and vengeance of God; and how do you think to clear your account without a vast and infinite treasure to defray it?

Suppose God should take every sinner, this day before him, by the throat; and say to him, "Wretch! pay me what thou owest me: I will give thee no longer time."

"Pay thee, Lord! why, what is that I owe thee?"

1st. "Thou owest me huge and vast sums for all the Temporal Mercies thou enjoyest. Thou vauntest it in the world, as though none were so great as thou art: yea, but thou hast paid for nothing that thou hast. Here is so much upon the account, for thy estate; and so much, for credit and reputation: so much, for protection and preservation; yea, for thy life and soul: yea, thou owest me for all. Pay me now for all these; yea, and the utmost farthing too for all these debts: or, else, lie for ever in hell."

Oh, that worldly-minded men would but seriously consider, that none of the good things which they now enjoy are upon free-cost: there must and will certainly come an after-reckoning: and then, perhaps, they will say, it is one of the worst bargains they made in their whole lives, when they were con-

tent to grow rich, when this after-reckoning comes and God shall call them to pay for all the mercies and enjoyments that he lent them.

2dly. Thou owest God for many thousands of Sins and Provocations against him, which thou must make recompence and satisfaction for.

And therefore sins are called debts: *Forgive us our debts.* And how many thousand talents art thou thus indebted to God! Every sin is a talent of lead, for its weight, to sink the soul deep into hell; but it is a talent of gold, for its price and satisfaction. God's law is transgressed: and how canst thou recompense it? his wrath is provoked: and how canst thou atone it? thy soul is forfeited to endless torments: and how canst thou redeem it? *The redemption of the soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever.*

Tell me now, O Sinner, art thou rich enough in thyself to discharge all these debts? canst thou pay God, to the full, for every mercy thou hast received? canst thou satisfy him, to the full, for every sin thou hast committed? dost thou think still, that thou hast no need of a treasure to discharge all these? Possibly, by this time, thou art convinced that thou standest in need of a treasure: but, it may be, thou thinkest there is none rich enough to do all this. Truly, there is none, but the treasure of the infinite merit of Christ; who, for those that believe on him, hath paid off all their score: so that neither God's mercies, nor yet their own sins, shall ever be charged upon them to their condemnation. They can plead, "Lord, here is a full price, the precious blood of thine own Son. It was, indeed, thine own free grace that bestowed him upon us, who is such a boundless treasure: but, being instated in that, we do no longer desire to deal with thee upon terms of grace; but upon most severe, rigorous, and strict justice. What mercies we have had were purchased for us by this price: what sins we have committed were satisfied for us by this expiation: and, therefore, we stand acquitted in law." Thus may those, that have a part in this Heavenly Treasure, make up their accounts with a great deal of confidence; when others, that have nothing to discharge their debts withal, shall be cast into prison, whence they shall never return. Be convinced, therefore, of the absolute need and necessity that you stand in of this Heavenly Treasure.

(3) Another reason why no more labour after this Heavenly

Treasure, is, because there are so few men that are willing to go upon trust.

Truly, the riches of a child of God are in believing, in trusting: and, therefore, we have that expression, James ii. 5. *The poor of this world, rich in faith.* Now to be rich in faith only, the world counts a fantastic kind of riches: they would rather be rich in present possessions: they know not the mystery of growing rich, by believing, and having nothing.

Now the people of God go on trust for their treasure: and that Two ways.

[1] Their treasures are Invisible.

2 Cor. iv. 18. *We look not at the things, which are seen; but at the things, which are not seen.* The greatest part of what a Christian doth enjoy lies in invisibles: in the love of God; in interest in him; in communion and fellowship with him; in the actings of faith and dependance upon him. Tell an earthly, carnal man of such a treasure as this, he wonders where lies the glory and excellency of it: he sees not God, nor Christ: he sees not that sweet communion and intercourse, that there is betwixt God and the soul. The things of the world he sees; the pomp, and glory, and splendor of the earth: these are objects of his sense: they are sensible things: and therefore these are things, that do affect him; but he prizes not invisible things, because out of sight, out of mind.

[2] Their treasure is not only invisible, but Future: it is to come.

It is but little, that a saint enjoys for the present: his great estate lies in hope and in reversion: now he lives, it may be, upon glimpses and half smiles; and very restricted communications of God unto his soul: he hath only enough to make him to know what that inheritance is that he expects; and, were it not that his faith tells him sometimes how rich and glorious it is, truly he could not live and subsist upon his present incomes. Now there is a body of sin and death, that keeps him low and mean in his actual enjoyments: this keeps him in nonage, and bars him from the possession of his estate: yea, but when this old man dies, then there falls to him a large and glorious inheritance, then he is instated into the present possession of all his hopes, and then he can live as much by sight and sense as the men of the world now do. Now this doth not affect earthly men: they have somewhat for the present, and they care not

for the future: the world is in their hands, but heaven is afar off: as eternity is that, which shall never end; so it shall never begin with them: and so, foolish creatures! while they are pleasing themselves with empty enjoyments here below, eternity comes upon them unexpected, and they unprovided for it.

And that is a Third Reason.

(4) Few men are willing to come up to the price of this Heavenly Treasure.

"Why, what is the price?" you will say. Truly, it is nothing less than all: Matth. xiii. 46. our Saviour, speaking of the wise merchant, says, that *when he had found* the *pearl of great price*, he *went and sold all that he had, and bought it*. Now, though hereby is not required actual renouncing of all, but only a disposition of heart to part with all, when they stand either in competition with or opposition to these heavenly things: yet men's affections are so glued to the world and the follies and vanities here below, that they count this a hard bargain; and they would rather forego God and Christ and the great and glorious things of eternity, than buy them at so dear a rate, as to be willing to part with them all for heavenly things.

You see, then, what hinders men from making heavenly things their treasure. Beware that these things be not charged upon you, as your practical error, at the Last Day. Let me tell you, it will be sad and dreadful for you, to see poor despicable saints let in to the full possession of this treasure, which here they believed, and hoped, and longed for; and you yourselves, for cleaving to these vain and worldly enjoyments, to be shut out in eternal torments: what horror and dread will this cause within you!

Thus much, for the First branch of this Exhortation: Labour to get these Heavenly Things to be your Treasure.

2. The other branch is, *Never rest satisfied, without a full assurance, that this Heavenly Treasure is yours; that you have a share in it, and a right to it.*

(1) Consider,

[1] Without this assurance you can never live comfortably.

For, though it be sufficient for your eternal safety and security, that God is your treasure and your exceeding great reward; yet it will not be sufficient for your present comfort, unless you know and apprehend him so to be.

[2] Without this assurance you can never live generously, and as it becomes a Christian.

That is, you cannot live above the world without it: not above the fears and flatteries, above the frowns and fawnings, of the world; unless you have assurance that God is your treasure. A Christian, that knows God is his portion, can do thus: he can rejoice in tribulation, and triumph in afflictions, and live splendidly upon his God, though all the things of this world fail him. Habbak. iii. 17, 18. *Although the fig-tree* should *not blossom, neither fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive* should *fail....* though *the flock* should *be cut off from the fold, and there* should *be no herd in the stalls:* what then? must not he languish and perish with other men? no: *Yet will I rejoice in the Lord,* and *joy in the God of my salvation.* What is the reason there is so much base compliance, and cringing, and servileness to every humour of men; but only because men have no assurance of any treasure, but what may be taken from them by men? I need not tell you what times we are now fallen into: they are perilous times, wherein nothing is worth the making sure; nay, indeed, nothing can possibly be made sure. We see changes and vicissitudes upon every thing; and, therefore, make that sure, that alone can be made sure: and that is God, and heavenly and spiritual things: and, then, *Though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be* hurled *into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar.....*and *the mountains shake.....* yet *God* will be *our refuge and strength, a very present help in* time of *trouble:* Ps. xlvi. 1, 2, 3.

(2) To those, that have had this full assurance, I shall only speak Two words briefly.

[1] Live upon your treasure: by faith fetch in supplies from it, for all your exigences and necessities.

Yea, live at a far higher rate, than what the men of the world can do: that so they may be convinced, that the poorest Christian hath greater sufficiency in himself than all the world besides; that the world may be convinced, that a Christian hath more in God than the greatest worldling can have in all his worldly possessions.

[2] Take heed of wasting and spending this treasure.

Indeed, the main stock cannot nor shall not be spent: yet take heed of diminishing the heap. Be still adding to it, rather than wasting it. Truly, sin will both waste your treasure, and blot your evidences, and darken that knowledge and assurance that you have that this treasure is yours.

(3) I have but one word more: and that is, to exhort you to

lay up your earthly treasures in heaven: you cannot lay them up in a safer place.

But you will say, "How may that be done?"

Why, if you lay them out for the honour and glory of God and in his service, you shall thereby lay them up in heaven: this is the way to carry earth to heaven; yea, to make earthly comforts and enjoyments to tend upon you farther than the grave. We say commonly, "These things will go no farther than the grave with us: there we must part with them:" no, lay up these earthly things in heaven, by employing them for the honour and glory of God, and they shall and will go farther with you than the grave; and, though you brought nothing with you into the world, yet you shall carry them out of the world with you. See Rev. xiv. 13. *Their works do follow them:* they enter into heaven with them. And Luke xvi. 9. *Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. Mammon of unrighteousness:* that is, earthly enjoyments; so called, because usually abused to unrighteousness. *Make* you *friends of them:* that is, so lay them out for the glory of God and the good of others, *that, when ye fail,* that is, when you die, you may be received into *everlasting habitations,* that is, into everlasting glory.

And thus I have finished this subject of Laying up Treasure in Heaven. The Lord make what hath been spoken profitable to your souls!

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY,

RECOMMENDED,

URGED, AND ENCOURAGED,

IN

WORKING OUT OUR OWN SALVATION.

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PHIL. ii. 12, 13.

WHEREFORE, MY BELOVED, AS YE HAVE ALWAYS OBEYED, NOT AS IN MY PRESENCE ONLY, BUT NOW MUCH MORE IN MY ABSENCE, WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING: FOR IT IS GOD, WHICH WORKETH IN YOU, BOTH TO WILL AND TO DO, OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE.

THE whole sum of Christianity is comprehended in two points; Knowledge and Obedience. The one is conversant about things supernaturally revealed; and the other, about duties supernaturally performed.

Now, although there be so wide a difference between these two: yet, where they are suffered to run on in a course, they will one fall into the other; and Gospel Revelations will make way for and lead unto Gospel Obedience.

Indeed, there is no divine truth, how abstracted, how sublime and speculative soever it may seem to be, but, by the help of one or two consequences, may be handed down along to clear and direct our practice.

And therefore the Apostle, speaking of the whole of Christian Religion, calls it *the mystery of godliness:* 1 Tim. iii. 16.; and, *the truth* according *to godliness:* Titus i. 1. He calls it not a mystery and godliness, or truth and godliness; but he knits and joins them both together, the mystery and truth of godliness: a truth, yea and a truth wrapt up in a mystery, because discovered only by a divine light; and yet a mystery of godliness, because it is a truth that tends to incline the will and raise the affections, and so direct the conversations of men, unto godliness and obedience.

And thus also, in this chapter, after the Apostle had soared up very high in those transcendent mysteries of Christ's Godhead, in the 6th verse; of his Incarnation, in the 7th verse; of his Humiliation, Obedience, and Passion, in the 8th verse; of his Glory, and Exaltation above every thing both in heaven and in the earth and in hell, 9th 10th and 11th verses: after he had thus soared aloft in these transcendent mysteries, he makes a sudden descent to the exhortation in the text, *Wherefore.....work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

This illative particle *wherefore* looks back as far as to the 5th verse: where the Apostle exhorts them, that the same mind should be in them, that was in Christ Jesus: who, though he was essentially equal with God, yet mediatorily became subject unto God: though he was in the form of God, yet he took upon him the form of a servant; laid aside his glory, emptied and humbled himself, and became obedient even to the lowest duties and to the vilest sufferings: he was obedient unto the death; that is, he was obedient to God's law till death, by fulfilling of it, and he was obedient unto God's will in death, by suffering of it. For which exinanition and obedience, *God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.* Now, says the Apostle, be you also of the same mind with Christ. Wherefore, as he was obedient, so be you also: do you *work*; that is, do you obey. As he was humble and emptied himself, be you also humble and lowly: *work.....with fear and trembling*; that is, obey with humility and reverence, as the phrase imports and is often used in Scripture. That so, as Christ obtained glory and exaltation, you also may be exalted and glorified with him: *Work out your own salvation.* For these words come in as a parallel with Christ: as he was obedient, so be you: as he was humble and emptied himself, so be you also humble: that so, when he is glorified, you may be saved. *Wherefore....work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

And this I judge to be the Apostle's scope in drawing this conclusion.

In the words, you have Three parts.

A Duty pressed upon us by a most serious and rational exhortation: *Wherefore....work out your own salvation.*

An express Way and Manner how it is to be performed: and that is, *with fear and trembling.*

Here is the Reason of this exhortation: *For it is God, which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.*

FIRST. Here is a Duty pressed upon us: and that is, To *work out* our *own salvation.*

To explain the words a little:

First. For Salvation, you may take it for the whole supernatural state of a Christian; begun here in grace, and to be finished hereafter in glory. And,

Secondly. To Work Out this salvation, is nothing but to continue and persevere in ways of obedience, until, through them, that salvation, that is begun here on earth, be perfected in heaven.

To Work out our Salvation, therefore, implies Three things:

First. Pains and Labour. Salvation is that, which must be wrought out: it is that, which will make the soul pant and breathe to obtain it.

Secondly. It implies Constancy and Diligence. A Christian, that would work out Salvation, must always be employed about it. It is a web, into which we must weave the whole thread of our lives. That man, that works at salvation only by some passionate fits, and then within a while undoes it all again by foul apostacy and notorious sins, will never work salvation out. No: it must be diligence and constancy, that must effect that.

Thirdly. It promises Success and Accomplishment also. And this is a mighty encouragement to enforce the exhortation. Though the work be difficult, our strength little, the enemies many, and the oppositions powerful; yet continue working, your labour shall not be in vain. Though it be hard work, it shall not be long work: for it shall be wrought out; and, what before was your work, shall be your reward; and, what before was your labour, shall be your wages: and this salvation, that was so painful in working, shall be most blessed in the enjoyment.

SECONDLY. Here is the express Way and Manner, how this work should be done: and that is, *with fear and trembling. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

This fear is not to be taken for a fear of diffidence, perturbation, or despondency: for this is so contrary to the duty of working out salvation, as that it only stupifies and dulls us; and, as in other matters, so in spirituals, it hinders both counsels and performances. But this *fear and trembling*, that must qualify our obedience, is nothing else, but an humble self-resignation,

self-denial, and a holy awe and reverence of God: with which humility and reverence, the highest degree of spiritual joy and assurance is so far from being inconsistent, that it usually springs from it, and is built upon it. This is meant by *fear and trembling;* and so the phrase is often used in Scripture: so the Psalmist, *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling:* Ps. ii. 11: it is not meant of any desponding diffident fear, but only of an awful reverential fear of God, joined with self-abasement: and so St. Paul, to the Corinthians, says of Titus, that he was received *with fear and trembling:* 2 Cor. vii. 15: there was no reason why Titus's coming should cause fear and trembling, which was so much desired; only the meaning is, they received him with fear and reverence: and, so, *servants* are commanded to *be obedient to* their *masters:* Eph. vi. 5: so, here, *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;* that is, work it out with humility, self-abasement, and reverence.

THIRDLY. Here is the Reason of this exhortation: *For it is God, which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.*

Wherein lies the strength of the reason? Possibly, it might seem rather, to a carnal judgment, an encouragement to sloth, than an encouragement to working and obedience. For, if God work in us both the will and the deed, what need we then be so solicitous about the accomplishment of our salvation; which, not so much we ourselves, as God works out for us? it would rather seem to be a greater motive for us to work, if the Apostle had said, "God will not assist you, and therefore look to yourselves."

Yet there are two ways, without torturing the words, whereby we may make them confess wherein their great strength lies: the one is, by reducing this reason to the Duty: and the other is, by referring it to the Manner of Performing the duty.

First. If we refer it to the Duty of working out salvation, then the force and strength of it lies in the consideration of that aid and assistance, that God, by working in us, affords us, to the working out of our own salvation.

"Work! alas!" may some say, "How can we work? Are not the duties of obedience, divine and supernatural? And is it not an Almighty power alone, that can enable us to do what is supernatural? Are we omnipotent? Doth not God herein plainly seek advantages against us, in bidding us thus to work, who have no hands nor strength to work with?"

No, by no means: for, what God commands us to do, he will assist us in the doing of it. And, though obedience be supernatural, and we weak and impotent; yet God is omnipotent. Work, therefore: for this omnipotent God works in you, both to will and to do.

And thus appears the force of the reason, if you apply it to the Duty. Now, if you thus refer it, then observe, that all ability in and all encouragement to obedience proceeds from God's working in us what he requireth from us. And thus, as Christ said, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work:* so may a weak Christian say, "What I do is above my own strength, indeed; but my God and my Father worketh hitherto in me; and therefore it is, that I am enabled thus to work."

Secondly. If we refer this reason to the Manner of Performing obedience, that it must be *with fear and trembling;* as if the exhortation ran thus, Be humble and awful in your obedience, *For it is God, which worketh in you, both to will and to do:* then, it carries a double force with it.

First. That the due consideration of God's working in us, is the greatest inducement imaginable to a self-debasing humiliation. There is nothing, that will sooner take down pharisaical pride and boasting, than sometimes to be catechising ourselves with those two or three questions and interrogatories of the Apostle: Who made *thee to differ?.....what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? Now if thou* hast received *it, why dost thou boast, as if thou hadst not received it?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. Why dost thou boast and glory, O vain weak man, when all thou hast and all thou dost is from God's free and arbitrary working in thee? alas! there is nothing of all thy graces or duties to be ascribed unto thyself, unless it be the imperfections and weaknesses of them. And this should cause us, when we are most strongly carried out in the ways of God and in the duties of holy obedience, most of all to renounce ourselves and our own sufficiency; and look upon it as an evident argument, that, of ourselves we are able to do nothing, because through God we are enabled to do so much, yea to do all things.

Secondly. Since all we do is wrought in us by God, this should cause us to obey with a holy fear and reverence; lest, by our miscarriages, we should provoke God to withdraw from us, on whom depend all the ability and power we have to obey. *It is God, which worketh in you:* and, therefore, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*

This shall suffice for the opening and explaining of the words.

I. That, which I shall press upon all, is the Duty contained in this exhortation of the Apostle. And the Proposition, which I shall lay down from them, is this:

> That IT IS THE DUTY OF EVERY TRUE CHRISTIAN TO WORK OUT HIS OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

Or, thus:

> EVERY CHRISTIAN, NAY EVERY MAN, OUGHT TO WORK FOR HIS LIVING, EVEN FOR AN ETERNAL LIFE.

To mention places for the proof of this were to transcribe the Bible: we can no where open this Blessed Book, but we find this truth proved to us, either directly or by consequence; for it is the very genius of the Scripture. And, yet, it is strange in these days to see how dubiously some men, who would be thought admirers of free grace, speak of obedience and working: as if it were the brand of a legal spirit; and as great a stranger to a Christian's warrant, as it is to their practice. Oh, it is a soft and easy doctrine to bid men sit still and believe; as if God would translate men to heaven upon their couches: to tell them, that all that they have now to do, is but to labour for more assurance, to praise God, and to sing hallelujahs unto him. And so also it conduces much to their abundant comfort; does it not? to tell them, that God sees no sin in them, nor requires no duty from them! that repentance and humiliation are legal things, belonging only to younger persons, and not to the heirs of the promises! Oh, who could think it possible, that such dreams and fantastic delusions could possess so many men's hearts, that ever heard the Scripture speak in its own language; or that ever read what Christ himself, the Holy Ghost, or the Blessed Apostles have written, who bid us to *work the works of God*, to give all diligence, to abound in all the fruits of righteousness? Is it possible, that these notions should be dispersed by some, and entertained by others, but because it always hath been the policy of the Devil, wherein he hath sped so well, still to vent those doctrines that indulge the flesh, under the name and patronage of free grace and gospel attainments? But, of this, more hereafter.

Let us now consider the REASONS of this truth.

And,

i. Wherefore is it, that we are commanded, to STRIVE that we may *enter in at the straight gate?* Luke xiii. 24. *so* to RUN, *that* we *may obtain?* 1 Cor. ix. 24. so to WRESTLE, that we *may be able to stand?* Eph. vi. 11, 12. so to FIGHT, that we may *lay hold on eternal life?* 1 Tim. vi. 12. not to *faint in* our *minds?* Heb. xii. 3. nor to grow *weary* of *well doing?* Gal. vi. 9.

Do not all these expressions imply great labour and pains? Can you strive, and run, and wrestle, and fight, and all this by doing nothing? or, were it needful to be taught not to grow faint, nor to be weary, when we have no work to do? Therefore, it is the genius and sum of the Scripture, to excite men to be always active and laborious in the ways of holiness and obedience.

ii. Wherefore is it, that salvation is set forth to us under the notion of a REWARD? Is it not to imply that we must work for it?

A reward, not indeed merited by our works; but yet a reward measured out to us and conferred upon us, according to our works. God *will render to every* one *according to his* works: *To them, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory.... and immortality,* he will render *eternal life:* Rom. ii. 6, 7. And, indeed, it were very strange, if that God, who will reward us with eternal life, according to our works, should yet lay a check upon the ingenuity of the new creature, thereby to account eternal life too low a motive to excite unto eternal life.

iii. Is it not to this end, that God hath implanted such an ACTIVE PRINCIPLE OF GRACE in the hearts of his servants, that thereby they might be enabled to work out their own salvation?

If God would save you without working, why then hath he given you such an operative principle that you might work? Nay, I might affirm that he might as well save you without grace, as without works; for that is not grace, that doth not put forth itself in working: grace, if it be true, will be working: it will rise in the thoughts: it will work in the affections: it will breathe in desires, appear in good works, and be very active and busy in the whole life and conversation. Now, not to work, is that, which puts a check and restraint upon this active principle: it is to curb it in, when it would freely break forth into action, upon every occasion given to it.

iv. Why hath God so often promised us ASSISTANCE, if it be not that thereby we should be encouraged to work?

He stands by us, to confirm our hearts, to strengthen our hands, to help our weakness, to quicken our deadness, to recruit our graces by continual supplies; and wherefore is all this, but that we might work? God, rather than we shall not work, himself will set us at work: nay, he will maintain us, at our work and in our work, upon his own cost. He gives us aid and promises assistance only for this end, that we might work out our own salvation. We are not sufficient of ourselves, says the Apostle, *as of ourselves to think any thing:* 2 Cor. iii. 5. what, then, must we therefore sit still, because we are not sufficient? no, says he, for God, who finds us employment, will also find us strength: *our sufficiency is of God.* And therefore it is, that God gives in assistances and supplies, that we might work the works of God.

And thus I have confirmed the doctrine, Why we ought to work, and That we ought to work.

II. But, here, before I can proceed any further, there are some OBJECTIONS that must be answered, THAT SEEM TO OPPOSE THE TRUTH OF THIS DOCTRINE.

Obj. 1. Some may cavil against this command of working out our salvation, as a thing Impossible.

Obj. 2. Others, as Derogatory unto Christ and his Merits.

Obj. 3. Others, as Prejudicial to the Free Grace of God, by which alone we are saved, and not by our own works.

Obj. 4. Others look upon it as Vain and Needless; since God will certainly bring to salvation all those whom he hath elected and foreknown, according to his purpose: which purpose of his, neither their not working with it, no nor their working against it, shall ever make void or frustrate.

OBJECT. i. Say some, "With what justice and equity can God require this duty of working out our salvation, when he knows we have no power to perform it? Either," say they, "it concerns those, that are spiritually inclined and have their salvation already begun, that they perfect it by working it out: and, if so, alas! to what purpose is it, when they themselves can act no further than they are acted? they cannot so much as will their

own salvation, unless God give them to will; much less then can they work out their salvation. Or, else, it concerns all, that live under the sound of the Gospel, though reprobates and castaways, though dead in trespasses and sins. And is it rational, is it just and equal, to bid dead men work? Or doth it become that God, who would be thought by us to be infinitely merciful and compassionate, to mock and deride human miseries, in requiring of them things that are impossible? Had he commanded us to bring light out of darkness: had he bid us pull the stars out of their orbs; or, with one of our hands, to stop the sun in its course: all these impossibilities we might as well do, as perform these divine duties, without divine assistance. We can as soon glorify ourselves, as sanctify ourselves. Exhort and command never so long, with as great authority and vehemency as you please; yet, till God move on us and work in us, you may as well expect stocks and stones should move at your speaking as we. And, if God doth but once begin to move and work in us, we shall work and move without your exhortations. It is therefore," say such as these, "altogether in vain to press men to duty, till God works in them: for all your exhortations are not sufficient, till he works; and, when he works, all your exhortations will be fruitless."

Because this is the common plea of sinners, why they do not work; and that, which questionless doth too often rise in the hearts and thoughts of most men, whereby they are greatly discouraged, and their hands weakened in their obedience; I shall, therefore, the more largely and particularly answer this objection.

And,

Answ. 1. This serious and pressing exhortation to obedience and working, *doth not suppose in us, nor is it necessary that it should suppose in us, a power to obey;* I mean a present and actual power: *neither doth our want of power take off our obligation to obey.*

It may and will be granted, that there is no command of God, but doth suppose a power once bestowed. Whether or no his absolute uncontrollable sovereignty might have required that from us, that is above our power ever to perform, may rather modestly be doubted, than peremptorily concluded. Yet this is certain, that those very duties, that now we complain we have

no strength or power to perform, were once as subject to our power and the freedom of our own wills, as now natural and moral actions are: subject, I say, to our power, either to perform them or not to perform them: not as though we come now into the world with this power, for we are all dead and still-born in respect of grace; but as having this power in our First Parent, who was our representative: for in him we must be considered as existent, even when he existed; and, what he received was for us, and what he did was done by us, and what he lost we lost in him. Now if we have lost this power of obeying, must God also lose his privilege and sovereignty of commanding? must he lessen his authority, as we lessen our ability? truly, had Adam once thought of this flight, he might have sinned himself quite from under the command and dominion of his Creator, and might soon have become thus free. Do not you yourselves think you may, if a debtor of yours through his own default becomes a bankrupt, require your debt of him? so stands the case here between God and us: we are all disabled to pay the debt of obedience that we owe to God, but yet it is through our own default; and the power, that we had, is not so much lost, as wilfully thrown away: and may not God justly come upon us for our debt? our want of power takes not off our obligation to obedience, because it is through a wilful defect that we are deprived of that power: if a servant throw away his tools with which he should work, may not his master justly expect his work from him, though he knows he cannot work without them? God's commands respect not the impotency that we have contracted, nor do they therefore abate any thing of their severity; but they respect that power and ability, that was once conferred and bestowed upon us.

Yea, were it so that God could with justice require no more from us than what at present we have power and ability to perform, this would make the grace of God, First, vain and fruitless, and, Secondly, dangerous and destructive.

(1) This would make void the pardoning grace of God.

For, according to this doctrine, nothing could be required of us, if we could do nothing: but, without grace, we can do nothing; and, therefore, if grace be not bestowed on us, nothing can justly be required from us; and, if nothing be required, nothing is due from us; and, then, we do not sin in not performing any thing; and, where there is no sin, certainly there can be no place for pardoning grace and mercy. And so these

wise men, who think they do so much befriend the grace and mercy of God in all haste, in affirming that God requires nothing from us but what at present we have power to perform, are injurious to the mercy of God, in making it void as to pardon and remission.

(2) This doctrine makes the sanctifying grace God destructive and pernicious.

If God can require justly no more of us than we can perform, wherefore is it, that men are justly damned? is it not, because they will not do what they are able to do? And whence is it, that they have this ability? is it not from the grace of God's Spirit? And, therefore, if they have not grace to make them able to do more than their own corrupt wills are willing to do, God could not justly condemn them; and, consequently, that of the Apostle should stand no longer true, Through *grace ye are saved*, (Eph. ii. 5.) but through grace ye perish.

These Two Consequences will follow, if God could justly require no more from us, than what we have power now to do. So that, though we have not power and ability to work out our own salvation, yet we are not thereby excused from our obligation to do it.

But,

Answ. 2. Though we cannot, of ourselves, work out our own salvation, *Yet God doth not mock us, as some do thence infer; neither doth he only upbraid us with our own weakness: but hath serious and weighty ends why he commands us to obey.*

Those, that are so ready to cast this odium upon the doctrine of special grace; making God a derider of human frailty and miseries, when he commands obedience from them, to whom, say they, himself denies that power and grace that should enable them to obey; I would only ask these persons this question: Whether do they grant, or whether or no can they deny, that God, antecedently, before he commands, knows who will obey and who will not obey? If they say God knows who will not obey, will they say God mocks them when he commands them to obey, though he knows they will not? What they answer to this, the same may we answer to their objection.

But, there are Two Ends, why God commands us thus to work, though we are not able; according to which, God is very serious in commanding us thus to work.

And God doth this,

(1) That he may thereby convince us of our own weakness,

and that wretched estate into which our sins have brought us; that he may humble and abase us, when we reflect how far we are fallen from our first perfection and excellency.

When we consider, on the one hand, that God requires nothing from us now, but what we once had a power to perform; and then, on the other hand, how little, yea how much of that nothing, it is that now we have power to perform; this convinces us how miserably great our fall is, that makes those things impossible to us, that once were both easy and delightful.

(2) God loves to deal with men as with rational creatures, that have free faculties; are capable of moral influences; and are fit subjects to be wrought upon by precepts, counsels, commands, and exhortations, as well as by internal and efficacious grace: that arguments and motives may persuade without, as grace sways within; that so, by both, he might render them a willing people in the day of his power.

And, therefore, they are not in vain, neither to those that shall be saved, nor to those that perish.

[1] To those, that shall be saved, these are the instruments, which the Spirit of God makes use of to incline their wills and conquer their affections unto the obedience of Christ; and, therefore, they are not in vain.

In conversion, ordinarily, if not always, the moral work goes before the physical: that is, there is, first the rational persuasion, before there is the efficacious and determining motion. For God, when he works on man, accommodates himself to the nature of man: that, as he is a creature, so he may be and is the subject of God's efficacious motions; and, as he is rational, so he may be guided by counsels, led by persuasions, and overawed by convictions. And, therefore, when God converts any, he takes both these ways: inwardly, he works by effectual grace, powerfully subduing the will as a creature subject unto it; and, outwardly, he works by moral suasions and authoritative commands, whereby he inclines the will sweetly and freely to consent to the power of that inward grace, which indeed he shall never, nay indeed he cannot resist: and both these together do concur, as I said before, to make a willing people in the day of God's power.

And,

[2] For those, that perish, these commands have a double end and use.

1st. They are instruments in the hand of the common work of

the Spirit of God, to raise them up to all those moral good things, that they attain to, short of true and saving grace.

It is wonderful, truly, to see how the raging wickedness of the world is dared by a command charged with a threatening. Herod heard John Baptist, who doubtless laid the law home to him, so that *he did many things:* Abimelech and Laban were warned in a dream, whereby God overruled and prevented that wickedness, that was intended by them: were they compelled to what they did? No; God loves to rule the world in a rational way; so that, though he acts and moves wicked men to that good that they do, yet he doth it by moral considerations, and such inducements as do most comport and suit with the liberty of their own will. Promises encourage: threatenings deter: counsels direct: commands enforce: and all these concur, instrumentally, to awe the consciences, and to incline the wills even of wicked men themselves. Whose conscience can gainsay this? Let the vilest sinner freely speak: when he hath been most mad and wild upon his lusts, hath not oftentimes some command or threatening suddenly shot itself in betwixt his conscience and sin? have not two or three weak words silently whispered to him, whence or from whom he knows not, stopped his way and given a check to his lust, when it was swelling ready to break forth into act? And whence have they this power? It is not from themselves: for why then doth it not always so work? But it is from God's inward and physical, though but common work; that, when the affections are most furious and corruption most raging, will effectually persuade to restrain and assuage.

2dly. Another end is, that hereby God leaves them without excuse.

If they perish, they shall have nothing to pretend against God. Hath he not often warned, and counselled, and threatened them? Hath he not told them, with as much earnestness and vehemency as the words of his ministers could deliver it, that *the wages of sin is death*, and the end of those ways wherein they walk will be shame and eternal destruction? Have they not, with all seriousness and entreaties, been called upon, again and again, to repent and turn from the unfruitful works of darkness, and to work the works of God? Can the mouth of God or man speak plainer, when they have been calling and crying after any, *Turn ye, turn ye: why will ye die?* This is that, which, from our souls, we do beseech and entreat at the hands of sinners,

even for the blood and bowels of Jesus Christ; nay, for the blood and bowels of their own precious souls, which they are wilfully spilling upon the ground; that they would *turn and live.* Now there is not one, that hears this serious obtestation and is not obedient to it, but his blood, even the blood of his soul, will lie upon him for ever. What is it, that men expect? Must God drive men to heaven by force and violence, whether they will or no? He hath laid promises and threatenings before them: he exhorts and commands: and, if these things will not prevail with men whose faculties are entire, whose reason is sound, and whose wills are free; think not foolishly to charge God, for he is free from the blood of all men, and sinners will be found to be self-murderers and self-destroyers. *If I had not come and spoken unto them,* says our Saviour, *they had* then had no *sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin:* so, if God had not come and spoken unto sinners, they had neither had sin nor condemnation; but, now that he hath spoken to them so often, and exhorted them so frequently and earnestly, therefore *now they have no cloke for their sin.* God hath spoken, and his speaking will strike every impenitent wretch dumb and silent at the Great Day, whatever they pretend to now.

And this is a Second particular, in answer to this objection: God doth not mock men's weakness, when he commands them to work; but hath great, wise, and weighty ends why he doth it.

Answ. 3. To come somewhat nearer: *There is, indeed, no such impotency and weakness in man; but, if he will, he may work out his own salvation.*

I speak not this to assert the power of man to work out salvation, without the aid of special grace, to incline the will; but, if the will be once inclined and made willing, there is nothing more required to make a man able: I say, where there is special grace given to make the will willing to convert, to believe, and to repent, there is nothing more required to make a man able; because conversion, faith, and repentance chiefly consist in the act of the will itself: now if the will wills repentance, it doth repent; if it wills faith, it doth believe; and so of the rest: and, therefore, there is nothing more required to make a man able, than what he hath in a state of unregeneracy; only, to make him willing is required special grace, which they that favour the undue liberty of the will do deny. And, therefore, God expostulates with the stubbornness of the will: Why will ye perish? *Why will ye die?* Ezek. xviii. 31. xxxiii. 11. and

Christ accuseth the will: *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life:* John v. 40. It is true, there is an impotency in the will; but this is only its stubbornness and obstinacy: it will not hearken to God's call: it will not obey his commands: it will not strive against sin nor perform duties: and, therefore, it cannot. Our CANNOT is not, indeed, an impotency, that we lie under; so much as the stubbornness of our wills. There is not the greatest sinner, who hath wrought iniquity with both hands greedily, but may work out his own salvation if he will: if he be but once willing, he hath that already, that may make him able: God puts no new powers into the soul, when he converts it. It is true, the will cannot incline itself to obedience, without grace; but, yet, it can intend it, if it will: it is its stubbornness, that makes it impotent. It is in the things of grace, as in other free actions of a man's life, with a proportionable abatement: a man can speak and walk, if he will; but, if he be resolutely set not to do these things, he cannot do them so long as that resolution remains, though simply and absolutely he can do them: doth this argue any impotency? So is it here: you may obey and work, if you will; but, if you are resolutely bent against these, if you are resolved not to do them, while that resolution continues you cannot do them: but this argues not any natural impotency, but a moral impotency only: this is an impotency of stubbornness and perverseness. Never, therefore, plead the inability of your will: no; it is through your own stubborn resolution if you perish: you are resolved for hell and destruction; and, if you are plunged into them, it is through your own wilfulness, and not through weakness.

Answ. 4. To come yet a little nearer to conscience and practice: *These very men, that thus make their impotency a pretence for their sloth, do not indeed believe what they pretend and assert here.*

They do not believe, that they are thus impotent: no; it is in the inward and secret thoughts of them all, that they have a power to work out their own salvation; and, therefore, whether they have or have not power, yet still they are inexcusable, if, while they think they have power, yet they will not strive and endeavour to put it forth. Those men, who thus plead impotency and want of power to obey and work out their salvation, though they speak these things, yet they believe not a word of what they say; and therefore they are inexcusable, if they strive not to put forth that power, that they suppose they have, into

act. Although a man's feet be chained and fettered that he cannot walk nor stir, yet if he thinks himself at liberty, and yet will sit still, judge you whether the fault be not wholly to be imputed to his want of will, and not to his want of power; for he thinks himself free and able to move, but will not try. So is it here: wicked men do think they have power to work, however they speak otherwise sometimes; and, therefore, they are utterly inexcusable if they do not work: this is as clear as the light; and their slothfulness, therefore, proceeds not from their weakness, but from their wilfulness.

And I shall endeavour, by some arguments, to convince sinners, that they do indeed think and believe that they have this power to work out their own salvation, whatever they may pretend to; and that therefore they are inexcusable, if they do not strive and endeavour to do it.

And,

(1) Did you never, when God hath shaken his rod over you, promise and resolve to work?

By his rod, I mean either some convictions or afflictions: have not these made you to enter into engagements with God, that you would obey him, and walk more holily and strictly for the future? And did you not really thus resolve to do? Few, I believe, there are, but have, some time or other, under some fit of sickness or some pang of conscience, thus done. And what! did you resolve all this; and yet, at the same time, think and believe you could do nothing at all? Did you only mock God? Did you only dally and play with your own consciences? No, certainly: conscience was too much provoked, too much enraged, and too broad awake, to be so jested withal. We find this very temper in the Israelites, when they were affrighted with the terrible voice of God from Mount Sinai, in the 5th of Deutronomy: see how confidently, under that conviction, they promise and resolve: *Speak thou unto us* what *the Lord our God shall* say *unto thee; and we will.....do it:* Deut. v. 27. and so the Jews also, when they were in great distress and calamity, when the whip and the rod was over them, then they took up large resolutions, and made great promises what they would be and do: *Whether it be good, or whether it be evil,* say they, *we will obey the voice of the Lord our God:* Jer. xlii. 6. And, oh, how many pious purposes and holy resolutions have the dangers, fears, and sick beds of many men been witnesses unto! have they not heard sinners cry out, "Lord, spare a little: give us

some space: try us once more, Lord; and we will reform our sinful lives, and perform neglected duties: never more will we return to folly." And are not these resolutions and promises evident convictions, that you thought you had power to do what you thus resolved to do? Who is there, but hath, some time or other, under some trouble and affliction, taken up such resolutions of obedience as these? And, certainly, you dare not so much mock God, and dally with your own consciences under such convictions, as to make such promises, but that you think you can perform what you promise.

And that is one argument.

(2) Did you never, in your whole lives perform a duty to God?

Did you never pray to him? Is there any one so desperately profane, so utterly lost as to any shews and appearances of goodness, as not to have prayed or performed one duty unto God in his whole life? To what end have you prayed and performed these duties, that you have done? Was it not for salvation? And did you work for salvation, and at the same time believe you could not work? No: it is impossible, that ever any man's practice should maintain such a contradiction. Whatever men's opinions are, yet their works shew that they think they have power: for, something must be done, though it be but formally; though but a slight, cold, heartless, "Lord, have mercy on me!" or a customary, "Lord, forgive me:" yet something conscience requires; and this men reckon and account the working out of salvation.

(3) Wherefore is it, that you trust to and rely upon your works, if indeed you think you have no power to work out your own salvation by them?

Would it be so hard and difficult to take men off from leaning too much upon their works, if they did not believe they had a power to work out their own salvation by them? Men do apprehend some worth, some value and sufficiency, in what themselves do in order to eternity. For, bid them forego and renounce their own works, their own righteousness, this is a hard saying; and they can as easily renounce and forego all hopes of happiness and salvation, as renounce their own works. Now, whence is it, that men are so difficultly brought unto the renouncing their own works? It is because, by them, they hope to obtain salvation. And can there be such a principle in men, and they yet at the same time believe and think that they cannot

work out their own salvation? It is very evident, therefore, whatever notions men may take up, to stop the mouth of a clamorous conscience when it calls them to working and labouring, that yet they do not themselves believe what they say concerning their impotency, but do really think they have a power to work out their own salvation.

(4) When the Spirit of God hath been dealing with your hearts and consciences, when it hath been persuading you to enter upon a course of obedience, did you never procrastinate and use delays?

Did you never stifle the breathings and resist the motions of the Holy Spirit, thinking it time enough to do what it puts you upon hereafter? "What need I begin so soon to vex flesh and blood? What! deny the pleasures of my life, as soon as I come to relish and taste them! When sickness and gray hairs admonish me, and tell me I am near eternity; when old age promiseth me, that the severity and strictness of religion shall not last long to trouble me; then, will I repent and believe, and work out my own salvation." Speak truly, and deal plainly with your own consciences: have not these been the foolish reasonings of your own hearts? have you not often thus promised God and your own consciences? and doth not all this imply, that you thought you had a power to do it? why did you delay and put it off, if you thought you had no power to do it at last? Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art that wilt not work: it is in vain to plead thou wantest power: God will confute thee by thyself, and out of thy own mouth. What! wilt thou say, thou hadst no power? why thou thoughtest that thou hadst power, and yet wouldst not work, nor endeavour so to do; and therefore thy ruin, if thou perishest, is as wilful, and thy condemnation will be as just, as if thou hadst power and wouldest not work.

And this is the Fourth Answer to this objection: men do really believe that they have power to work, and therefore they are inexcusable if they will not endeavour to put it forth.

Answ. 5. *Men will not plead so foolishly; no, not in matters of far lower concernment, than the salvation of their souls is.*

Would a master, when he commands his servant to work, take this as a sufficient excuse for his sloth and idleness, that he hath no power to work, till God acts and moves him? Why this is a truth, that he cannot do it unless God enable him; and, it may as well be objected by your servants to you, and with more rea-

son too, than by you unto God. Pray tell me, what power have I to speak one word, or you to hear one word more, unless God concurs to it? nay, we are not sufficient to think as of ourselves: yet we do not make this an excuse to forbear those actions, that are necessary. Do we therefore resolve to do nothing, because it is impossible for us to do any thing unless God concur? What stupid and dull folly is this! No: but we put it plainly and hourly to the trial: and never could any one produce that man, that could ever say, God was wanting to him in his concurrence, when he would have done an action. What a miserable ridiculous task would it be, if, in every action of our lives wherein we can do nothing without God, we should still be questioning God's concurrence with us! When you sit, do you dispute whether God will enable you to arise? when you walk, do you, every step you take, question whether God will concur to another step? no men put these things to the trial: and, though it be impossible that they should live, move, or stir, till God act and move them; yet this hinders not men's endeavours, no nor is it any matter of discouragement to them. Now why should we not do so in spirituals, as well as in temporals? are they not of greater concernment? do they not more deserve the trial? It is true, we can do nothing without God's concurrence; yet, let us put it to the trial, whether or no God will not concur when we endeavour. Certainly, that man must be for ever nameless that can say, he was truly willing and did sincerely endeavour to do any good thing, and God did not enable him.

Answ. 6. *Although wicked men had power to work out their salvation, yet they would never do it:* and therefore it is a vain and most unreasonable pretence for sloth, to plead want of power; for, had wicked men power, they would never obey.

"But how can any one tell that? What! not obey, if we had power!" No: and the reason is this: because there is no wicked man in the world, that hath done so much, or that doth so much, as he is able to do; no, not so much as he is able to do without special grace and assistance: and, therefore, it is not inability, but wilful sloth, that destroys men. Sinners, ask your own consciences these questions: Was there not one duty more that you could have performed? was there not one temptation, nor one corruption more, that you could have resisted? could you not have prayed, and read, and heard, and meditated more upon heavenly things; even then, when your hearts and thoughts

have been vain and worldly, yea sinful and devilish? might not that time have been spent in holy converse, that you have trifled away in idleness and in doing nothing, or that which is worse than nothing? What force, or restraint, is laid upon you? Is there any violence used to you? Can you not think? and, if you can, can you not think of God; as well as of the things of the world, or upon your lusts? Can you not speak? and, if you can, can you not speak of God, of heaven, and the concernments of another life; as well as of your trade, and bargainings, and other trivial matters, which are below a man, much more below a Christian? What force is there put upon sinners? doth the Devil screw open the drunkard's mouth; and pour down his intemperate cups, whether he will or no? doth the Devil violently move the black tongue of the blasphemer and swearer, to rend and tear the holy name of God, by horrid oaths and blasphemies? doth the Devil strike men dumb, when they should pray; or deaf, when they should hear; or senseless, when they should understand and ponder? Is there any such force or violence used unto any? Can you not avoid the one, and can you not do the other, if you will? You can: but, you will not; and therefore neither would you work out your own salvation, if you could do it. Is there any hope, that you would ever willingly do the greater, who will not do the less? Let your impotency and weakness be what it will, your damnation lies not upon it, but upon your wilfulness, so long as your wilfulness is greater than your weakness. No, it is not upon your impotency, that your precious and immortal souls perish eternally; but it is only for lack of a will, to pity them, and to save them. Sinners! wherefore then will you perish? why will you sleep away your souls into hell? will you go on drowsily to destruction? shall your souls be ready to burn as a brand in unquenchable fire, and will you not stretch forth your hand to snatch it out? is it more painful for you to work, than to be damned? Endeavour, therefore, to do what you can: labour and sweat at salvation, rather than fail of it: let it not grate and fret your consciences in hell, that you lie there for a wilful neglect.

"But, should I labour, should I endeavour, should I work to my utmost, should I do all that I am able to do, I cannot work grace in myself by all this: to what purpose, then, should I work?"

However, try God in this particular. Did you ever know any, who thus laboured and thus wrought, that did not give

very good evidence of a work of grace wrought upon their hearts? And why then should you suspect that you should be the first? What reason have you to think, that God should make you the first example of a soul, that did endeavour, strive, and work for salvation, and yet came short of it; when you never either heard or read of any, that put forth themselves to the utmost for the obtaining of grace, and yet fell short of grace or glory?

Thus, in these Six Particulars put together, you have a full and an abundant answer and satisfaction to this Objection, concerning our Impotency to work out our own Salvation.

Object. ii. Another Objection against this doctrine is this: "Thus to press men to obedience and working, is prejudicial and derogatory unto Christ's merits; by which alone we are saved, and not by our own works. Hath not Christ already done all for us? Hath he not finished and wrought out our salvation himself? And is not this, to render his work as insufficient, to go and piece it out by our obedience? Is not this, to set up our works as Antichrist, in flat opposition and defiance to the gracious undertaking and perfect accomplishment of Jesus Christ; when all, that we have now to do, is to believe in him, and to get a right and title to him and saving interest in him?"

To this I answer: The merit of Jesus Christ, and our working, are not inconsistent; but there is a sweet harmony and agreement betwixt them, in carrying on the work of our salvation.

And, to make this evident, I shall lay down the due bounds and limits of each of them; that so it may appear, what Christ hath done for us, and what he expects we should do for ourselves.

Christ, therefore, hath done Two things, in order to the carrying on of our salvation.

He hath purchased and procured Eternal Happiness, to be conferred upon us hereafter.

He hath merited Grace, to be conferred upon us here to prepare us for that happiness.

1. *He hath purchased Happiness and Eternal Life, for all that do believe in him. I give unto them eternal life*, says he

himself, John x. 28. And, says the Apostle, He is *the author o eternal salvation unto all them that obey him:* Heb. v. 9.

Now, as there are two things, that must be done for us, befor we can be brought unto a state of salvation; namely, a freein of us from our liableness unto death, and a bestowing upon u a right unto life eternal: so, Jesus Christ, that he might brin us into this state, hath performed both these things for us.

(1) He hath satisfied divine justice for us; snatching us fro under the vengeance of God; substituting himself in our roo and stead; bearing the load of all that wrath and punishmen that must otherwise have fallen insupportably heavy upon u *His soul*, says the Prophet, was made *an offering for sin:* Is liii. 10. And he was made *sin for us*, says the Apostle, that i he was punished as a sinner for us, *who knew no sin:* 2 Cor. v. 21

And,

(2) He hath perfectly fulfilled the commands of the Law, b his active obedience; so that the life, promised by God in th Law to the doers of it, doth now undoubtedly belong to a those, for whom Christ did obey the Law; that is, for all those that believe in him.

And, by both these, bearing the Penalty of the Law and fulfilling the Duties of the Law, God is atoned, justice is satisfied vengeance is pacified; and we are reconciled, adopted, an made heirs of glory according to the promise.

"But, what! shall glory and happiness be presently bestowe upon us? Shall we be installed into it, without any more cir cumstance? Must nothing intervene betwixt Christ's purchas and our actual possession?"

There must: for,

2. *Christ hath purchased Grace, to be bestowed upon them, upo whom he bestows salvation. When he ascended up on high, he le captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men:* Eph. iv. 8. anc among others, especially the gifts of grace. For, *of his fulnes* says the Apostle, *have we all received, and grace for grace* John i. 16.

And why did Christ make this purchase? why did he mer grace for us? was it not, that we might act it in obedience And, if Christ merited grace that we might obey, is it sense t object that our obedience is derogatory to Christ's merit? if on end of Christ's doing all that he did for us, was to enable us t do for ourselves, will any man say, "Now I am bound to d

nothing, because Christ hath done all?" How lost are such men, both to reason and religion, who undertake so to argue! No: salvation was purchased and grace was procured, that, by the acting and exercise of that grace, we might attain to that salvation; and both these are to be preserved entirely as things most sacred, ascribing them solely to the merits of our Saviour. So far are we from exhorting men to work out their salvation by way of merit and purchase, as that we conclude them guilty of the highest sacrilege and practical blasphemy against the priestly office of Jesus Christ, who think by their own works to merit the one or the other.

And, therefore, though Jesus Christ hath done thus much for us; yet, that he might leave us also some work to do, I shall now shew what he expects from us in order to the working out of our own salvation.

And, as he hath done Two things for us, so he requires Two things from us.

As,

He requires, that we should put forth all the strength and power of Nature, in labouring after grace.

And,

He requires that we should put forth the power of grace, in labouring for salvation, purchased for us.

(1) He requires, that all those, who are void of grace, should labour for it with that power and strength that they have.

And, in so doing, they do not at all intrench upon the work of Christ; neither is it at all derogatory to his merits. See how the Prophet expresseth this, Ezek. xviii. 31. *Make you a new heart and a new spirit:* he speaks to those, that were in a state of nature; and he bids them make them a new heart and a new spirit; *for why will ye die?* noting, that, if they did not labour after a new heart and a new spirit, they would certainly die the death. Let every sinner know, that this is it, that he is called upon for: this is that, which God expects from him: it is his work, to repent and return that he may live: it is his work, to labour to change his own heart, and to renew his own spirit. It is true, it is God's work also; for he hath promised to give a new heart and a new spirit: Ezek. xi. 19. and it is Christ's work also, as he is God; but yet it is not Christ's work, as a Mediator: and, therefore, to endeavour the working of a new heart in us, is not at all to intrench upon the mediatory office of

Jesus Christ; for, so, his office is not to work grace, but to procure it; not to implant grace, but to purchase it. You cannot, therefore, sit down and say, "What need is there of my working? Christ hath already done all my work for me, to my hands." No: Christ hath done his own work: he hath done the work of a Saviour and a Surety; but he never did the work of a Sinner. If Christ, by meriting grace, had bestowed it upon thee and wrought it in thee, then indeed there was no more required of thee to become holy, but to cast back a lazy look to the purchase of Jesus Christ: then, thy sloth would have had some pretence why thou dost not labour. But this will not do: our Saviour commands all men to *seek first the kingdom of God, and* the *righteousness* thereof: Mat. vi. 33. and the Apostle exhorts Simon Magus himself, though *in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity*, yet *pray*, says he, *if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee:* Acts viii. 22. do not, therefore, cheat your own souls into perdition, by lazy notions of Christ's merits. What though Christ hath merited, yet God requires that you should work and labour, to change your own hearts, and reform your own lives; but, if you sit still, expecting till the meriting grace of Christ drop down into your souls, of its own accord, and change your hearts; truly, it may be, before that time you yourselves may drop down into hell with your old unchanged hearts.

And this is the First thing, which Christ requires.

(2) Christ expects and requires, that those, that have grace should put forth the utmost strength and power thereof, in labouring after that salvation that he hath purchased for them.

He hath merited salvation for them, but it is to be obtained by them through their own labour and industry. Is not that, which Christ hath already done, sufficient for them? Is it not enough, that he hath reconciled them to God by the blood of the covenant? that he hath made their peace and procured their pardon for them? but must Christ repent, and believe, and obey for them? This is not to make him a Saviour, but a Drudge. He hath done what was meet and fit for a Mediator to do: he now requires of us what is meet for Sinners to do; namely, to believe, to repent, to be converted, and to obey: he now bids you wash and be clean. And what would you have more? would you have the Great Prophet come and strike off your leprosy, and you only mark the cure, and do nothing thereunto?

or, is it indeed enough, that salvation and happiness are purchased, that the way to heaven is made passable, that the bolts and bars of the New Jerusalem by Christ are broken off? Alas! what of all this! thou mayest still be as far from heaven and glory as ever, if thou dost not walk in the way that leads to it: still thou art as far from entering into heaven as ever, if thou dost not strive at the entrance into the strait gate. It is, therefore, in vain that Christ died, it is in vain that thou art justified, it is in vain that thou art adopted, it is in vain that heaven is prepared for thee: Christ may keep heaven, and glory, and his crowns, and robes for ever to himself; unless, as he hath purchased these great things for his people, so also he hath purchased to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works: a people, *who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and.....immortality*, and by that way obtain it. Thus we see that Christ's doing all for us, is no excuse for our doing nothing: he hath, indeed, done all for us that belongs to him, as a Mediator meriting and procuring grace and salvation; but he never intended to do all for us, as to the conveying of them to us and making them ours: no; that is still to be done by us: and, therefore, though Christ's works alone were meritorious, yet by the actings of faith we must apply his merit, and by the actings of obedience confirm them to our ourselves. I might add also, when Christ is said to obey the Law in our stead, as well as to suffer in our stead: though his bearing the punishment of the Law by death doth excuse and exempt us from suffering; yet his obeying the Law doth not excuse our obedience unto the Law: Christ obeyed the Law, in a far different respect to the obedience which is now required from us: he obeyed as a Covenant of Works; we, only as a Rule of Righteousness: if he had failed in the least tittle, he could not have purchased life that was promised; but we, though we fall infinitely short in our obedience, may yet inherit that life that Christ hath purchased: Christ's obedience was fully perfect, yet ours is not derogatory thereunto, because it proceeds from other grounds than Christ's did.

But I will not proceed further in this, only conclude this answer with Two practical things in reference to this question.

First. So work with earnestness, constancy, and unweariedness in well doing, as if thy works alone were able to justify and save thee.

Look, with what affection and fervency you would pray, if now God with a voice from heaven should tell you, that, for the next prayer you make, you should be either saved or damned: look, with what reverence and attention you would hear, with what spiritualness of heart you would meditate, if your eternal state and condition were to be determined and fixed by the next of those duties that in this kind you were to perform: with the same fervency, affection, and spiritualness perform all the obedience that you do. Why should you not do so? are not God's commands as peremptory and as authoritative for obedience under the Covenant of Grace, as they were under the Covenant of Works? is not obedience of as absolute necessity now as ever, though not to the same end and purpose? and, since the end of our obedience is graciously changed, doth not this change lay a farther obligation of gratitude upon us to obey God, who requires it from us, not as merit, but as duty? Still, there is as great an obligation to obey now under the condition of the Covenant of Grace, as ever there was while mankind stood under the tenor of the Covenant of Works. Certainly, Christ's merit was never given to slacken our obedience: and it is the most unworthy, nay it is the most accursed use, that any Christian can make of it, that therefrom he should take encouragement to grow more remiss and slack in obedience. Would you not thereby turn the grace of God into wantonness? Would you not abuse the infinite mercy of a Mediator? Think with yourselves; "How would I strive and struggle, were I to stand or fall upon the account of my own works and duties!" Use the same diligence, put forth the same endeavours, as indeed in that case you would do. And,

Secondly. So absolutely depend and rely upon the alone merits of Jesus Christ for your justification and salvation, as if you never had performed an act of obedience in all your life.

This is the right gospel-frame of obedience: so to work, as if you were only to be saved by your own merits; and, withal, so to rest on the merits of Christ, as if you had never wrought any thing. It is a difficult thing, to give to each of these its due, in our practice: when we work, we are too apt to neglect Christ; and, when we rely on Christ, we are too apt to neglect working. But, that Christian hath got the right skill and art of obedience, that can mingle these two together: that can, with one hand, work the works of God; and yet, at the same time,

with the other hand, lay fast hold on the merits of Jesus Christ. Let this Antinomian principle be for ever rooted out of the minds of men, that our working is derogatory to Christ's work. Never more think Christ hath done all your work for you; for that is unbecoming the free spirit of the Gospel: but labour for that salvation, that he hath purchased and merited. Could such senseless objections prevail with those men, who ever seriously read that scripture in Tit. ii. 14. *Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works?* were this place seriously pondered over by men, they would be ashamed to object any longer, that our duties and works are derogatory to the purchase of Christ; for he gave himself for this end, that he might purchase such a people, that might be zealous of good works. But, truly, when sloth and ignorance meet together, if you tell men what powers their natures have to work, and how necessary obedience is to salvation, that thereby you may excite and quicken their hearts to obedience; they, with the sluggard, fold their arms in their bosom, doing nothing, telling us these doctrines are Arminianism and flat Popery: whereas, in deed and in truth, they are as far distant from either of them, as light is from darkness: it is their ignorance and sloth only, that makes them think so. But, deceive not yourselves: this doctrine is such, that whether it take hold on your judgments and understandings now, I know not; but, this I know assuredly, it shall take hold of your consciences, either here or hereafter: and, then, it will not suffice you to make this excuse, either that you had no power to do any thing, or that Christ had already done all things for you.

And, so much, for the Second Objection.

Object. iii. Others may Object, that "This duty of working out our salvation, is inconsistent with, and prejudicial to, the freeness of God's grace, by which alone we are saved. If God save them only, that work for salvation; how then doth he save them freely, and how is it that by grace we are saved?"

In general, I answer: That salvation, upon our working and obedience, is free salvation: and that, for Four reasons.

1. Because *all our working is a natural duty, that we owe to God, as creatures to their Creator.*

Had God required the same things of us that now he doth, and never propounded a reward to encourage us, he had been just, and we had been as absolutely and as indispensibly obliged to obey as now we are. We have not so great a right to salvation, as God hath to our obedience. God can challenge our service and obedience from us, because of our natural bond and obligation; as well as from that voluntary covenant, whereinto we have entered with God to be obedient: but we can only plead for salvation, because God hath made a promise, that he will save those that obey. Whether God had made that promise or not, yet he might have required the same obedience from us that now he doth, because we owe it to him naturally by our creation. And is it not now free grace and mercy, that, when God might have required obedience without a reward, yet he will bestow salvation according to that obedience? See what our Saviour saith, in Luke xvii. 9, 10. *Doth* the master *thank* the *servant because he did the things that* he was *commanded* to do? *I trow not. So* even *ye likewise, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants;* for, when we have done all, *we have* but *done that which was our duty to do.* Yea, and our duty it was to do it, though God had never made a promise to reward what we have done: we are unprofitable servants, and deserve not so much as thanks: *Doth* the master *thank* the *servant because he did the things that were commanded? I trow not:* and, if we do not merit thanks when we have done our utmost, how then can we merit salvation?

2. Because *our obedience is imperfect in this life: it is full of cracks and flaws.*

And if, to accept and reward the most perfect obedience with salvation, be an act of mercy and free grace; as it is, because it is our duty if there were no salvation promised: how much more is free grace magnified and glorified, in accepting and rewarding a weak and imperfect obedience with that salvation, which the most perfect obedience cannot deserve! For, when we have done all, *we have done* but *that which was our duty to do:* and, if we could say so, doth the master thank the servant? No: But alas! *in many things we offend all.* Now to reward that with eternal salvation, that deserves eternal damnation; to re-

ward that work with life, that deserves to be rewarded with death; what is this, but the effect of rich and glorious grace? what is this, but to bestow heaven, not according to merit, but rather according to our demerit?

3. Because *there is no comparison betwixt salvation and our obediences; and, therefore, free grace shines forth still.*

It is free grace, though we do obey. We obey, as creatures: God rewards, as a God. Our obedience is temporal; but our reward is eternal. Our obedience is mixed with rebellion; but the reward hath no mixture to take off the fulness and sweetness of it. Therefore, it is free grace still, to give an infinite reward to so mean an obedience; betwixt which obedience and reward, there is no comparison nor proportion.

4. Because, *though we are commanded to obey, yet that grace, whereby we do obey, is the gift of God.*

It is he, that works in us this obedience, which he rewards with salvation. And must not this then be wholly of free grace? To save upon an obedience wrought in us by God himself, is to save altogether as freely as if we were saved without any obedience at all.

And, so much, in answer unto the Third Objection.

OBJECT. IV. Others may say, that "It is a vain and most needless thing, to press this doctrine of working for salvation upon us. What! we work! If we are elected to salvation, we shall be saved, whether we work or not: and, if we are not elected, all our working will be to no purpose, for we shall never be saved by it."

To this I answer: We are to look to God's commands; not to his decrees: to our duty; not to his purposes. The decrees of God are a vast ocean, whereinto many possibly may have curiously pried, to their own horror and despair; but few or none have ever pried into them, to their own satisfaction. This election, in particular, is not written in the plain word of God; but this duty is plainly written. If thou performest thy duty, thereby thou shalt come to know thy election. It is but a preposterous course, and that which will both discourage all endeavours and fill the soul with despair, to look first to God's decrees, and then to its own duty: whereas, indeed, the right method is, first to perform thy own duty, and thereby to be led into the knowledge of God's decrees. Question not, therefore, whether

thou art elected or not; but, first, work for salvation: and, if thy work be good and thy obedience true, thereby thou mayest come to a certain knowledge that thou art elected. And, know this also, farther; that God, who elects to the end, elects also to the means: now obedience is the means and way to salvation; and, therefore, if thou art elected to salvation, thou art also elected to obedience. Say not, therefore, "If I am elected, I shall be saved whether I work or not:" there is no such thing: I may boldly say, if thou art elected and dost not work, it is impossible that thy election should save thee. What says the Apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 13? *God hath chosen* us: there is election: *chosen* us *to salvation:* there is the end: but how? *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:* chosen us to salvation, as to the end; but it is not an end to be obtained without sanctification. There is, indeed, an absolute election to salvation, whereby God, without respect of works, hath chosen some to salvation: but there is no election to salvation absolute, whereby God hath chosen any to salvation without works; that is, whether they work or not. If, therefore, you believe heartily and obey sincerely, then your election to salvation stands firm. Nay, the Scripture makes election to be terminated, as well in obedience as salvation: *elect,* says the Apostle, *unto obedience, through sanctification of the Spirit:* in the former place it was, elect *to salvation, through sanctification;* but in this it is, *elect to obedience, through sanctification:* noting thus much to us, that none are elected to salvation, but those that are elected to obedience; and therefore it is unreasonable, yea it is contradictory, to say, "If I am elected, I shall be saved whether I obey or not," for none are thereunto elected but through obedience.

III. And now, having, as I hope, satisfactorily answered all objections and scruples, that may arise in the hearts of men against this doctrine, I proceed to PRESS THIS DUTY of working for salvation upon their consciences: and I shall do it in a USE OF EXHORTATION.

Be persuaded then, O Sinners! to cast off your sloth and laziness; and to rouse yourselves from that drowsy slumber that you have long lain in, and to work for salvation. But, truly, when I consider, how powerful an orator and how mighty a charmer sloth is;—how easily it can stupify and benumb reason,

and lull men asleep on the top of a mast and on the brink of hell;—and, though God and man call upon them, " Sinners, Sinners, bestir yourselves: work for your lives: you perish eternally, if you do not labour to lay hold on eternal life, for you are falling and hell-fire is under you: yet, when we call and cry thus earnestly, how easily a careless, yawning, wretched sinner can slight all these admonitions; baffle all these arguments, motives, and persuasions, though urged upon him with all vehemency and tenderness of affection; and turn about, like a man besotted, falling fast asleep again:—when I consider this, truly I am apt to conclude, that it is but a desperate attempt to press men any more against their natures; and against so many disadvantages, that can soon frustrate the efficacy of weaker words: and am ready to give over in despair, with that of the Prophet, *He, that* will be *righteous, let him be righteous still: and he, that* will be wicked, *let him be* wicked *still.* And, truly, were it not more for conscience of duty than for any hope of success, I would not speak one word more upon the subject: success, I mean, upon those, who are altogether carnal, whose hearts Satan hath filled, and whose ears Satan hath stopped; we may call long enough and loud enough, ere these men will awake; or, if they do sometimes give a look upwards, they soon close their eyes again and slumber away into destruction. And yet, truly, if variety of motives, if strength of arguments and persuasions would prevail, we might hope for this seldom-seen success.

Then let us consider these following particulars.

i. Consider, Sinners, you have A GREAT AND WEIGHTY WORK TO DO; and, therefore, it is time, yea high time, that you were up and doing.

Believe it, Sirs: God hath not placed you here in this world, as the Leviathan in the great waters, only to play and sport: were it so, you might take your ease, fold your arms in your bosoms, and follow your delights and pleasures; and let him be blamed, that ever should disturb or discourage you. I know not whether some may not think that we ministers are task-masters, and that we make more ado than needs. No, Sirs: it is God, that hath set you your work: we do only tell you how great it is, and of how great concernment it is to you that it be done. And, if you will not do it, who can help it? we have no scourges nor scorpions to drive you to your work; but God hath, to

punish you, if you neglect it. And why is it so generally neglected, but because men do not seriously consider how great it is? Most men acknowledge that it must be done; but, because they look upon it as that which may speedily and quickly be dispatched, they drive it before them from day to day, and think to huddle it up at the end of their lives: then, when they are fit for no other employment, and least of all fit for this employment, then they think to do the works of God.

I shall here lay down Three particulars, to convince sinners of the greatness of this work: and, because it is so great a work, it requires that they should presently, without delay, set upon it.

1. *It is a work, in which sinners must undo all, that they have wrought in their whole lives before.*

O Sinner, think: What hast thou been doing, this twenty, thirty, forty years, or more? hast thou not, instead of working out thine own salvation with fear and trembling, been working out thine own condemnation without fear or trembling? hast thou not been working the works of darkness? hast thou not been working the works of thy father the Devil, as our Saviour tells the Jews? Truly, this is not so much working, as making of work: all this must be undone again, or you yourselves must be for ever undone: you must unrip and unravel your whole lives, by a deep and bitter repentance: you are gone far in the way, that leads to death and destruction; and you must tread back every step, and at every step shed many tears, before ever you come into the way that leads to life and happiness. And is it not yet time to begin? can the work of so many years be undone, think you, in one moment? no: Sin and Satan make their works more durable and lasting, than to be so easily and speedily spoiled. It were the work of an age, yea of eternity itself, if possibly we could so spend it, rather than of a few faint late thoughts, to get an humiliation deep enough and sorrow sad enough, to bear any the least proportion to any the least sins that we have committed. Do not hope or think that your many great and sinful actions shall ever be blown away with a slight and general confession; or that ever they shall be washed away with a slight and overly repentance. What saith holy David? *Thou tellest my wanderings: put thou my tears into thy bottle:* Psal. lvi. 8: thou hast my wanderings, by number, but thou hast also my tears, by measure: there must be some proportion betwixt the humiliation and the sins: great sins call for great sorrow; and long continuance in sin requires a con-

tinued and prolonged repentance. Is it not then yet high time to begin? have you not already made work enough for your whole lives, should they be longer than they are like to be? Nay, and will not every day of your lives make work enough for itself? what says our Saviour? *Sufficient* for *the day is the evil thereof:* Mat. vi. 34: truly, the evil, that we every day commit, is sufficient work for the sorrow and repentance of that day to undo. Now, then, begin this undoing work: the longer you delay, still the more will lie upon your hands; still, the more sins you have to repent of. We already complain, that the work, which God hath set us, is too hard and too grievous; and yet, such foolish creatures are we, that we make it more and more difficult by our delays; adding to the strictness of God's commands, the necessity of a severe repentance. And therefore it is prudence, as well as duty, to begin this repenting, this undoing work betimes; that so, the greatness of the work, and the shortness of the time to do it in, may not at last dismay and confound us.

2. Consider *the great variety of duties, that must be gone through, in the working out of salvation;* and this will evince how great a work it is.

A Christian's work is a life full of actions and employments. There should be no gap nor void space at all in it; but all should be filled up with duties, ranked in their several orders; that, as soon as he passeth through one, he should enter upon another, that where one leaves him another may find him. Thus a Christian should go from one duty to another: from hearing the word, to meditation; from meditation, to prayer; from prayer, to the acting of grace: and, in all, there should be much striving and struggling with the heart, and much carefulness and circumspection over the way and life.

Now there are Four great and usual Duties, which every man hath to do; which are enough to fill up all the time of his life, were it stretched and tentered out to the end of our time.

(1) He is to get the truth and reality of grace wrought in him. This is his first and general work. And this will cost a man much sweat and anguish: for this, he must suffer many pangs and throes of the New Birth; and shall lie under many fears and jealousies, lest hypocrisy and presumption should cause him to mistake in a matter of such infinite concernment.

(2) He is to draw forth and to act this grace, when once it is wrought in him.

This is the next work of a true Christian; continually to ac faith, love, patience, humility, and to let all have their perfec work. And there is no moment of a man's life so idle, but al may administer some occasion or object for the exercise o grace.

(3) A Christian's next work is, continually to grow and increase in grace.

To *go from strength to strength:* to be *changed from glory t glory.* Still to be adding cubits to his spiritual stature, till he i grown to such a height and tallness in grace, that his head shal reach into heaven, and be crowned there in absolute perfection with a crown of glory and immortality. Here is that work, tha will keep you in employment all your days; and, if you car find one spare minute in your whole lives wherein you have no some duty to perform, then give over and sit still.

But, besides all this,

(4) Another work of a Christian is, earnestly to labour afte the evidence and assurance of grace in himself. *Give* all *diligence* says the Apostle, *to make your calling and election sure.*

Still, a Christian must be ascending: ascending, from a pro bable conjecture, to a good persuasion; from a good persuasion to a full assurance; from that, to a rejoicing with joy unspeak able and full of glory.

These are the general works, that should take up the lives o Christians: and to these are subservient almost an infinite numbe of particulars; some whereof are means whereby these gre things are obtained, others are concomitants or the effects an fruits of them: but I will not so much as mention any of the now.

For shame then, O Christians: since that your work is so grea why will you sit still, as if you knew not how to employ you selves? Besides, there is great variety in your work; and th usually breeds some kind of delight: you are not always to b toiling and drudging at the same thing; but, as bees fly fro one flower to another and suck sweetness from each of them, s should a Christian pass from one duty to another and draw fort the sweetness of communion with God from every one of them

3. To evince the greatness of this work, consider, *it is work, that must be carried on against many encounters and stron oppositions, that a Christian will certainly meet with.*

Within, are strong corruptions: without, are strong tempta tions. You have a treacherous and deceitful heart, within; an

this traitor holds intelligence and league with your great enemy, the Devil, without. You are sure to meet with difficulties, affronts, and discouragements, from a peevish ill-conditioned world in which you live. Never any yet could escape free to heaven, without meeting with these things. And doth not all this call upon you to work and strive for salvation? Is it a time to sit still, when you have all this opposition to break through; so many temptations to resist; so many corruptions to mortify; Satan, that *old serpent*, to repel, and make him become a flying serpent? Doth not all this require a morose constancy; and a kind of sour resolvedness to go through the ways of obedience, notwithstanding all opposition? These great things are not to be achieved, without great pains and labour. And, therefore, if you resolve to do no more than a few heartless wishes, no more than a few more heartless duties, will amount to, never raise your expectations so high as salvation: for, let me tell you, salvation will not be obtained at such a rate as this: no; there must be great strugglings and labour, with earnest contendings, if ever you intend to be saved.

And, thus much, for the First Argument, taken from the consideration of the Greatness of the Work: to work salvation out, is a great work and requireth great pains.

ii. But, lest the setting out of the greatness of this work should rather deter and fright men from it, than excite and quicken their endeavours to it, let me add a Second thing: and that is, to consider WHAT AN INFINITE, INCOMPARABLE MERCY IT IS, THAT GOD WILL ALLOW YOU TO WORK FOR YOUR LIVES; that he sets life and death before you, and gives them into your hands to take your choice.

If you will indulge your sloth, then you choose death; but life may be yours, if you will. It will, indeed, cost you much pains and labour; but, yet, it may be yours. And is it not infinite mercy, that salvation and happiness may be yours, though upon any terms?

Wicked men are apt to say, "Oh, how happy had we been, if God had never commanded us to work; if he had never required from us such harsh and difficult duties; if we were but once free from this hard task and heavy burden of obedience!" But, alas, foolish Sinners! they know not what they say: as

happy as they count this to be, yet, if God required no working from them, he should then shew them just so much mercy as he doth to the devils and damned spirits, and no more; from whom God requires no duty as well as from whom he receives no duty, and unto whom he intends no mercy.

You think it a hard restraint, possibly, to be kept under the strict commands of the Law: "Oh, that God required no such observances from us!" but what do you desire herein, but only the unhappy privilege of the damned; to be without law and without commands? But, should God send to the spirits now imprisoned, and declare to them that if they would work they should be saved, oh! how would they leap in their chains at such glad tidings; and count it part of salvation, that there was but a possibility of it! No, but God commands nothing from them, because he intends nothing but wrath upon them: he will not vouchsafe so much mercy to them, as to require those duties from them, that you repine and murmur at as grievous.

And, furthermore, consider this: if you do not now work, but perish under your sloth, in hell you will think it an infinite mercy if God would command you more rigid and severe obedience, than ever he commanded from you on earth. It would be a great mercy there, if it might be your duty to repent, and pray, and believe. Nay, you would count a command then, to be as comfortable as a promise; for, indeed, there is no command but connotes a promise. No: but these things shall not so much as be your duty in hell: for there you shall be freed for ever from this rigorous and dreadful law of God, that now you so much complain of and murmur against.

Oh! therefore be persuaded, while you are yet under the mercy of the Law, (give me leave to call it so) and while you have so many promises couched in every command, before God hath left off his merciful commanding, before the time of duty be expired, be persuaded to work. Delay not: you know not how long God will vouchsafe to require any thing from you; and, as soon as that ceaseth, truly you are in hell.

And this is the Second Argument to press this duty upon you. Work, and that speedily too. While you may work, there is hope, that, upon your working, you may be saved. And, therefore, while God calls upon you, and whilst he will accept of obedience from you, it is time for you to begin to work.

iii. Consider, WHAT A SHORT SCANTLING OF TIME IS ALLOWED YOU TO DO YOUR GREAT WORK IN.

And this I shall branch out into Two particulars.

1. Consider *how sad it will be for your time to be run out, before your great work be done.*

Alas! what are theescore years, if we were all sure to live so long, from the date of this present moment? How short a space is it, for us to do that in, which is of eternal concernment! and, yet, how few of us shall live to that, which we so improperly call old age! Our candle is lighted; and it is but small, at the best: and, to how many of us, is it already sunk in the socket, and brought to a snuff! and how soon the breath of God may blow it out, neither you nor I know. Night is hastening upon us: the grave expects us; and bids other corpses make room for us. Death is ready to grasp us in its cold arms, and to carry us before God's tribunal: and, alas! how little of our great work is done! What can any shew, that they have done? where are the actings of faith, the labours of love, the perfect works of patience? where are those graces, that are either begotten or increased? where are the corruptions, that you have mortified? These are works, that require ages to perform them in: and yet you neglect them, that have but a few days, nay possibly but a few minutes, to do them in.

"But what! Is God severe? Is God unjust, to require, so much work to be done in so little time?"

No: far be it from us to say thus. Though our work be great, yet our time is long enough to perform it in, if it were well improved. We do, indeed, consume away our precious days, and waste our life and light, exhaust our strength, and lay out our endeavours upon vanities and trifles, on nothing but emptiness and folly: and that life, which the Prophet tells us is but as a tale, truly we spend it as a dream: we sleep, and drowse, and suffer our precious minutes to run and waste away, doing nothing to any good purpose; till the night is shutting in, till the night of darkness comes upon us, and then the greatness of our work will confound us, and cause despair rather than excite endeavours. Have you never known any, who, at the close of their lives, having neglected their great work, have spent that little time, that they had then left them, in crying out for more time? and thus it may be with you also, if your consciences be not awakened sooner than by the pains and disquiets of a sick

bed: then, with horror, you may cry out, "More time Lord, more time." But it will not then be granted: the term is fixed: the last hour is struck: the last sand is run: and, as you and your work shall then be found, so you must go together into eternity. This is such a consideration, as must needs prevail with all men, if they would but lay it to heart: "My time is but short and momentary: I am but of yesterday; and, possibly, I may not be to-morrow; and God hath suspended eternity upon the improvement of this moment: a few hours will determine mine everlasting state and condition: according as these few are spent, so will my doom be; either for eternal happiness or for eternal misery; and why should my precious soul be so vile in my own eyes, as to lose it for ever through sloth and negligence? why should I hearken to the allurements of my own corruptions, or to the enticements and persuasions of Satan's temptations? No: stand off, for I am working for eternity; an eternity, that is but a few days hence; a boundless, a bottomless, an endless eternity, into which I know not how soon I may enter: and woe to me, yea a thousand woes to me, that ever I was born, if my great work be not done before the days of eternity come upon me." This is such a motive, as methinks should make every man, that hears it and hath but a sense what eternity is, presently to bestir and rouse up himself, and give God and his soul no rest till his immortal soul be secured, and well provided for, for eternity. To me, there is no greater argument of the witchcraft and sorcery, that Sin and Satan use to besot the reason and judgment of rational creatures, than that men can hear of such truths, truths that are not to be denied or doubted of, and yet live at such a rate as they do: so vainly, so fruitlessly, so lazily, so securely and presumptuously; as if their eternity were to be expected and enjoyed here, or that there were none to come hereafter.

2. The consideration of the shortness of our life, may serve as *a great encouragement to work.*

The consideration of the burthensomness and trouble of working for salvation may, doubtless, fright many from engaging therein. Oh! it is a work very painful and laborious: and this discourageth them. But know, O Sinner! though it be grievous, yet it is but short work: it is to last no longer, than our frail, short life doth last. And, oh! how unseasonable is it to complain, as most do of our work, as being too long and too tedious; and of our lives, as being too short and brittle! for our work is to be no longer than our lives. A child of God doth not,

at least he should not, desire to live longer than his great work is done: and, truly, when it is finished, it is a great piece of self-denial in him, to be content to abide here in this world any longer: and, in the mean while, this may support him, that it shall not be long, that he shall thus wrestle with temptations, and thus struggle with corruptions: Death will come in to his help, and put an end to his toil and labour; and, though he brings a dart in one hand, yet he brings a reward and wages in the other hand: and this may be his great encouragement.

iv. My next argument, to press this duty of working out our own salvation, shall consist of THREE OR FOUR GRADATIONS.

And,

1. *We are all of us very busy, active creatures.*

The frame and constitution of our natures is such, as we must be working some work or other: and, therefore, since we must be working, why should we not work the works of God? We do not simply exhort sinners to work: neither, indeed, need we: you have active faculties and stirring principles within you, that must and will be still in employment; and, when your hands cease, yet then your hearts and thoughts are at work: your whole lives are nothing but actions; yea, when your thoughts themselves are most unbent and most remiss, when they are most vanishing and glimmering, so that yourselves scarce know what they are, yet then are they visibly working, though you perceive it not. Now, what is it, that God requires of you? it is not, that you should be more employed than you are, that you should do more than you do; for that is impossible, because you never are idle, doing nothing: but it is, that what you do, should be done in order unto heaven and salvation. And how reasonable is such a command as this! it is not more work, that God expects from you; only other work: your thoughts need not be more than they are; but they must be more spiritual than they are: your desires no more; but only more gracious: your actions no more; but only they must be more holy than now they are. Let but grace regulate what nature doth, and the art of working out your salvation is attained. The wheels of a watch move as fast and as quick, when it goes false as when it goes true; and, if the watch be but at first set right and true, the same activity, that makes it go false, will make the motions go right and orderly. Truly, you yourselves are like

your watches: your faculties are the wheels of your souls; and they move and click as fast, when they go false, as when they go right; and, if grace doth but once set them right, the same activity of nature that makes them work falsely and go amiss, will also continue their motion orderly and regularly, when once they are set right. Well, then, whatever your trade be, whether it be a trade of sin, or whether it be a trade of holiness, you must be working at it. And, let me tell you, religion and holiness are so far from increasing your work, that they rather lessen and contract it: what says our Saviour? *Martha, Martha, thou art careful.....about many things: But one thing is necessary:* Luke x. 41, 42. so may I say: Sinners, you are careful, and busy yourselves about many things; but there is but one thing, that is necessary: many things, indeed, you trouble yourselves with: the cares of the world, the temptations of Satan, the corruptions of your own hearts, these distract you; yea, very trifles and impertinencies themselves give you full employment: this lust storms and rages; that lust flatters and entices: this is impetuous; that is insinuating: the one impels; the other allures: and, it may be, after all, conscience begins to grow terrible; giving the sinner no quiet in doing that, which lust would let him have no rest till he had done; so that, betwixt them, of all men's lives in the world, his is the most toilsome and vexatious.

Since, then, you can save no labour by being as you are, why will you not change your work? you are now in constant employment as you are, and no more is required of you in the ways of obedience. Nay, you are now divided, distracted, and and even torne in pieces, betwixt divers lusts and pleasures; all which cry Give, Give, and all are eager and importunate, so that you know not which to turn to first: but, in working for salvation, your employment is but the one thing necessary, which though indeed it calls for the same endeavours and industry which now you use in the service of sin, yet, by reason of its uniformity, is less distractive and less cumbersome.

And that is the First Gradation.

2. *You must work either in God's service, or in the Devil's drudgery.*

And choose you whether you would rather be Satan's slaves, or God's servants. Nay, indeed, choose whether? is it a matter of choice with men, who have rational and immortal souls? do you not all profess yourselves to be the servants of the Living God? do you not all wear his livery? would not the vilest and

most profligate sinner willingly lurk under the name and badge of a Christian; and count it a great wrong done him, should say so mush as doubt of his salvation? and wherefore is this, but because they are ashamed of their service, and of their own black master? But, alas! it is in vain to renounce him in words: for, if your works be not for God, if they be not such as religion exacts, as the Holy Ghost inspires, as grace performs, and as salvation calls for from you, his slaves you are; and, though you profess to deny him, yet in your works you own him.

3. *If you work for Satan, you do but work for your own damnation.*

For work, you must and will: and this is all the reward and wages, that you can justly expect from the service of Sin and Satan; and, of this, a just God and a malicious Devil will look that you shall not be defrauded: but, as your Ephah hath been full of iniquity and abominations, so shall your cup be full of wrath and indignation. Think, O Sinner, think how these masters, whom thou now servest, will in hell insult over thee and upbraid thee: "Is this he, our faithful and industrious servant? He, who preferred our misery, before his own happiness? whose precious soul was not precious to him for our sakes? And is he now come, whither his ways led him? Prepare a place quickly for him. Let his darkness be horrid and dismal: his works were so. Let his chains be strong and massy: the bonds of his iniquities were so. Let his unquenchable fire be piercing and vehement: let his torment be next unto my own." This, this will be the insulting of your Master then. O Sinners, consider! is this the reward and preferment, that you work for? "God forbid! mercy prevent!" you will say: nay, believe it, mercy will not prevent, God will not forbid, unless you yourselves labour to prevent it: all this must be your condemnation, as unavoidably as if God had no such attribute of mercy belonging to his nature. This sinners know, and are persuaded of the truth of, unless they are Atheists. And, if you are, truly it will not be long before your own sense and feeling will convince you of the truth of these things, to your eternal grief and sorrow. And, if you do believe this, why do you not rouse up yourselves and fall to work? if you are resolved for hell, for a foreseen and forewarned hell, who then can stop you? And, unless you are resolved for hell, methinks I might have done, and need proceed no further. Tell me, therefore, O Sinners, are you not all persuaded by these terrors? will you not

from this moment labour, struggle, and strive; and take any pains in the ways of obedience, rather than ruin your own souls, and thrust them down into the pit of destruction? I might be confident sinners thus resolve to do, were I speaking now to men that were themselves: but men's reasons are besotted; and their ears are open only to the Devil, and to the base allurements of the flesh: and, when we have done our utmost in persuading sinners, in the end we must turn our exhortations to them into prayers to God for them, that he would snatch them as brands out of the fire and burning, into which they, like drunken men, are casting themselves and in which they are lying down.

4. Once more: *The same pains, that possibly some take to damn their own souls, might suffice eternally to save them.*

The same toil and labour, that some undergo for hell and destruction, might have brought them to heaven and happiness had it been but that way laid out. The Prophet tells us of some, *that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope:* Isa. v. 18. that is, they are so enslaved to the work of the Devil, that he puts them into his team, and makes them draw and strain for their iniquities; and he doth them a courtesy when their sins come easily to them, for so the phrase imports. And we read of some in another Prophet, that sin *with both hands greedily:* Mic. vii. 3. And the Psalmist tells us of those, that devise mischief upon their beds, and that travail with iniquity: Ps. xxxvi. 4. vii. 14: that is; they are in as much pain and torment till their wicked designs be accomplished, as a woman in travail is till she be delivered. Sinners, since the work of sin is so toilsome, why will you not *work the works of God?* Doth that salvation, that follows obedience, fright you; or is heaven and glory become terrible to you? Is not this it, that all men desire? do not your hearts leap at the mention of it? What then is it, that any rational man can pretend, why he will not work? is it because you are loth to take pains? why then are you so laborious in sinning? why do you so sweat and toil in carrying faggots to your own fire? why are you continually blowing up those flames, that shall for ever burn you? It is in vain to plead this any longer, that you are loth to take pains: for, where are there greater drudges in all the world, than sinners? the Devil can scarce find them work enough: they out-sin his temptations; and, had they not that corruption within, the scum whereof is continually boiling up in them, they mus

of necessity, I was going to say, sometimes be holy, for want of employment: Satan could not find them work enough. How restless and impatient are they, till they have done some wicked work! and, sometimes, they are more restless and impatient when they have done it, through the Devil's temptations; and, yet, notwithstanding these torments, they will do them again. Are there more drudges in the world than these? Doth God require more pains in his service, than these men take? no: he doth not: would but men do as much for their precious souls, as they do against them; would they do as much to save them, as they do to destroy and damn them; truly, their salvation would not lie upon their hands unwrought.

But some may say in their hearts, "It is true, indeed, we are convinced, that the work of sin is laborious; but, yet, there is pleasure in that labour: but to the works of obedience we find reluctancy; and, to struggle against that, is exceeding irksome and grievous: and, therefore, we cannot work."

But is it so, indeed? Is it all peace and tranquillity with you, when you sin? Are your consciences so utterly seared, as that they make no reluctancy, give you no checks or reproofs, when you sin? If they do, put that reluctancy of natural conscience against sin, into the balance with the reluctancy of natural corruption against obedience; and the most profligate sinner in the world shall find, though this is more strong and prevalent, yet that is more vexatious and tormenting. God requires no more labour from you, than you now take: nay, this labour shall not put you to so much torment, as sometimes you now feel: the same labour, with more content and satisfaction, may perfect your salvation, that now tends only to consummate your destruction. What madness then is it, for men not to be persuaded to work the works of God, when it will cost them less pains; I mean, less tormenting pains! You wear your lives in the service of sin; and, at the end of your days, you go down to hell; when, with as much ease, you might inherit life and glory, as you thus purchase hell and destruction. And is not this great folly and madness?

Bring, then, all these Four Gradations together, and look upon them all at once; and we shall find the argument so strong, as that nothing can resist it, but the perverse reasonings of men's own wills: you will not, because you will not:—You must work. If you work not in God's service, you will work in

the Devil's drudgery:—If you work Satan's work, you must receive Satan's wages; which is the reward of eternal damnation. And the same labour, that you take to damn your own souls, might suffice to save them. Wherefore then shall not God employ you, as well as the Devil? Hath he not more right to you? Why should you not work out your own happiness, as well as work out your own misery? Doth it not concern you more? If men would but set their reason on work in this particular, if they would but shew themselves to be men, they would soon set grace on work and shew themselves to be Christians also. It is but turning the streams of your actions into the right channel, and the work is done: since that will incessantly flow from you, why should they all fall like Jordan into the Dead Sea, when they might as well run into the infinite ocean of all happiness, and carry your souls along with them also?

But,

v. Consider this also: THE DEVIL WORKS CONSTANTLY AND INDUSTRIOUSLY FOR YOUR DESTRUCTION. And will not you much more work for your own salvation?

See the place of the Apostle, 1 Pet. v. 8. He *walketh about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* And, therefore, when God questions him, *Whence comest thou,* Satan? he answers, *From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it:* Job i. 7. What pains doth he take, to prompt men with temptations! to suit objects and occasions to their corruptions! Still, he is at their right-hand, laying snares and traps for them, that they may fall as his prey. And wherefore makes he all this ado? is it not to satisfy his malice and hatred against men's souls? And shall malice and rancour make the Devil so laborious and unwearied to destroy souls, and shall not your own happiness and salvation make you much more diligent to save your souls? Is the Devil more concerned in your ruin, than you yourselves are in your own salvation? Shall the death of your souls be more dear to him, than the life of your souls is to yourselves? Learn from Satan himself, how to rate and value your own souls: did not he know them to be exceeding precious, he would never take so much pains to get them; and did you but know how precious they are, certainly you would never lose them so contentedly. Let the Devil, if you will

learn no otherwise, teach you the worth of your precious souls: and, since he thinks no pains too much to ruin them, why should you think any pains or labour too much to save them?

vi. Consider: YOU YOURSELVES DO LABOUR AND TAKE PAINS, IN THINGS OF FAR LOWER AND LESSER CONCERNMENT, THAN THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS.

Men can rise up early and go to bed late, eat the bread of carefulness, and all to get some little inconsiderable piece of this world, to provide for a frail, short life here: and who is there, that thinks his pains too much? And why, then, should you not labour for a future life in another world, that you confess to be infinitely more glorious and desirable than any thing you can obtain here? To me, it is folly, so gross and senseless as to be bemoaned, if it were possible, with tears of blood, that men should so toil for the low conveniences of the world, and yet neglect the eternal happiness of their precious and immortal souls, as if they were not worth the looking after. Sinners, do you know what a vain, empty bubble, blown up by the creating breath of the Almighty, the world is? do you know it, and yet will you take pains for it, yet will you grasp and catch at it? Who would doubt, when we see men so busy about impertinencies, and the trivial concernments of this vain world; who would doubt, but that they were far more anxious and careful about the things of heaven, and the concernments of their souls? who would not conclude, but that they, who are so diligent about petty trifles, had certainly made sure that their great work was done? But, alas! would it not astonish men and angels, if we should tell them how foolish sinners are? would it be believed, that rational creatures, who have immortal souls that must be for ever saved or damned, should spend all their time and strength about nothing; never taking any care or thought what will become of them for ever? would such folly be believed to be in men? And yet this madness are most men guilty of. We may all of us be ashamed to lift up our heads to God, when we confess the world to be so vain and slight a thing, that if we should get all of it, nay should we get ten thousand of them, yet were they not all worth one soul; that, yet, we should be so foolish as to strive to get a vain world, to the neglect, yea to the contempt, of our precious souls. It is such folly, as men would scarce suspect that any persons should be guilty of, if it were not seen daily in the practices of almost all men.

vii. Consider this: ARE YOU AMBITIOUS? DO YOU AFFECT TRUE HONOUR AND DIGNITY?

Yes, I know this is the great idol of the world: that, which every one falls down to and worships. Well then, Sinners, here is a way to prefer you all. To work for salvation, is the most honourable employment in the world; an honour, that will pose and nonplus the most towering and raised ambition, when once it is spiritualized. Alas! what poor and contemptible things are the grandees and great ones of the world! though they take great state and pomp upon them, and will scarce own their inferiors for their fellow-creatures, nay will scarce own God himself for their superior; yet are they but like painted flies, that play and buzz awhile in the sunshine, and then moulder away and come to nothing! All worldly honour and pomp is but imaginary. But would you have that, which is solid and substantial? Christ tells you how it is to be attained: *If any man serve me, him will my Father honour:* John xii. 26. Whatever honour we have, we hold it by service: our work is not only duty, but preferment also: *If any man serve me,* he shall be honoured. Would you be enrolled for Right Honourable in heaven's treasury? would you be Peers of that kingdom, with Saints and glorified Angels? then honour God. And how shall you honour him, but by obeying him? and him, who thus honours God, God will honour. This is the only real honour: all other is but airy, fictitious titles; like cyphers, which, as they are placed, stand for hundreds and thousands, but are all of the same value when huddled together. So, truly, the great ones of the world, if not made honourable by obedience to God have but imaginary excellence; and, when death once shuffles and huddles them together, nobles with ignobles, will the dust and ashes of the one stand at a distance and make obeisance to the other? No: all honour here signifies no more than a king upon a stage. But, here, is a way to attain true honour; here, is the way to it, by becoming servants; not to command, but to obey; not to be imperious over others, but to work yourselves. This is true honour.

Now I shall, in Three things, demonstrate the honour of working for salvation; that, if men be not very lowly spirited, they may be excited unto this honourable work.

1. *It is pure, spiritual, refined work.*

In services among men, the less of filth and drudgery there is in them, the more creditable they are accounted. It is an

honour to be employed in higher and more cleanly work, when others are busied about baser employments. Christians, your work is the highest and most noble service imaginable: you are not at all to set your hands to any foul office: you have nothing to do with that mire and sink, in which wicked men are raking; yea, and it is their work to do it: no; but your work is all spiritual, consisting of the same pure employment that the angels in heaven spend their eternity about. Holy thoughts, divine affections, heavenly meditations, spiritual duties, in these lies your work; which, because of its purity, is therefore very honourable.

2. Your work is honourable, because *it is the Service of a most Honourable Master.*

We account it a great credit, to tend immediately upon the person of some prince or potentate: but what is this, to their honour, who are called always to attend upon the person of God himself, who is *King of Kings and Lord of Lords;* to be continual waiters about his throne? God hath but two thrones: his throne of glory in the highest heavens, about which angels and glorified saints are the attendants; and his throne of grace, to which you are called. Angels and saints are but your fellow-attendants: and, if they see his glory in the highest exaltation, you are admitted to see it in the next degree. Yea, and herein is your honour so great, that you are capable but of one preferment more; and that is, of being removed from one throne to the other, from attending upon the throne of grace to attend upon the throne of glory: so great is your honour.

3. *Your work is such, as makes you, not so much Servants, as Friends unto God.*

It is an honour to be servant unto a king; but, much more, of a servant, to become a favourite. Thus it is in the service of God. You are not only servants, but friends and favourites. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you:* a strange speech! one would think the doing of what is commanded, is the office of a servant, rather than of a friend: no, says Christ: *Henceforth I call you not servants.....but.....friends: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* And, certainly, no title so glorious, as that, which God put upon Abraham, to be *the friend of God.* Well, then, let wicked men go on scoffing and mocking at obedience in the people of God, let them look on them as poor and low spirited persons; yet can there be no honour like unto theirs, to be attendants upon, yea the friends

of, the Great God of Heaven: and there can be no discredit so base as theirs, who are slaves to the Devil, who is God's slave; to be a slave unto the Devil, whom the people of God have in part subdued and overcome, and over whom they shall shortly at once perfectly triumph.

IV. Having thus, by several arguments, pressed this great duty of working out our own salvation, I should now proceed to some other things that are necessary to be spoken unto from this doctrine. But because this is a duty of so vast importance, and of so universal concernment; and the slothfulness and backwardness of many so great, and, if persisted in, will be so ruinous and destructive, I SHALL FURTHER URGE THE PRACTICE OF THIS DUTY upon the consciences of sinners, by these following CONSIDERATIONS.

i. THIS WORKING FOR SALVATION IS THE MOST DELIGHTFUL WORK AND EMPLOYMENT THAT A CHRISTIAN CAN BE ENGAGED IN.

What is it, that makes the whole world so busy in the service of Sin and Satan, but only pleasure, which they either find or imagine? The Devil baits all his temptations with this enticing witchcraft, which the world calls pleasure; and this is that, which makes them so successful. But, hath the Devil engrossed all pleasure unto his service? Can the ways of God promise no delight? Are they only rough and rugged ways? David certainly thought otherwise, when, speaking of the commandments of God, he tells us, they were *sweeter than the honey and the honey-comb:* Ps. xix. 10: he could squeeze honey out of them: it is an expression, that sets forth the exceeding pleasantness and delight, that are to be found in the ways of obedience. And, truly, the whole Book of Psalms is abundantly copious, in setting forth that delight, that is to be found in the ways of God. Ask, therefore, the children of God, who are the only sufficient judges in this matter, and they will tell you with one consent, that they know no delight on earth comparable to that delight that is to be found in obedience. Indeed, if you are only taken with a soft, luxurious, washy pleasure; this is not to be found in the ways of holiness: but, if a severe delight can affect you, a delight that shall not effeminate but ennoble you; if you desire a masculine, rational, vigorous pleasure and delight; you need not seek any further for it, than in the ways of obedience.

There are Two things, that make this working for salvation to be so pleasant: the suitableness of this work to the agent or worker, and the visible success and progress of the work itself: and both these make the working out of salvation exceedingly pleasant and delightful to the people of God.

1. *It is a work Suited to their Natures;* and that makes it pleasant.

As Jesus Christ had, in a physical sense, so every Christian hath, in a moral sense, two natures in one person. There is the divine nature, or the nature of God; and there is the human, corrupt nature, the nature of sinful man. And each of these has inclinations suited unto it: there is the carnal part, and that is too apt to be seduced and drawn away with the pleasures of sin, that are objects proportioned to the carnal part; but then there is also a divine, and, if I may so call it, a supernatural nature, imprinted by regeneration, that only doth relish heavenly and spiritual things: so that it is not more natural to a godly man, by reason of the propensions of the old nature, to sin against God; than it is natural to him, by reason of the propensions of the new nature, to obey and serve God. Now when nature acts suitably to its own sway and *pondus*, this must needs cause two things: first, facility and easiness; secondly, delight and complacency. Streams flow from the fountain with ease, because they take but their natural course: so the works of obedience flow easily from that fountain-principle of grace that is broken up in the hearts of the children of God, because they flow naturally from them; and, therefore, because nature makes things easy, that easiness will make them pleasant and delightful. It is true, indeed, when they work, there is an opposition and reluctancy from their other contrary nature; for, as they act suitably to the one, so they act quite contrary to the other nature: but doth not the gracious and new nature as strongly wrestle against and oppose the workings and eruptions of the old nature, as the old doth the workings of the new? It doth: and therefore you, that are truly regenerate, never sin because of the easiness of it, because of its suitableness, because you must offer violence to your nature if you resist a temptation: do you not offer violence to your nature, if you close with that temptation? You are not all of one piece, if I may so speak, if you are regenerate. And what! must the corrupt part only be indulged and gratified, and must the renewed part be always opposed? Why should not grace, since it

is as much, nay more yourself than sin is, why should not that have the same scope and liberty to act freely as sin doth? Truly, these things are riddles to wicked men; and they are unfit judges in this case: they wonder what we mean, when we speak of easiness and delight in ways of obedience, which they never found to be otherwise than the most burthensome thing in the world. And, truly, it is no wonder; for they have no principle suited to these things: they are made up only of the old nature, that is as contrary and repugnant to them as darkness is to light. But, if once God renew and sanctify them, then they will confess as we do, that the works of God have more easiness in them than the generality of the world do imagine. And therefore St. Paul tells us, that he delighted *in the law of God after the inward man:* Rom. vii. 22. But why after the inward man, but because, though his corrupt part was contrary thereunto, yet his renewed part, which he calls his inward man, was suited to the duties of the Law of God, and carried him out as naturally to obedience as the spark flies upward? And, hence it is, that the children of God delight in the ways of obedience, because they suit with their new nature that is implanted in them.

2. Another thing, that makes working for salvation so delightful is, *that Visible Success, that the children of God gain; and that Visible Progress, that they make in this work.*

Nothing doth usually cause greater delight in work, than to see some riddance in it; and that we are like, at length, to bring it to some issue. So, truly, this is that, which mightily delights the children of God: to see that their work goes forward; that their graces thrive; that their corruptions pine and consume away; that they are much nearer salvation, than when they first believed; that they are perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and every day growing nearer unto heaven and happiness than other; and that, though these works of theirs are now imperfect, yet they shall be shortly finished and consummate in glory.

Well, then, if pleasure and delight do affect you, here you see is that, which is solid and substantial: it springs from success in your work, and from that suitableness that is in your renewed part thereunto. And, therefore, the more work, the greater delight you find; because the greater progress you make, and the more suitable to it your will becomes. Nay, your delight is of the same nature with that, which you shall enjoy in heaven. The work, in which the blessed are there employed, is of the

same nature with yours: only, their suitableness to it is perfect, and therefore their delight and pleasure is perfect: and, accordingly, the more suitable your hearts are to your work, the more delight and pleasure you will find in it. This is that, which makes heaven a place of happiness, because there is no corruption, no body of sin and death there, to make those duties, that are there required from glorified saints, to be irksome and grievous to them.

ii. Consider THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF YOUR REWARD.

Doth Job fear God for nought? was the cavil of Satan, when God applauded himself that he had such a servant as Job was upon the earth. The Devil himself thought it no wonder, that Job should fear and serve a rewarding God; a God, whose hands are as full of blessings, as his mouth is full of commands. And, yet, what were these great somethings, that the Devil envies Job for; and thinks every one would have done as much as he, if they had but as great a recompence for it? it was but hedging him about, but blessing the works of his hands, and increasing his substance; as it is in Job i. 10. Alas! these are poor, mean rewards, to what God intends to bestow: such rewards they are, as that God still reckons himself in arrears to his children, till he hath given them something better than he can bestow upon them here upon earth: these things he casts but as crumbs unto dogs; when he reserves a far better portion for his children. And yet Satan thinks Job well paid for his service, in having these lower enjoyments, in causing the works of his hands to prosper: *Doth Job* serve *God for nought?* And, therefore, if Satan doth not wonder that Job fears and serves God for temporal mercies, will it not be to the great wonder of Satan himself that you should not fear and serve God, who have infinitely better things promised to you than temporal mercies are? Do you deserve your breath, in spending of it some few hours in prayer? or, do you deserve your plentiful estate, by laying out some small part of it for God? Why, to be able to think or speak, to enjoy health and strength, are such mercies, though outward mercies, as can never be recompensed to God; although you should think of nothing but of his glory, and speak of nothing but of his praise; although you should impair your health and waste your strength, and languish away in the performance of holy duties. These, though they are obligations to obedience, yet they are not the reward of obedience: no; far higher and more glorious things

are provided, promised, and shall be conferred upon you, if you will but work.

For there are, first, your set standing Wages; and that is eternal salvation; no less. And, secondly, besides this, many incident Vails accrue to God's servants, in their performance of his service. And are not here reward and wages enough?

1. *There is that Eternal Weight of Glory, that shall be the Reward of the Saints in Heaven.*

This is so great, that it is impossible for you to conceive it. It is such, as *Eye hath not seen, nor* hath *ear heard*, nor hath it ever *entered into*, no nor can it ever enter into, *the heart of man* to conceive what *God hath prepared for them that love him*; as the Apostle speaks.

If St. Paul were now preaching, and pressing this very consideration of the infinite, glorious reward, it would possibly be expected, that he, who suffered a translation, and was admitted as a Spy into the Land of Promise, should, at his return, make some relation of it, and discover something of the riches and glory of that place: and would not all flock about him, as men do about travellers, to enquire for a description of the country whence they come? "Who are the people and inhabitants? What are their manners and customs? What is their employment? Who is their king, and what subjection do they yield unto him?" Thus inquisitive, truly, our curiosity would be. And, yet, when St. Paul purposely relates his voyage to the other world, all that he speaks of it is only this, *I knew a man....caught up into paradise*, who *heard* things, that no man could, nor is it *lawful for* any *man to utter*.

The glory of heaven is such, that it can never be fully known, till it be fully enjoyed. And, yet, if heaven were ever made crystally transparent to you, if ever God opened you a window into it and then opened the eye of your faith to look in by that window, think what it was that you there discovered, what inaccessible light, what cherishing love, what daunting majesty, what infinite purity, what over-loading joy, what insupportable and sinking glory, what rays and sparklings from crowns and sceptres; but more, from the glances and smiles of God upon the heavenly host, who for ever warm and sun themselves in his presence: and, when you have thought all this, then think once again that all your thoughts are but shadows and glimmerings, that there is dust and ashes in the eye of your faith that makes all these discoveries come infinitely short of the native glory of

these things; and then you may guess, and guess somewhat near what heaven is.

Nay, as God, by reason of his infinite glory, is better known to us by negatives, than by affirmatives; by what he is not, than by what he is: so is heaven, by reason of the greatness of its glory, better known to us by what it is not, than by what it is: and we may best conceive of it, when it is told us, there is nothing there, that may affright or afflict us; nothing, that may grieve or trouble us; nothing, that may molest or disquiet us; but we shall have the highest and sweetest delight and satisfaction, that the vast and capacious soul of man can either receive or imagine. Are you now burdened with sin and corruption; those infirmities, that though they are unavoidable, yet make your lives a burden to you? there, the old man shall never more molest you: that body of sin and death shall never enter with you into life: the motions of sin shall for ever cease in that eternal rest. Are you here oppressed with sorrows? do afflictions overwhelm you? there, God shall kiss your blubbered eyes dry again, and wipe with his own hands all tears from your eyes. Are you pestered here with temptations; and doth the Evil One, without intermission, haunt you with black and hellish thoughts, with dreadful and horrible injections? there, you shall be quite beyond the cast of all his fiery darts; and, instead of these, you shall have within you an ever-living fountain, bubbling up spiritual and sprightly contemplations and holy raptures for ever, such as you never knew when you were here upon earth, no not when you were in the most spiritual and heavenly frame. Are you here clouded and cast down with desertions; and doth God sometimes hide his face from you in displeasure? in heaven, there shall be an everlasting sunshine: God shall look freely and stedfastly upon you; and you shall nc more see him *through a glass darkly, but face to face*, without any interruption or obscurity.

Think, O Soul, and then think of any thing else if thou canst, "What is it, to see *the Father of Lights* in his own rays? What is it, to see *the Sun of Righteousness* lie in the bosom of *the Father of Lights?* What is it, to feel the eternal warmth and influence of the Holy Ghost, springing from both these lights? What is it, to converse with holy angels and *the spirits of just men made perfect;* to join with them in singing the same hallelujahs for ever?" And, when you have thought all this, think once more, "Heaven is all this, and more also."

Well, then, since heaven is such, and since such a heaven i this is may be yours, what should I say more, but only, with th Apostle, *Having these promises, dearly beloved,* promises of s certain and vast a glory as this is, *let us cleanse* and purify *ou selves from all filthiness* and pollution both *of the flesh and spir* and perfect *holiness in the fear of God?* 2 Cor. vii. 1. Is th heaven attainable, upon your working? will God give it in wages, after working? will he share stars, will he share his self and his Christ, among you? Truly, methinks Christia should not have patience to hear any more: methinks, it is t much dulness, to endure another motive besides this. Why you not interrupt me, then? Why do you not cry out, *Wh shall we do that we may work the works of God?* Why do yo not say and pray, Lord, work in us, *both to will and to do,* thy *good pleasure?* Why is there not such a holy tumult an disturbance among you; some questioning, some praying, som resolving, all some way or other testifying a sense of salvatio upon you? But, alas! there is a general silence. Men an women sit as quiet in their seats, as if their seats were fille rather with monuments than with men; as if heaven and eterna salvation were of no concernment for them to look after. An wherefore is all this, but because their sight is short and thei faith weak? They do not see afar off, nor believe afar off Heaven they look upon as at a great distance, and very unwillin they are to go so long upon trust; and, sensual persons as the are, they look for present reward and present wages, and wil not stir till they have received it. And this is the reason, wh the consideration of this great and infinite glory affects men n more, they look for something present.

Well, be it so. Will God's work bring in no present profit It will; and that, such as you yourselves shall acknowledge t be great.

And, therefore,

2. Besides those set Wages, that are to be received at the en of our lives, *there are many Vails and Occasional Incomes, th accrue to God's servants in the performance of their work.*

As,

(1) Such are assured, that God will provide for them whil they are doing his work.

He hath assured them of the mercies and good things of th life by promise. I do not say of the troublesome abundance them; but of the enjoyment of them, so far forth as they ar

mercies and good things: *Godliness*, says the Apostle, *is profitable* for *all things, having* the *promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come:* 1 Tim. iv. 8. It hath the promises of this life; and that is a large charter, by virtue whereof God feeds them and clothes them, and provides sustenance and comfortable enjoyments for all those that work in his service. And, therefore, that I may note it by the way, most men greatly mistake, that labour and toil in the world to get riches and great estates: this is not the right thriving course: if you would grow rich, *Seek first the kingdom of* heaven, *and* the *righteousness* thereof: *Work out your own salvation:* labour for the true riches; and this will not only increase and improve your inward graces, but increase and improve your outward mercies also. It is true, indeed, earth-worms may, by carking and caring, by pinching and drudging, increase their heap of dirt: but, let who will, for my part I will not nor cannot, call that man a rich man, that hath more curses than enjoyments. Well, thus we see what great vails God gives his servants: he gives them not only those of another life, but those of this life so far as they are mercies. And that is One Vail.

(2) As God provides for his servants while they are working, so their very work is wages and reward enough for itself.

If God should only give us our labour for our pains, as we use to say, and never bestow a penny more upon us than what we get in his service, we were even in that sufficiently rewarded. It was, certainly, a violent pang of distempered zeal in that person, that carried fire in the one hand and water in the other; and, being demanded a reason of it, gave for answer, that he would burn up Paradise and quench hell-fire, that so God might be served and holiness embraced, upon no other motives than themselves. This was a violent pang, and cannot be allowed: this fire was strange fire, and this water was too much muddied to be water of the sanctuary. But yet, certainly, that man, who, abstracting from the consideration of heaven and hell eternal rewards and punishments, would not rather choose the works of God and the ways of holiness, than the works of sin and the ways of iniquity, let that man know he never yet had much acquaintance with that way and with that work. What says holy David, concerning the commandments of God? *In keeping of them there is great reward:* not only after keeping them, when those commands, that have here been the rule of

our holiness and obedience, shall in heaven become the measure of our reward and happiness; but, *in* the very *keeping of them* while we are observing and obeying, there is so great a reward, that we should have no cause to complain should God bestow no more upon us, than to suffer us to obey his law.

For,

[1] Herein we uphold Communion with God and Christ through the Holy Spirit.

What is communion, but a mutual intercourse of grace and duty; when grace received reflects back again in the returns of duty? Then is communion maintained between God and the soul, when we return duty for grace. Now is this nothing, to enjoy fellowship and communion with the Great God of Heaven and Earth; to be admitted to him; to walk and converse familiarly with him, and to enjoy him; to see him, who is invisible; to lean upon him, who is almighty; to enjoy him, who is infinite? Is all this nothing? Will not the souls of those, who have by experience tasted the sweetness of these things, cry out, "They are so excellent and transcendent, that there is but one thing more desirable, and that is immediate enjoyment?" What is heaven itself, but communion with God at a nearer hand? Here it is by faith; there, by vision: here, by ordinances; there, by immediate influences: here, it is by duty; there, by union. And, therefore, if the consideration of a future heaven be not cogent and prevailing with you, behold here is a heaven at present: here is happiness for your work, as well as for your reward. It was nobly spoken of Galleacius Carriciolus: "Cursed," says he, "be that man, who preferreth the whole world before one hour's communion with Jesus Christ." And, certainly, they, who have once tasted the sweetness of this communion, will subscribe to that anathema.

[2] Usually, great Peace and Tranquillity of Conscience attends and accompanies this working for salvation; that fills the soul with as great a calm, as the world had the first morning of its creation, when there was no wind or tempest to discompose it.

Never is the soul more at rest, than when it is most at work. I dare appeal to the experience of the people of God, in this case. Do not your most solemn feasts come in by your obedience? Doth ever conscience look so friendly and pleasantly upon you, as when it finds you active in the ways of God? it

then wears not a wrinkle nor frown upon its face: as sin ruffles it, so duty smooths it out again; and this causeth such peace and quietness in the inward man, as yields more satisfaction than all the noise and ruffling gallantry and jollity in the world. *Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that, in simplicity and godly sincerity....we have had our conversation in the world:* 2 Cor. i. 12. So that, if men care not for the enjoyment of God, yet if they love the enjoyment of themselves, if they would avoid discords and civil wars in their own breasts, this were enough to excite them to this pacifying work, that atones and reconciles conscience unto themselves.

[3] In this working for salvation, God gives in many evident testimonies of his special Favour and Acceptation, unto the souls of his servants.

Thou meetest him, says the Prophet, *that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness. Thou meetest him:* how? not to contend with him, as with Jacob; not to slay him, as thou didst Balaam: but to embrace him; to reveal and manifest thyself unto him. If you have any comfortable evidences that God is yours, in a strict bond of an everlasting and unalterable covenant, and that you are accepted of him in the Well-Beloved, examine how you attained to this evidence: was it not through obedience and working? This is the way, whereby God manifests himself unto the souls of his: and, should your comfortable persuasions not come in thus by obedience and working, they are but enthusiastical and groundless presumptions, and not true and divine assurance. The Apostle, in 2 Pet. i. 10. exhorts us, to make our *calling and election sure:* but how is that to be done? it is by giving *diligence.* What is it men desire and wish for, next to heaven? is it not assurance of it? would you not have the terrors and torments of conscience, apprehending and preoccupating your own condemnation, eased and removed? would you not have the unquiet tossings and fluctuations of your minds, because of the uncertainty of your future state and condition, settled and confirmed? Then be persuaded to work: believe it, this evidence is never received in any other way than in a way of duty: God will not hold his light of assurance to them, who will not work the works of obedience.

[4] Those, that are diligent in working for salvation, many times have high Spring-Tides of Joy: joy, that is unspeakable and glorious, that rusheth in upon the soul and ravisheth it with a sweet and potent delight, while it is in ways of obedience.

Now this, though it be not ordinary with every Christian, yet God sometimes vouchsafes it, especially to the most laborious working Christians; as a cordial to revive and quicken them, that they should not faint and grow weary in their work. He gives them, many times, such prelibations of future glory, such bright glimpses of himself passing before them, that they scarce know wherein their state differs from the state of the glorified; unless it be that it is shorter in the duration, lasting not so long as theirs.

Should you, then, be asked, as they were in the parable, *Why stand ye here all the day* long *idle?* you could not return the same answer as they did, *because no man hath hired us:* for God hath hired you; and that, at no less a rate than all these great and glorious things that have been propounded to you do amount unto: a glorious heaven; a blessed work, that is accompanied with communion with God, peace of conscience, assurance of divine favour and joy in the Holy Ghost. And, if all this will not persuade you, certainly you set a mighty price upon your own sloth. Only let me say this, beware that these souls of yours, that you will not part with to God for salvation, beware you do not sell them to the Devil for nothing.

(3) Consider your encouragements after your work is done: there is an Eternal Rest that waits you.

I have already considered heaven, as a reward for working: let us now consider it, as a Rest after working. And so the Apostle tells us, *there remaineth a rest for the people of God:* Heb. iv. 9: and, in Rev. xiv. 13. we read, *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit,* for they *rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.*

They *rest from their labours.*

[1] They rest from their labour, in working under Affliction.

Sometimes, afflictions are spurs and incentives; and, sometimes, they are burdens and discouragements, to obedience. But, when we arrive at heaven, we shall no longer need the spur to quicken us: nor shall we any longer bear that burden to oppress us; but shall cast it down at heaven's gate, where never sorrow nor suffering durst yet appear. And,

[2] In heaven you shall rest from your labour, in working under Desertion.

Now, though you do work; yet, it may be, you apprehend God frowning upon you, and finding fault with all that you do. Now, it may be, though God doth cause the clear light of his

precepts and Spirit to shine before you, to direct you what your work is that you should do; yet he makes it dismal darkness behind you, and shuts up the light of his comfort that you cannot see what work you have done. And this is your great trouble: you work and labour, and yet you know not whether you shall be accepted: "Obedience were easy and pleasant work," says the soul, "if I knew that God did regard me: but, alas! I pray, and he shuts out my prayer from him: I lay hold upon him, but he shakes me off in displeasure: I obey, but he rejects all my services: and this is the anguish and torture of my life." This, indeed, is matter of great grief and trouble. But, know, O Soul, thou shalt not long work thus in the dark: shortly, thou shalt be above these clouds; and then thou shalt see, that those prayers, which thou thoughtest were vainly scattered and lost in the air, are become a cloud of sweet incense hovering before the throne of God: and that those tears, which thou thoughtest were dropped in vain upon the earth, are all gathered up and preserved in God's bottle: and that those poor duties of thine, which, for their own meanness and vileness, thou thoughtest God would scorn, yet, through that worth that is put upon them by the intercession of Christ, are ranked in the same degree of acceptation as the most perfect services of the angels themselves. Have but patience a while, and continue working, and thou shalt see a happy issue; when the clouds of darkness and desertion, that now lie upon thy spirit, shall be all scattered and blown away.

[3] You shall also rest from your labour, in working against the continual workings of your own Corruptions; which shall then, at once, both cease to act and cease to be.

And this, indeed, is the great thing, that makes it such a blessed rest to the people of God. Indeed, God cuts you out your work, in his commands; but it is the Old Man within you, that makes it to be tedious, irksome, and difficult unto you. God makes it not so, but your corruption.

And this it doth, Two ways:

By deadening your heart to it: and,

By turning your heart against it.

Deadness and dulness to and averseness from the ways of holy obedience, are the greatest cause of all that toil and pains, that most take in the work and service of God, if ever they will bring it to a good issue.

Now both these shall shortly cease and be removed, if you but wait and continue striving against them.

1st. You shall rest from all that labour, that you take with a dead and heavy heart in the ways of God.

Now, you are continually calling upon it, *Awake, awake, my glory:* now, you are continually tugging it, to get it a little more forward; lifting it up, to get it a little higher towards God and heaven: now, you stand in need of continual quickening grace, to actuate and excite those lumps of lead, that lie heavy within your breasts: and it is the greatest disquietment of your lives, that you find your hearts so heartless and listless to what holy and spiritual: it is with them, as with some great bells, that you must pull long at the rope before you can make them sound: is not this the daily complaint of God's children, that their hearts are dull and heavy, and they cannot raise them? and this makes the ways of obedience, yea this makes their very lives, become burdensome. Well, have but patience for a while, and continue still to struggle against this sad indisposition, and it will not be long before you shall rest from this labour also. Though now you are as birds, whose bodies are too heavy for their wings; when you stretch them forth, and would fain be soaring up to heaven, you can only run up and down and flutter upon the earth: yet, shortly, these heavy and cloggy bodies shall fall off, and you shall be all wing; free from all deadness and straitness, distraction and weariness, in the ways of God, that now afflict you. Then shall your affections be always intent, and not languish; always burning, and yet shall never waste nor consume. Every motion of your soul shall then shoot itself to God as quick as the lightning, and yet constant as the sun-beams. And those, who are now outstripped by weak and underling Christians, shall then be able to keep pace in their obedience, even with the Holy Angels themselves.

And, then,

2dly. In heaven, there shall be a resting from all that labour, that the people of God now take in the ways of holy obedience; through the averseness of their hearts from them, and the opposition of their hearts against them.

There is that contradiction in the carnal part against what is holy and spiritual, that the godly cannot bring themselves to the performance of it without much strife and contention: *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit:* and, when the spiritual part calleth

for holy thoughts and heavenly affections, the corrupt and fleshy part sends forth noisome and stinking vapours; obstructing the good that we would do, and infecting that little good that we do perform: so that, as if working were not a sufficient employment, a Christian must fight that he may work: and this is it, that makes working for salvation so laborious, because we must fight and work at once. But, it shall not be long, before that, which hinders, shall be removed: and, then, as you are not under a sad necessity of offending God, so also you shall be under a most blessed necessity of serving God; and shall find no more trouble in that service, than in those actions which you now cannot but do. And thus shall you have a happy rest from all that labour and pains, that your corruptions here made you take. And, therefore, be encouraged to persevere in well-doing: perfect the work which you have undertaken, in spite of all opposition from your own corrupt hearts; for, assure yourselves, this troublesome inmate shall not long disquiet you.

I might also add,

[4] You shall then rest from your labour, in working against Satan's Temptations; who is now buffeting you, while you are here upon earth: but, in heaven, the Evil One shall not approach near to touch you.

There, you shall no more trouble yourselves, to know how to distinguish between the injections of Satan and the ebullitions of your own corruptions; for you shall know neither, there. You shall then stand no more upon your own guard, and keep centinel to your own soul; nor conflict with any of Satan's temptations: but shall for ever triumph in victories and conquests over them.

This is that Blessed Rest, that you shall shortly possess, if you will but now work. And what is it, that comforts the painful labourer, but this, that, though his work be hard and difficult, yet the evening will soon shut in, and he shall then betake himself to quiet rest and repose? What is it, that comforts the wearisome traveller, but this: every step of his long way brings him nearer to his home, where he shall enjoy a longer rest? And shall not the same encourage and support you, in your way and work? What though the work be painful and laborious: yet, it will not be long, before you shall lie down in the bed of the grave; and sweetly sleep away a short night of oblivion, that is between this and the resurrection; and your tired weary souls

shall then repose in the bosom of God himself. What though the way be long and tedious to the flesh: yet, you are travelling to your father's house, where you are sure to be welcome; and where you shall enjoy an eternity of rest and repose; and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the whole ring of glorious saints, discoursing to them of the dangers and difficulties that you have passed through in getting to them. Doth it not sweeten the toil and pains that you take in your youth, to think that thereby you are laying up that, whereupon you may live at ease hereafter, and spare the weakness of old age? and is it not much more rational, that, while you are in this world, which may be called the Youth of Eternity, you should lay up a good foundation; and treasure up a large, rich stock, upon which you might live at ease for ever? Why should you not be as wise and politic for heaven, as for a little of the perishing things of this world? Will you labour that you may rest here, where your rest shall certainly be disquieted and you shook out of it? and will you not labour that you may rest in heaven, where alone you can enjoy an everlasting rest?

I know it is that inveterate prejudice, which men have taken up against the ways of God, that they are painful and laborious, that invalidates all reasons and arguments which we bring to persuade them to work. Rest! that is it, which they would have: and, though God tells them they shall have an Eternal Rest, if they will but work a while; and tells them, on the other hand, that they shall never enter into rest if they do not work, that they shall never enjoy more ease than what they can find in hell itself where their groans and bellowings together with the smoke of that bottomless pit shall ascend up for ever: yet, such is the madness of men's folly, that neither the Rest of Heaven nor the Restlessness of Hell can stir or move them; but they roll themselves up in their own sloth, and will hear nothing, nor lay any thing to heart, that may rouze or awaken them. Hath not God often called upon them by his ministers; "Sinners, Sinners, awake: bestir yourselves: hell-fire is kindling about you: God is ready to open his mouth, to pronounce sentence against you: Satan is ready to lay hold of you, and to drag you to be tormented?" One would think such execrations as these are, should awaken the carcasses that you sit over, were they not in their final state: and yet, with you, whose souls are yet in their bodies, but know not how soon they may be in hell, who among you are moved with all that hath or can be said of

this matter? Nay, are you not like sleepy men when jogged, ready to grow pettish and to quarrel with us? "Why do you molest us? Why do you envy us our rest? Why do you disturb our peace, and will not let us alone?" Shall I say to you now, as once our Saviour said to his Disciples: Mat. xxvi. 45. *Sleep on, and take your rest:* sleep on, and nod yourselves into destruction: sleep on, and never wake more till the flames of hell awaken you? Truly, we come not to disturb your rest: but we come to inform and guide you to a better rest, than what you can find here, even an eternal rest; a rest with him, that is immortal; a rest with him, who alone is unchangeable. And is not this rest worth a little pains and struggling to obtain? Do you think you are always to believe and to repent, always to obey and mortify your corruptions? you cannot think so, unless you think you are always to live in this world. No: a rest remains for the people of God, after a few short days be gone. It is not, therefore, your ease, that you seek, when you will not work: no: it is rather your pain and eternal torment, which shall certainly then be given unto all slothful persons, when the industrious and painful Christian, that labours and works for salvation, shall be admitted into the eternal rest that he is aspiring after, and hath already embraced in his hope and faith.

(4) As, in heaven, there is an eternal rest; so also, in heaven, there is an Eternal Work to be done.

And therefore you should inure yourselves to that work, while you are here upon earth. If happiness, according to the philosopher's notion, consists in operation; then in heaven, where there is the most perfect happiness, there must needs be the most perfect operation. And, therefore, whatever hath been spoken of rest that remains, yet you are not so to conceive of it, as possibly some gross enough are apt to wish and fancy to themselves, as if in heaven the blessed were unactive and enjoyed there only a long vacation, and only stretched themselves on that flowery bank, and so void of cares and fears lulled away an eternity: no; these are too low and brutish apprehensions for the glory of that place. That rest, that is there to be expected and enjoyed, is operative, working rest: it is both rest and exercise, at once; and, therefore, it is a true paradox, Though the saints in heaven rest from their labours, yet they never rest from their working: continually are they blessing and praising God; ascribing glory, and honour, and power to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for evermore:

always are they beholding, admiring, and adoring God, and burning in love to each other, and mutually rejoicing in God and in one another. And this is the work of that eternal rest; a work never to be intermitted, nor to cease.

And, therefore, it is worth our observing, that both those places, that do chiefly speak of the future rest of the people of God, do also intimate a work in that rest.

So the Apostle to the Hebrews tells us, *There remaineth a rest for the people of God:* Heb. iv. 9. The word is, *There remaineth a Sabbath for the people of God.* Look how you are to be employed on a Sabbath: such shall be your employment in your eternal rest. Is it not your work upon a Sabbath-Day, to raise your thoughts and affections to heaven, to fix and terminate them upon God, to maintain communion with him, to admire him in all his works both of grace and providence, to stir up your own hearts, and to quicken the hearts of others to praise and adore him? why this shall be the work of your Eternal Sabbath. And, when you are at any time lifted up to a more than ordinary spiritualness in these things, then may you give some guess what your work shall be in heaven, and what the frame of your hearts shall be in your eternal rest.

And so that other place, in the Revelations: *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.....*for they *rest from their labours; and their works do follow them:* which may be meant, not only of the reward of their works, that they shall then receive; but of the works themselves, that here they performed on earth: these shall follow them, and enter into heaven with them; and, as they were done by them weakly and imperfectly here, so there the very same works shall be done by them with absolute and consummate perfection: all those works, I mean, that, for the matter and substance of them, do not connote a sinful state and condition.

Now, then, since you must be employed in such a work as this is to eternity, why do you not accustom yourselves to it while you are here? The Apostle to the Colossians, blesseth God, who had made them *meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:* Col. i. 12. Were it a meet thing, that those, who spend their whole time in sin, should be abruptly snatched up into heaven, to spend an eternity there in holiness? And therefore God accustoms those, whom he saves in an ordinary way and manner, to work those works here on earth, that they are to be employed in hereafter in heaven.

Here they are apprentices, as it were; that they may learn the trade of holiness: that, when that time comes, they may become fit citizens of the New Jerusalem. Here, God is trying their eyes with more qualified and allayed discoveries of himself: that, when they come to view him face to face, they may be able to bear the exceeding brightness of his glory. And, therefore, though you profess heaven to be your country, and that you are *strangers and pilgrims* here on earth; yet, say not with the captive Jews, *How shall we sing the* song of Sion *in a strange land?* Psal. cxxxvii. 4. Yes: you must acccustom yourselves to that song: you must mould and warble it here on earth: that you may be perfect in it, when you come to join with saints and angels in their eternal hallelujahs. You must try your eyes, by seeing of God; and your voices, by singing that song, that you must continually sing in heaven. And, were it only for this disposing and fitting of yourselves for the work of heaven, this were motive enough to persuade to begin it now.

(5) Another encouraging consideration, to persuade you to work out your own salvation, is this: as your work is great, so the Helps and Assistances, that God gives for the performance of this work, are many.

So that your work is not greater than your aids: nor is it more difficult, than they are potent. And, therefore, though you are weak in yourselves; and so weak, that, were you left to your own strength, you would faint in the most easy service: yea, the weight but of one holy thought would sink you, for *we are not sufficient*, says the Apostle, as *of ourselves to think any good thing:* yet, when we consider those mighty auxiliaries, that are afforded and promised; as comfort when we droop, support when we are weak, that we shall rise when we fall, recruits when we are worsted, omnipotency to supply our impotency, all-sufficiency to make up our defects: when we consider these things, then may we triumphantly say, with the Apostle, *When* we are *weak, then* are we *strong:* and though of ourselves we are nothing, and therefore can do nothing; yet, through these mighty assistances, we are able to do all things.

I shall rank these Auxiliary Forces into Two Bands. Some are External: others are Internal.

[1] External Helps are various. I shall only instance in Three.

1st. You have the exciting Examples of others, who have already happily gone through this work.

You are not commanded that, which never yet was imposed upon any of the sons of men; nor that, which whoever undertook, he failed in the performance, and sunk under the burden of it. No: there are hundreds and thousands gone before you, from whom God required as much as he doth from you; and these have demonstrated, that the work is possible, and the reward certain. And, therefore, as Israel followed the cloud for their conduct into the Land of Canaan: so may you be led into a Land of better Promise, by *a cloud of witnesses*, of those, who have already passed through the same faith, patience, and obedience, wherein you are to follow them.

It is superstition heightened to idolatry, to make use of the departed saints, as substituted mediators and under-advocates unto Christ, that Christ may be our advocate unto God the Father. What their present prayers for us are we know not: but this we are certain of, their past example ought to be propounded and improved by us for our encouragement in the ways of holiness and obedience. Hence the Apostle exhorts us, that we should be diligent; not slothful: and he grounds it upon this, because in so doing, we should be *followers of them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises*. In difficult and hazardous enterprizes, every man is apt to stand still and see who will lead the way; and, according to the success of the first attempters, so either to be encouraged or dismayed. Now what says our Saviour, Matt. xi. 12? *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force*. You are not the forlorn hope: you are not the first assailors: no; whole armies of saints have, in former ages, stormed heaven: they have heretofore planted strong batteries against it, and made wide breaches in it: they have heretofore entered and taken possession; and still the passage is as open for you, and the conquest as easy as for them; and you may see them beckoning out of heaven to you, and hear them calling to you, "Fellow-Soldiers, bend your force hither. There is your labour: here is your rest. There are your enemies: here is your crown and victory. Believe it, there are no more dangers for you to pass through, no more difficulties for you to meet with, than what we have passed through; yea, and passed with so much safety, as that not so much as one soul of us miscarried, not a soul left dead on the place: we struggled against the same corruptions, that you do, and overcame them; against the same temptations, and baffled them; against the same devils, and routed them; against the

same flatteries and oppositions of a base world, and despised them. Believe it, upon our experience, all these things are but scare-crows set in the ways of obedience, on purpose to affright you; but there is no danger at all in them, unless you fear them." This they tell you, with one consent.

And, therefore, if Examples are any encouragement, as indeed they are almost the greatest; if imitation hath any force to obedience, as too often we find it hath great force to sin; why should we not hereby quicken ourselves? Why do you not arise, and press upon the footsteps of them, who have gone before you, and shewed you that the way is both certain and passable?

Are you called to exercise self-denial? Abraham looks down from heaven upon you, and tells you that he was ready to sacrifice his beloved Isaac. Are you afraid of the scoffs and jeers of a fleering world? Noah builded an ark: Moses relinquished the honours of Pharoah's court; and met with as many persecutions and afflictions, and underwent as many taunts and flouts, as you are like to do. Are you called to lay down your lives for the testimony of Jesus and a good conscience? Stephen tells you a storm of stones fell upon him, and brake open the prison, and set the prisoner free: his soul escaped: it broke out of the cage; and, as a bird, took wing, and flew to heaven. Are you assaulted with temptations? St. Paul looks down, and tells you that he had much stronger temptations than you have, and yet he got safe to heaven.

Yea, our great Master and Pattern, Jesus Christ, wrought out all obedience. And what were the motives, that put him upon this mighty undertaking? It was not for his own salvation and happiness, but it was for ours. Nay, the Scripture goes yet lower, it was, to leave *us an example, that* we *should follow his steps:* 1 Pet. ii. 21. Now shall Christ do all this, not for himself, but for us, and shall we sit still and do nothing for ourselves? Shall Christ take so much pains to set us an example, and shall not we follow that example; we who have so great a happiness to work for, and so great a pattern to work by? Shall we be slothful in procuring our own good, since Christ was so laborious and expensive, not in procuring good to himself, but in procuring good for others? Methinks, these things should add some spurs to our endeavours; and excite us to follow the examples of those, that are gone before us; yea, and to leave an example unto them, that are to come after us: and, though we

do come after the examples of others, who are gone before us: yet the consideration of their examples, who have gone through this work, may excite us not to come behind them in any good work.

2dly. God holds out to us the Light of his Gospel-Truth and Ordinances, whereby to help us in our work.

What Christ saith of himself is applicable unto all: We *must work the works of* God, *while it is day: the night cometh*, wherein *no man can work:* John ix. 4. You are not shut up in darkness: you are not muffled up in the clouds of error and ignorance; or, if you are, it is not because you have not light shining about you, but because you shut it out when it is breaking in upon you. It is not a double labour, that is put upon you; first to find out your duty, and then to perform it: no; the light shines about you; and, unless you will seal up your eyes against it, it is impossible but that it will sometimes flash in upon you, and discover both what you have mis-done and what you ought to do. The Mahometans have a tradition among them, that Moses's Law and Christ's Gospel were written, at first, with ink made of pure light: this conceit of theirs, though it be fond and ridiculous, yet carries a mystic truth in it: the Scripture is as plain for matter of duty, as if it had been written with a sun-beam: ordinances are dispensed freely and powerfully: so great the throng of teachers, and such the variety of Gospel-Administrations, that men must take almost as much pains to keep themselves ignorant of their duty, as would suffice to perform their duty. And wherefore think you is all this glorious light given you? is it not that you may work by it? doth a master light up a torch or candle, only that his servants may play about it? And wherefore doth God light up the sun of truth in the firmament of his Church? is it, only that you should dally and trifle with it? no: it shines, that you may work by it. And, truly, work by it you do: but, alas! how many do work the works of darkness, by the glorious light of truth! how many have light enough, to see that they are notoriously wicked and profane swearers, drunkards, despisers of ordinances, revilers at religion and the professors of it, enemies to what is sober and sacred in Christianity! this light they have flashing in their faces, from the clear evidence of the word of God; and yet, still, they continue to work the works of darkness. What shall I say to such as these are? truly, I can say nothing worse to them, than what their own consciences already thunder against them; for they

are self-condemned persons. But, truly, this complaint may too too justly be taken up against all, that do not walk worthy of the light vouchsafed to them: their sins are revealed clearly: and duties are revealed as clearly, as the Scripture can possibly express them; and yet they live in a gross neglect of them. Believe it, this light will not always shine to be gazed at only: the day is drawing to an end: the night is hastening upon us; the darkness of the night of death, and the darker night of judgment: and, oh! that then it may not be the condemnation of any of us, *That light is come into the world*, but we *loved darkness* and the works of darkness better *than light, because* our *deeds were evil.*

3dly. God hath, to this end, set apart his Ministers, that they might be helpers to you in this great work of working out your salvation.

And therefore they are called, *Helpers of your* faith and joy: 2 Cor. i. 24. they are said to *watch for your souls, as they that must give* an *account:* Heb. xiii. 17: they are said to be co-workers with Jesus Christ: yea, they are said to save your souls: Jude 23. Ministers are set in the Church, to admonish with all meekness, to beseech with all earnestness, to rebuke with all authority. Yea, and we have done it: have we not called upon you, "Sinners, Sinners, why will you die? the way, wherein you now walk, leads down to the chambers of death and destruction: the wages of that work, which you are now doing, is shame, death, and hell." Have we not thus often called upon you? yes, so often have we thundered terrors in men's ears, that they now disregard them out of custom; and, when we speak of sin, and death, and hell, and judgment to come, men think we are fallen into a common-place, and we must talk dreadfully to keep in our road: these are the apprehensions which men have of the great and fearful denunciations, that are daily discharged in their ears by the ministers of the Gospel. And have we not also displayed Jesus Christ in all his excellencies, so far forth as his infinite excellencies can be displayed with a few short-breathed words? Have we not set forth holiness in its beauty and lustre; and done as much as we could do, to reconcile you to the ways of obedience, and to remove the unjust prejudices that men have taken up against them? What could we have done more than we have done, to inform men's judgments, to satisfy their consciences, to answer all their doubts,

to allay their fears, to supply them with quickening consider-
tions to duty and with deterring considerations from sin? W
appeal to yourselves. And yet we speak not this, to ingrati
or to commend ourselves: we profess that we care not much
the good opinion of any man in the world, farther than it may
of some advantage to do your souls good. But do you th
God expects not some great thing from you? Give me leave
deal truly and faithfully with you. If your works do not,
some measure, answer the labours of God's servants, that ha
many years followed you, with line upon line and precept upo
precept, here a little and there a little, still warning and entreat-
ing with all bowels of tenderness, alluring you to pity your own
souls, and to save yourselves from that wrath and vengeance
that shall shortly overcome the disobedient world; they, whe
have thus exhorted you, believe it, shall, within a while, be wit-
nesses against you. Since, then, you are daily called upon and
warned to flee from wrath to come; since you have such clea
convictions of your duty, as a bribed conscience can hardl
evade; since you have such abundance of examples of others
who have gone before you, and have done what God require
of you; why will not you be hereby persuaded and encourage
to work? These things, you must acknowledge, are great help
to further your salvation: and, believe it, they will prove dread
ful aggravations of your condemnation, if they do not preva
with you.

But these are only Outward Helps.

[2] There are other helps; and they are Inward, and of fa
greater force and efficacy: of which I shall name Two.

1st. The Dictates of your own Consciences: they are sti
prompting and exciting you to work.

Conscience is God's deputy and vicegerent in the soul, th
rules and governs in his name and by his authority. Of all th
faculties in man, this was the least corrupted by his Fall: thoug
the will be wholly corrupted and perverse, that it will not obe
the commands of conscience; yet conscience still continues th
performance of its office: still, it informs, and urges, an
threatens, and torments; and thus may you see it busily working
even in those that never had the Law of God to direct consc
ence: *The Gentiles*, says the Apostle to the Romans, *which ha
not the Law, do by nature*, that is by natural conscience, *th
things contained in the Law.....their conscience bearing witness, an
their thoughts*, in *the mean while accusing* and *excusing one another*

Rom. ii. 14, 15: and, because they had not the Law, therefore conscience in them was like an officer walking in the dark, apprehending the innocent and letting the guilty escape. But, yet, this was from the beginning so deeply implanted in the heart of man, that something must be done and avoided to obtain happiness, which could never yet be obliterated. Though our knowledge of what is duty and what is sin be in a great part defaced; yet this knowledge the Scripture doth abundantly supply to us, and give conscience a perfect draught of all the duties that God requires, and bids it be overseer and look that the work be done. Now is it not a great help, when you have somewhat within you, that stands for and takes part with what is good, and what is your duty? Conscience secretly bids you beware of such and such sins, that will bring ruin, destruction, and vengeance upon you; and perform such and such duties: "Pray, hear, meditate, and be more fervent and affectionate in all your services: this is the way that tends to life and happiness." Thus conscience daily and hourly is following you, with counsels and chidings; and, with threatenings, denouncing wrath and vengeance against you: and, though it speaketh these things with so low a voice, that others, though they lay their ears to your soul, cannot hear it; yet in your ears, it speaks as loud as thunder, and no less terrible. It is in vain to wound it: it is in vain to stop its mouth; for that will but make it break out with the more violence and outrage: nothing can appease it, but duty and work. Why should you not, then, since you have that within you that stands for and prompts you to work, why should you not as well follow and obey the dictates and commands of your consciences that prompt you to work and duty, as obey the propensions of your sensual part to the contrary?

2dly. God himself helps us, by working all our works in us and for us; by working in us the will to work, and by working for us the work when we have willed.

And, therefore, while there is no part of our work too hard for God, there should be no part of it too hard and difficult for us. Christ tells us that his burden is not heavy; yet, were it heavy, we might well undergo it, since he himself helps us to bear it. The frequent experience of every child of God doth abundantly confirm this. Did you never begin a duty, with your hearts listless and dead, with affections cold and flat, with

thoughts very wandering and distracting; so that, at the very entrance of it, you concluded you should never make good work of it, you should never bring the duty to a good issue and, yet, have you not, in the midst of these your distempers found a mighty assistance and influence shining down from heaven into your hearts, filling them with holy and divine affections transporting them beyond all that deadness that did oppress them, enlarging them with sweet and heavenly enlargement so that no duties were ended with more comfort and reviving than those, that were begun with such dead hearts and cold affections? Have you not often found it so? And what is this but a sensible feeling of God's working in you? so that, in the same performance, you see your own weakness when you are left to yourselves, and you see the power of God's assistance, when he comes in to help you; and there is no duty, but this divine assistance may be hoped for and expected by you to enable you in the performance of it. Are you to do? God works in you the will and the deed. Are you to suffer? When you pass through the fire and through the water, he will be with you: Isa. xliii. 2. He *shall deliver* you *in six troubles;* and, *in seven there shall no evil touch you:* Job v. 19. Are you to pray? His *Spirit maketh intercession for us:* Rom. viii. 26. God doth not, as the Scribes and Pharisees did, lay heavy burdens upon others and not touch them with the least of his fingers: no; he is pleased to become a co-worker with you: he begins, he carries on, and he also perfects whatever concerns your duty here, and your happiness hereafter. And is not this a mighty encouragement to obedience? Will you any longer delay, since God affords you such assistance as this? Why do you not presently attempt this work? "But," you will say, "how shall I know that God will assist me?" Put it to the trial. Was it ever known, that God failed any, that resolutely ventured? Dispute not his concurrence; but believe: and, by looking for it and depending upon it, you engage God to help you. It was the consideration of the all-sufficient assistance of God, that made one of the ancients cry out, *Da, Domine, quod jubes; et jube quod vis:* "Give, Lord, what thou commandest; and then command what thou wilt."

(6) Consider, for your encouragement, that it is not so much the absolute and legal Perfection of the Work, as the Perfection of the Worker, that is the perfection of the heart, that is looked at and rewarded by God.

And is not this a great encouragement? There is a twofold perfection; the perfection of the work, and the perfection of the workman: the perfection of the work is, when the work doth so exactly and strictly answer the holy Law of God, that there is no irregularity in it: the perfection of the workman is nothing but inward sincerity, the uprightness of the heart towards God; which may be, where there are many imperfections and defects intermingled. If God should accept and reward no work but what is absolutely perfect in respect of the Law, this would be such a saddening discouragement, that it would take off the wheels of all endeavours; for all our obedience falls far short of legal perfection in this life. We ourselves are conscious of many failings and imperfections in our best services, and God knows far more; and, since we can do nothing without infirmities, who would venture to do any thing, upon the account of those infirmities, lest God should cast back all again as dung into our faces? No: but we do not stand upon such terms as these with our God: it is not so much what our works are, as what our heart is, that God looks at and will reward. Yet know, also, lest any should too soon lay hold on this; if our hearts are perfect and sincere, we shall endeavour to the utmost of our power, that our works may be perfect according to the strictness of the Law. I speak not this, therefore, to encourage ignorant sottish sinners, who, though they live in a constant course of sin and neglect of duty, yet sooth up themselves with this, that God knows their hearts are good, sincere, and upright: let me cut off the foolish hopes of these men in a word: it is impossible that the heart should be sincere, where there is the allowance and liking of any one sin in the life. But I speak what I have said, to those, who, upon the sight and sense of their many failings, of the deadness and untowardness of their hearts, of their averseness and indisposition, of their wanderings and formality in the performance of what is holy and good, are ready to be dejected and discouraged, and to give over doing any thing, because they can do nothing well: let such know, that though their works have not this legal perfection, yet if they do proceed from a sincere, upright, perfect heart, they shall be accepted and rewarded by God: Hezekiah had his failings, and the Prophet sharply reproves him for his pride, &c. making a glorious and boasting ostentation of his treasure to the king of Babylon; yet he prays and appeals to God, *Remember now, O Lord.....how I have walked before thee in truth,*

and with a perfect heart: Isa. xxxviii. 3. There may, therefore be a perfect heart, where there are imperfect works: and, if you can make this plea, let me tell you, the perfection of your hearts will swallow up the imperfections of your works, so that they shall never come up in remembrance against you before God.

(7) Consider, for your encouragement, that, though your work be great, yet the Success of it is certain.

The greatest check to industry, is fear of disappointment from which you have no security, while you labour for any thing besides your own salvation. All worldly affairs are moved by such invisible wires and turned upon such small pins, that, the finger of Providence displace but one of them, the whole fabric of our design is thereby disordered and our hopes defeated: and God, sometimes, delights to frustrate men's attempts about worldly concernments. *Is it not of the Lord of Hosts,* says the Prophet, *that the people shall labour in the very fire, and that the people shall weary themselves* for *very vanity?* Hab. ii. 13. To *labour in the fire* signifies two things: first, great pains; secondly, great disappointment: they work in the midst of scorching flames; and, what they do produce with so much anguish, they enjoy not, but it consumes betwixt their fingers. When men have weaved a curious web of earthly contrivances, and think to wrap up themselves therein and to keep themselves warm, God breathes secret flames into it, that singe it; so that it can no more hold together, than so much tinder. And wherefore doth God blast men's endeavours; but that, seeing the vanity of all their labour under the sun, how wavering, how uncertain, and how unsuccessful things are, how means run one way and the end another, they might hereby be induced to turn their labours into another channel, and to work for their souls and for eternal happiness and salvation; that are as far above the reach of disappointment, as they are far above the rate of earthly concernments? *Mine elect,* says God, *shall long enjoy the work of their hands:* Isa. lxv. 22: they shall not labour in vain. And this is the great argument urged by the Apostle upon the Corinthians: *Be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord:* and why so industrious and constant? knowing this, says he, *that your labour is not in vain in the Lord:* 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Two things there are, that make a labour to be in vain.

When it doth not accomplish its end.

When that end, which it doth accomplish, is not worth the cost and pains.

Now, in neither of these respects, is your labour in vain. For,

[1] It shall not fail to accomplish the end to which it is ordained; and that is, Eternal Salvation.

Three things there are, that make men come short in the accomplishment of an end propounded.

When men propound to themselves ends, that are in themselves simply impossible.

When, though the end be possible, yet the means, that are used, are unfit and improbable.

When, though the means are rightly suited to the attainment of the end, yet we do not persevere in the use of them.

Now, in none of these ways, shall a laborious Christian fail of his end.

For,

1st. The End, that you work for, is not in itself simply impossible.

Should you propound to yourselves to become angels, should you strive to sublimate yourselves into spiritual essences, your attempts herein were all but vain, because it is impossible you should ever be refined into angels: but, if your end be to be like angels, to be equal to angels, this is possible and may be attained: *When they* arise *from the dead*.....they *are as the angels which are in heaven:* Mark xii. 25. which another Evangelist renders, they *are equal unto the angels:* Luke xx. 36. If, in this life, you propose to yourselves a state of perfection and freedom both from sin and sorrow, a state of consummate bliss and happiness, this end is impossible: but, if you make it your end to enjoy such a state as this hereafter, this is attainable and labour may atchieve it. Yea, aim at what degree of glory you please, next below God and Christ, be it as high as Cherubims and Seraphims, I cannot say that you think of an impossibility: your labour may raise you to such a pitch and advance you to such glory, as shall dazzle the sun in its brightness. It is true, there was once a time, when salvation might well be reckoned among those things that were impossible; and that was, in that sad interval between the Fall and the Promise of Christ, when all mankind lay in the shadow and in the valley of death; under the breach, and yet under the bond of the Covenant of Works;

when it had, indeed, been in vain, so much as once to have thought of happiness, or to have laboured for it: But, since Christ's undertaking, we, who were once *without hope*, have now obtained *good hope through grace:* the partition-wall, that then we could neither climb over nor break through, is now taken away: the gate of heaven is now set open; and, with striving, we may enter, for our Saviour Jesus Christ *hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.* And, therefore, though it may seem an impossibility to dejected and despairing souls, that ever such vile wretches should receive so great a dignity; that those, who are sunk so low in misery, should ever be raised to happiness; that those, who are so loaden with sin and iniquity, should ever feel the weight of mercy and beaten glory; that those, whose best works deserve the lowest hell, should, though not for yet upon the performance of those works, obtain the highest heavens: though this may seem to be an impossibility, yet, believe it, while you think of any glory lower than the glory of the Godhead, you think of nothing above a possibility and the reach of industry. None of you are excluded from a possibility of being saved. The Covenant of Grace runs in most large and comprehensive terms: *Whosoever believeth shall* obtain *eternal life.* The death of Christ and his blood is a most sovereign medicine, applicable, not only to all maladies, but to all men, if they will believe. Though it is true, that none shall be saved but the elect; yet is it true also, that a possibility of salvation extends farther than election. Election gives the infallibility of salvation, as reprobation doth the infallibility of damnation: but, yet, as there is a possibility for those, that shall infallibly be saved, to perish if they do not believe; so is it possible for those, that shall infallibly perish, to be saved if they will believe.

The possibility of salvation, therefore, stands, not upon election, but upon Two other grounds.

(1st) The Meritorious and All-sufficient Procurement of Christ.

Whereby he hath procured salvation for all the world, and for all in the world, upon condition of their faith; for that must still be taken in: for, were it not so, how could we preach remission of sins in his name to every creature, were not his death applicable to all? then, though some should believe, yet, for want of a sacrifice offered up and a price paid down for them, they should not be saved, though they should believe. How

then is it, that we seriously call all men to repent and believe, that their sins may be pardoned and their souls saved? certainly, unless the death of Christ hath procured salvation for all men upon condition of faith and repentance, such calls would be false in us, and vain to them: for so, we should promise salvation upon believing, to those, to whom, though they should believe, salvation should be denied, because they want a covenant made with them, and a surety to undertake for them. Therefore, I say, Christ's procurement is general so far, that whoever believes shall receive the benefit of his death.

(2dly) As the death of Christ is applicable to all for salvation if they believe, so Faith, that alone applies this death, is attainable by you all, if you be not wanting to yourselves.

None of you are under an impossibility of believing; and, therefore, not under an impossibility of salvation. Though it be certain, that some shall infallibly persevere in infidelity; yet there is no one, that hears the sound of the Gospel and the outward call of God in his word, but may believe and obey, if he be not wanting to himself. Neither is this doctrine Arminianism; nor is it prejudicial to the efficacious grace of God, whereby the will is powerfully swayed to faith and obedience: for the converting grace of God is not given to make men capable to believe and to be converted, but it is given to make them actually believing and actually converting. The most wicked man that is, without the converting grace of God, is capable to be converted even in his state of unregeneracy; and converting grace gives not any new power to enable us to be converted, but it gives us an actual conversion. Some shall never believe, and why? not because they are under an impossibility, but because they will not believe: it is not because they cannot, but because they will not; unless we would so gratify their sloth, as to call their obstinacy an impossibility. It is true they are obstinate, and that obstinacy can never be cured without efficacious grace; but yet that obstinacy is not properly called an impossibility.

Since, then, salvation is a thing possible, why do you not labour for it, that your souls may be eternally happy? Christ hath *the key of David*, and *he openeth, and no man shutteth*, and he hath opened the everlasting gate to you all, and bids you all enter and take possession. There stand no grim guards to keep out you, or you. You cannot complain that you are excluded

by a forcible decree: no; you shut the doors upon yourselves and refuse to enter.

And this is the First Reason why salvation is not labour in vain, because the end is possible to be attained.

2dly. There are also Right Means made known to you, for the obtaining of this end.

Jacob, in his dream, saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven: certainly, there is a Jacob's ladder reaching up from earth to heaven, that is more than a dream: every round in it is either a grace or a duty. It is not hid from you, what grace you must act, what duties you must perform, that you may obtain happiness: these are direct and proper means to it; nay, not only means to it, but the initials and beginnings of it. The glimmering Light of Nature could discover, that there was a future happiness; but it could not discover to us the right means thither: it could not direct us to believe in a Crucified Saviour: and, therefore, to write by this dim Light of Nature had been labour in vain. But, now, we know that the way of salvation is, by repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ: now, we know that holiness and obedience do as certainly lead to heaven, as sin and disobedience drag down to hell. And, therefore, while we continue believing and working, is there any fear? nay, is there any possibility of disappointment in our great end? It is as impossible, that faith and obedience should not lead unto glory; as it is, that faith should, or obedience should not, continue in glory. And, therefore, O Soul, be confident of success. Hast thou any good evidences, that thy graces are genuine and true, though but weak; that thy duties are sincere, though but imperfect; and that thou dost work the works of God with a steady heart, though with a trembling hand? give this assurance one lift higher: and, as thou art already assured of the truth of thy grace, and of the sincerity of thy obedience; so, henceforth, be as much assured of thy future glory, as if it were no longer future, but now actually in thy present possession: thy dawning shall break forth into a most perfect day: the womb of thy morning twilight shall be delivered of a noon-tide brightness: thy spark shall become a sun: thy seed of grace shall sprout, till it be fit for transplantation into paradise, and there shall flower into glory.

"But," may a poor soul say, "though the means that I

now use for the obtaining of salvation be right, to effect it, if still persisted in; yet I fear, lest the many corruptions, temptations, and hardships, that I meet with, may turn me off from following my work, defeat me of my end, and make all I have done as so much labour in vain: and, therefore, I could have this confidence and assurance that you speak of, did I not fear this, that I should desist in my work."

3dly. Would you have good security against this? Then, in the third place, the laborious Christian as he useth right means, so he shall Continue and Persevere in the use of them, till he hath wrought out his own salvation by them: and, therefore, he shall certainly accomplish his end; and his labour shall not be in vain.

It is true, if you desist from working, all, that you have hitherto done, will be in vain; your faith, in vain; your tears, in vain; your prayers, in vain; all, in vain: and, therefore, this should cause you to work with fear and trembling, lest the wiles of Satan and the deceitfulness of your own hearts should entice you from your work and cheat you of your reward: *Let us therefore fear*, says the Apostle, *lest, a promise being* made *us of entering into his rest, any of* us *should*.....fall *short*. Yet, as this may cause holy fear; so it may be matter of spiritual joy and rejoicing, that, notwithstanding the deadness of our hearts, the slackness of our hands, the many avocations from without, the many interruptions from within, yet none of us shall forsake our work till we have brought it to perfection: our obedience shall be crowned with perseverance, and our perseverance with glory and immortality: see, for this, that of the Apostle, We are *confident of this very thing, that he, which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:* Phil. i. 6.

Let, therefore, the mouth of calumny be for ever stopped, that accuseth this comfortable doctrine, of the saints' perseverance through grace unto glory, of patronizing sloth and idleness. Some do fasten this viper upon it: Let Christians live as they list, though careless of good works, yea though continually employed in evil works, yet, being Christians, they need not fear that they shall fall short of glory. But, though we do affirm that every true Christian shall certainly inherit heaven and glory, yet we shake off this pernicious confidence; for he is no true Christian, who is not zealous and careful of good works, whose knowledge of his own estate doth not pro-

voke him to *walk worthy of* that *vocation wherewith* he is ca whose hope of heaven doth not enable him to purify hir and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. What a contri tion is it to say, we patronize sinful sloth in men, when we them, if they are true Christians, that they shall continue w ing! is it sloth, to continue working? or, do we encou men to be idle, by assuring them, if they are Christians, must and shall work? yet this is the natural strain and tende of our doctrine. What greater encouragement can you l to obedience, than this? if you will work, you shall not fa your end; because the End itself is possible; because Means to it are direct and certain; and because, if you c begin to work, you shall most assuredly Persevere till you l attained that end, even the salvation of your own souls?

And this is One Reason, why your labour shall not be in v

[2] Your labour shall not be in vain, because this end fully answer, yea infinitely exceed, all that Cost and Pains w you are at in procuring it.

It is not so, in the things of this world. As to this, th the Psalmist holds true: *Surely every man walketh in a shew: surely they are disquieted in vain:* Ps. xxxix. 6. the they do attain their end; and that, because that very end, they grasp, is itself but vanity. But, can any man acc heaven and happiness a vain thing? Is it not infinitely worth yea more than all, that thou canst do or suffer for it? Certa when you come to enjoy it, you will not think it a hard bar that it stood you in so many duties and difficulties before came to the possession of it. No: if there could be any so in that state of perfect joy, it would be, not that we have so much; but that we have done no more: not that we gone through so much anguish in repentance, or that we sustained such great conflicts in self-denial and mortificat but that we waded no deeper in our own tears, nor deep the blood of our own lusts; that we have not more vexed crossed our carnal self, and taken more pains in the wa God. Could there be any sorrow in heaven, this would be cause of it. But, certainly, a great part of our joy there be to reflect back upon those duties and works of obedie through which, though with much struggling and striving have attained unto that most blessed state.

And this is the last argument or motive, that I shall i *upon:* Work; for your labour shall not be in vain, you

certainly accomplish your end; and this end shall abundantly recompense you for all your labour and pains.

To conclude, then, this head. You have, at large, seen what can be pleaded on the behalf of obedience. What is it now, that you can object against these things? Are they not true? Are they not cogent? Your consciences, I know, tell you that they are so. Why, then, do they not prevail with you? Why sit you still, holding your arms in your bosoms? Sirs, I have not spoken to you fables or mysteries, that cannot be understood; but the truth, in all plainness: and, if you will not lay it to heart, believe it there is a day coming, when you shall too late know, that once you had a proffer of salvation, and you might have been happy for working for it. But, alas! this is the desperate folly of men: they do not prize salvation, while it is attainable: they never account their souls precious, till they are lost; yea, and lost, beyond all hope of recovery. I cannot tell how these many and weighty Arguments, that have been propounded, may work with you: God and your own consciences know: but this I can tell, the Devil can never bring such strong reasons, why you should destroy and damn yourselves, as have now been laid before you why you should work out your own salvation. And, if they do not prevail with you, truly there is nothing that you can plead for yourselves: you cannot plead, that you could not do these things; that objection hath been answered: you cannot plead, that there would no profit arise to you if you did them; for the reward hath been abundantly discovered to you: if you plead any thing, it must be because you will not do them; and that is the thing, that will condemn you. Therefore, if these things do not prevail with you; if you still continue obstinate, and, instead of working the works of God, you work the works of your father the Devil; God acquits himself: your blood lies not upon him: you have been fairly warned and told of it: but your own destruction shall justly lie upon your own heads.

V. And thus, having done with the Arguments to press you to this Duty of working out your own salvation with fear and trembling; I now come to ANSWER SOME OBJECTIONS.

And,

OBJECT. i. It may possibly enter into the heart of some de-

perate sinner or other to say, "These indeed are strong Arguments, that have been propounded for the Enforcing of this Duty of working out our salvation, upon those that expect salvation; but, for my part, I pretend not so high: let me but now enjoy the sins that I serve and the pleasures that I pursue; and, for the state of my soul hereafter, I shall commend it to the mercy of God. Had I true grace, I might be persuaded to attempt this hard work, with hopes of some good success: but I own myself to be a sinner, and you tell me I cannot change my own heart, and without this change no salvation can be expected; why then should I disquiet myself in vain, by labouring for that, which I cannot accomplish? If I must perish, I will perish with as much Ease and Pleasure as I may. If I must go to hell, I may be as soon carried down thither in a flood of tears, as with a flood of sins. If God hath sentenced me to hell hereafter, why should I sentence myself to a hell here? And, therefore, if salvation and happiness be such points, I will give them over, and embrace more easy and obvious pleasures."

I know there is no pious heart, but shivereth with horror at such language as this, though it be but presented to it; and may, and does, think it rather the speech of devils, than men that are in a way of salvation. It is true, it is the speech of devils; but it is the speech of devils, in men's hearts. But, what! shall we leave these men to such desperate resolutions? Shall we suffer them thus to go down flaming to hell? Certainly, religion hath reason enough in it to convince such as these, if they will but shew themselves to be rational men.

For, consider, thou, who wouldst rather perish, than make thy life a trouble to thee by obedience: God, under thy disobedience, may make thy life a trouble, yea a hell to thee, by his terrors. Thou thinkest the filthy garments of thy sin and pollution sit more easy and loose about thee, than the close garments of holiness and obedience will do: nay, but God can wrap and roll these filthy garments of thine in brimstone, and set them on fire about thine ears. Many men's consciences, indeed, are like iron, that hath lain for some time out of the fire, which you would not suspect to be hot, till you let some water fall upon it, and then it appears to be so by its noise and hissing: so, truly, their consciences seem cold and dead, and such as you might handle at your pleasure; but, when once God lets fall some drops of his wrath upon them, then they hiss, and

boil, and fill the soul with smoke and smother. A hard heart is no security from a troubled conscience. It is with the hearts and consciences of wicked men, as it is with a sore in the body; which, it may be, is the hardest part in the body and yet the sorest also: the red flesh about the sore is hard, and yet full of pain and anguish: so is it, many times, with the hearts and consciences of wicked men; which, though they are exceeding hard, yet are full of pain and anguish. We read of Heman, that, whilst he suffered the terrors of God, he was distracted: Ps. lxxxviii. 15. And, David tells us, *The sorrows of death compassed me* about, *and the pains of hell gat hold* of *me*: Ps. cxvi. 3. And, if the wrath of the Almighty be thus sore and terrible upon these holy men, whose hearts were sound towards God; how fretting and galling will it be upon the ulcerated consciences of sinners! No man hath his present contentment and delight in his own power, no more than he hath his own conscience in his own power; which will speak, yea and speak terrible things too, when the sinner hath done all he can to stifle it. Nay, let every sinner speak: How is it with you, after the madness and rage of your sin is over? are you not then haunted with direful thoughts of horror and amazement, that are, as it were, gnawing and devouring your hearts? And are these they, who are content to buy ease and quietness at so dear a rate, as the loss of their precious and immortal souls; and to be eternally tormented hereafter, besides their present pain and anguish after the committing of sin now, which if they feel not always yet frequently they do? But, if God should give them up to such hardness of heart, as to become altogether insensible and stupid while they continue in this world; yet what will this avail them? will they not purchase their ease and pleasure very dearly; to lose their souls for ever hereafter, and to suffer the pains of hell eternally? The Devil hath put a horrid cheat upon these men: for they do not change their troubles and sorrows, but only the time of them: and, for a little fancied sensual ease and pleasure in this world, (which it may be they may enjoy, and it may be not; for, possibly, God may be so provoked by them, that he may suddenly cut them off in their sins: but, if not, it is but for a very little time that the pleasures of their sins and lusts will last, and then) an eternity of pain and torment shall be their portion. Sinners, be not therefore deceived: suffer not the Devil to abuse you; and to impose his drudgery upon you, under the pretence of ease and quietness. If, therefore, it be

only present contentment and satisfaction, that you seek; if yo think that you shall perish, but yet you would perish the easie way; that is not, believe it, by giving up yourselves to a wa and course of sin, but in a way of duty and laborious working in that only, can you find present contentment; and in th possibly, you may find eternal happiness.

OBJECT. ii. "But," may some say, "the works of God would be more pleasing to us, if we could but work them. But, first we have no working principle: we are in a state of nature, an without grace; so that we cannot work. And, secondly, w cannot implant this grace in ourselves."

To this I answer: Though you neither have grace, nor ca work grace in yourselves, yet you can do much, yea very much in order to salvation, by the mere strength of nature and th liberty of your own will. This is a consideration, that needs t be frequently pressed upon the consciences of wicked men they often hear unto what a state of weakness sin hath reduce them, and that without grace they can do nothing that is pleasin unto God or advantageous to themselves; and, by this, the are put out of conceit of setting upon the work of God, an leave the salvation of their souls at all adventures.

Consider, therefore, Sinners, how much you may do toward your own salvation, from your own nature and free-will.

And, here,

1. *The vilest sinner, even by the power of nature and his ow free-will, may attain to the highest degree and pitch of preparatio that is usually wrought in the heart antecedently to or before tr grace.*

Such are legal conviction and contrition, a sad sight of si and a deep sorrow for it, together with strong resolutions an purposes against it, with strong desires after grace and holines and the like. And the reason of this is, because all these thin are short of grace: and, whatever is short of true grace, fal within the compass of nature and free-will, which is comm unto all men; which, though it be indeed wounded and maime yet may make shift to go so far as this comes to. True grace only the creation of the power of God, and not the productie of nature or free-will: wherefore, after all this preparation wrought, a sinner can no more work grace in himself, than I could before; yet he is now nearer to grace, and in a great

probability of it than he was before. And there is none but may go thus far, if they will but improve that power and ability that they have.

2. *There is no duty in religion, but the power of nature may carry a man out to the external performance thereof, and that with affection and enlargement also.*

Ahab humbles himself. Herod heard John Baptist gladly. And so, sinners can pray, hear, read, meditate, and discourse of the things of God: others have done so, formerly; and, therefore, they may and can do so, now. Indeed, heretofore, there were peculiar gifts bestowed upon wicked persons, immediately from God; as Balaam was made to prophesy of Christ, and the like: Numb. xxiv. 17. But these are now ceased: and all unregenerate persons now, have the same power and faculties in them, one as well as another; and may be able to do, one as much as another; in the performance of spiritual duties, if they themselves will.

3. *There is no wicked man whatever, but may, by the mere power of nature, restrain himself from the commission of sin.*

I speak not of sins, collectively taken; for no man can so say his heart or life is clean and pure: but he may keep out of notorious and scandalous sins. There is no sinner, that hath given himself up to his lusts, but may, if he will, for the future live so inoffensively, that neither the world nor his own conscience may have much to accuse him of, besides common infirmities. Mark the reason of this: because wicked men commonly make choice of sin: this sin they will live in, and that sin they will not live in: the drunkard is not covetous, and the covetous man is not a drunkard; and so I may say of other sins. Now it is from the power of nature, that wicked men refrain from the commission of any one sin; and not from the power of grace: and, therefore, if one sinner hath power to keep from this sin, and another sinner hath power to keep from the commission of another, and a third from a third sin, then every sinner may, by the power of nature, keep from all those sins that any of those sinners do keep themselves from; because there is the same power in each sinner, to lay the same restraint upon this or that sin, that others keep from.

4. *There is no man, how great a sinner soever, but, if he will, he may with constancy, yea to the end and period of his life, con-*

tinue thus in the performance of duties and in the avoiding of sin by the power of nature only.

For, if it be possible that men should do it at any time, then it is possible for them to do it continually. No more power required to enable them this day, than was required the day past; nor no more power is required for the day to come, than was for this day now present: therefore, having strength to avoid them one time, they might also avoid them another time; yea and continually persevere in so doing, if they would keep daily constant watch against them.

5. *There is no man, but, through this perseverance and continuance, may attain to habitualness; and, thereby, to a facility and easiness, in the performance of duties, and in the avoiding of sins.*

When men are accustomed to a road and round of duties, it is a trouble to them to omit them: so, if men did but set themselves to their utmost to perform duties in a more hearty and cordial manner, those duties would become easy to them; and, if men would but engage themselves perseveringly to oppose their corruptions, this would bring them to that pass; that, it would be their delight to keep from sin and to perform duty. And all this the power of nature would bring them to.

Now, Sinners, you see what a large tenure you have. You are not staked down fast, that you can do nothing: no; it is much, yea very much, that you may do in order to your salvation.

But, here, some may possibly say, "We hope that these words are not true:" for they would not be able to do so much as all this comes to, because they are willing to do nothing at all. But, let such know, that that, which will condemn them at the Last Day, will be, that they have not done what they might have done, in performing duties and in opposing sins, and therefore they wilfully fall short of happiness and salvation.

OBJECT. iii. "But," may some say, "if we should put forth to our utmost the power of Nature, what would that avail us We cannot thereby work Grace in ourselves; and, without grace, no salvation is to be had."

To this I answer: consider, you do not know but, whilst you are thus doing what you can, God may come in and by his grace enable you to do what you cannot do. God is not wont to be wanting, in this particular, unto any. He is found of those, that seek him not; and, much more, will he be found of those, that seek him and enquire after him, though it be but by the weak endeavours of nature.

OBJECT. iv. "But", may some say, "hath God obliged himself to convert and save those, that do to the utmost what nature enables them to do, in desiring salvation and in seeking to obtain it?"

To this I answer: God hath not bound himself, but usually he doth so. God is neither bound to give grace, upon the endeavours of nature; neither is he wont to deny it. Can you say, that ever you knew or heard of any careful, conscientious, industrious soul, that diligently and conscientiously exercised itself in performing duties and in avoiding sins, that was not at last truly converted and eternally saved? and why then should you doubt or think that you shall be the first? Cast yourself, therefore, upon God; trusting to his rich and free grace; doing the utmost of your endeavours.

However, suppose the worst, that thou art never converted nor saved, which supposition is very dreadful and terrible; and, if thou art careful and conscientious to improve thy abilities to the utmost, it is altogether improbable; but, suppose the worst:

1. *Thou livest here, then, more according to the rule of nature and reason, than others do.*

For, when others wallow in sin, thou shewest thyself to be more like a rational man: thou art sensible thou hast a soul of more worth, than to be lost for want of care and diligence. And, then,

2. *Thy pains and punishments, hereafter, shall be greatly mitigated.*

Possibly, thou mayest slight this: because, at best, it is damnation: yea, but consider, there are several degrees of torments in hell. Now thy workings and endeavours may free thee from many degrees of torment; and, therefore, they free thee from many hells: and is not this worth thy labour? Nay, and not only so, but it is very probable that you may altogether

escape those torments, if you be conscientious in doing yo utmost endeavours.

VI. And now, methinks, every one, that hath but reason judge and a soul to save, must needs see so much strength an force in the arguments that have been propounded, that the ne question should be, *What* must *we do,* to *work the works of God* John vi. 28. In every trade and profession, there is some kin of mystery, that gives to them, that have attained to it, a quicke dispatch in their business than other men have. And so is it i the work and profession of a Christian: there is an art an mystery; and he, that is master of this, shall make good dispatc in his great work.

And, possibly, we may have some insight into it by the following DIRECTIONS.

DIRECTION I. If you would work out your own salvation, the DIGEST AND DISPOSE YOUR WORK INTO A RIGHT ORDER AND METHOD.

Immethodicalness breeds confusion; and makes that a tumul and a heap of business, that would otherwise become a trade i Christianity. One attainment makes way for and opens int another: and, to attempt any thing in Christianity by leaps an jumps as it were, is fruitless, unprofitable, and vain. No wis man will try to mount up the highest round of a ladder at th first step. But, yet, many such preposterous endeavours ar found among men, in the working out of their salvation. I respect of doctrinals, St. Paul tells us, some built *hay* an *stubble* upon a foundation of gold: 1 Cor. iii. 12. But, i respect of practicals, it is frequent, that many men endeavou to build gold upon a foundation of hay and stubble. Thes men's buildings will soon totter, fall, and come to nothing bu ruin, shame, and disappointment. Now the right disposing o your great work lies thus: first, you are to work from natur for grace; and, then, from grace unto the holy and spiritua performance of duty, by which grace is much confirmed an strengthened; and so, continuing in duty, to arrive at assurance and, from this, the next step is salvation: from nature to grace and from grace to duty. See this method laid down by th Apostle: Heb. xii. 28. *Let us,* says he, *have grace, whereby we*

may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear: this is the ladder of heaven, whose bottom step is below grace in nature, and whose utmost step is above it in absolute perfection and glory: first, there must be grace; before any duty can be performed acceptably unto God. But, most men pervert and disturb this method. And the ordinary way of disturbance is this: they are frequent in duties; but they perform them not, either for grace or from grace; neither that they may attain grace by them, nor that they may exercise grace in them: and yet, notwithstanding, these men think and hope to work out salvation by such duties as these; making a leap from duties to salvation; neglecting to obtain that grace, that can make their duties acceptable and saving: and, hence it is, that they make no quicker dispatch and riddance in their great work.

Now such attempts as these are

Discouraging and Disheartening. And,

They are Vain and Fruitless.

1. They are *very Discouraging.*

Duties never flow freely from the soul, where grace is not like a continual fountain to supply it. Job, speaking of the hypocrite, asks this question, *Will he delight himself in* God? *will he always call upon* him? Job xxvii. 10. no: he will not: it is not possible that he should do so: though, for a time, he may drive at a high rate, praying both with fervency and affection; yet will he soon decay and faint, because he hath no life of grace to carry him through duties: but he finds them to flow stubbornly from him; and, therefore, through weariness and discontent, at last he gives them over. The good works of graceless persons may be as flourishing as if indeed they were true saints; but they have not a root to supply them: the root of the matter, as Job speaks, is not in them; and, therefore, they are soon nipped and fade away. It is simply impossible, that a person, without the life and power of grace, should persevere in a cordial, affectionate performance of good works: interest, credit, respect, and natural conscience, are too weak wheels for so great a burden: it is grace only, that can overbalance all outward discouragements; yea, and which is more, that alone can remove all inward also: this can make obedience sweet to a child of God, which to a wicked man must needs be irksome; and that, because he hath no relish therein. Matth. xvi. 23. *Thou savourest not the things that* are *of God:* this may be much more said of graceless persons, because they have not salt in them, for so

grace is called, (Col. iv. 6.) that should make holy and heaven things to be savoury to them. What a torment is it, to be st chewing an unsavory prayer and an unsavory meditation! to hea and speak those words, that their ears cannot relish! "Must always," says the sinner, "offer this force to myself? Must still strain and pump for tears and sighs? Were holiness as eas to me as it is to some, no life would I choose sooner than that but I am straitened and pinched up, and all good things com out of me like the Evil Spirit, which rends and tears me, and a torture and anguish to my heart and bowels." And it is so because, in the performance of them, there is a neglect of the grace, that should make duties become easy: and, therefore such a one will shortly give over duties themselves, which h finds to be so troublesome: yea, and will also give over all hope of attaining any good at all by them.

2. Such works are also, as to the obtaining of the last an main end, *Vain and Fruitless:* and that, upon Two accounts.

(1) Because the Acting of Grace is the Life and Spirit of a our Works; without which, they are all but carcasses and dea things, and only equivocally called good works, even as th picture of a man may be called a man.

We are, says the Apostle, *his workmanship; created in Chr Jesus unto good works.* As, after the First Creation, God to a survey of all the works of his hands, and pronounced them very good: so there is no work of ours, that God will pronoun to be a good work, but what is the effect of his creating powe that is, the product of his Second Creation: *created*, says t Apostle, *unto good works:* Eph. ii. 10. Good works are otherwise necessary to salvation, but as they are the exercises grace, by which we express the life and likeness of God: only, are they necessary unto salvation. How should grace seen and known but by works? First, God imprinted his o image upon our souls, in regeneration; and stamped us feat for feature, grace for grace, and glory for glory: but, becau this is hid and concealed, therefore are we to copy forth t image in a holy conversation, and to express every grace some duty or work of obedience. As those, that we call falli stars, dart from heaven, and draw after them long trains of ligh so God would have us to shoot up to heaven, but yet to leave train of light behind us: our graces must shine always: we mu go on in good works. And those good works are of no value account with God, of which grace is not the end or princi

What says the Apostle? *Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor....and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing:* 1 Cor. xiii. 3. can a man bestow all his goods upon the poor, and not be charitable? indeed, the word, that we translate *charity*, might, for the avoiding of some mistakes, better have been translated *love*: but, however, we must take *charity* for a disposition to relieve the wants and necessities of others with respect of love to God and his image: if this good work be not from grace, through a principle of love to God and obedience to his command, it is but the empty shell and husk of a good work, and it avails a man nothing. Yea, further: if, after this, *I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing:* if my soul burn not as clear and bright in love, as my body in the flames, it availeth me nothing: I burn only what was dead before; and offer a carcase, instead of a sacrifice. There is no work or duty, how specious soever, that is of any profit to the soul, if that work or duty hath not the life and power of some grace or other expressed in it.

This, then, is the First ground, why works without grace are fruitless: because they are empty and lifeless. Grace is the life and spirit of good works.

(2) All works and duties whatever, without grace, leave the Heart in the same estate of Sin, and therefore the Person in the same estate of Wrath and Condemnation, as before.

For,

[1] All of them are not a sufficient Expiation for the guilt of any one sin.

Should such men pray and sigh, till their breath were turned into a cloud, and covered the face of the whole sky; should they weep, till they drowned themselves in their own tears: yet, if all this could be supposed to be only the remorse of nature, and not true and godly sorrow, they would still be under the same state of condemnation as the most seared sinner in the world. The Prophet Micah tells of some, that bid very high for pardon and forgiveness, as if they were resolved to carry it at any rate whatever: *Wherewith*, say they, *shall* we *come before the Lord, and bow* ourselves *before the* most-*high God? Shall* we *come before him with burnt-offerings,* and *with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,* and *with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall* we *give* our *first-born for* our *transgression, the fruit of* our bodies *for the sin of* our souls? Micah vi. 6, 7: what high rates are here bidden, and yet all

this falls short! There is but one grace, and that is Faith, the can give us a right and title to that righteousness, that shall b a sufficient expiation and atonement for all our sins.

[2] All attainments and attempts, all endeavours and duties without grace, can never mortify and subdue the Power an Dominion of any one lust or corruption.

Men may divert, and chain, and restrain their corruptions and impale in their lusts, so that they shall not break forth into any outrageous wickedness: but, yet, without grace, they ca never subdue them; because it is grace alone, that can lay th axe to the root of this evil tree.

Notwithstanding, then, all, that hath been said concernin the power of nature, what men may do thereby and how fa they may go: yet here you see what impotency there is i nature, without grace; and what it cannot reach to perform.

But, this is not spoken, that, hereby, any should be di couraged from working; and, because some doubt of the trut of their graces, that therefore they should desist from a cour of holiness and obedience: this were plainly to thwart the whol design of this subject. No: all, that hath been said, is, t persuade men not to rest satisfied in any work of obedience o religion, in which some grace is not breathed or exercised; n to look upon them at all as inductive to salvation, as in them selves, but as in reference to true grace.

How many poor souls are there, who, because they run on a round of duties, because they do something that they call goo works, think that salvation is as surely their own, as if all th promises in the Scripture were sealed and delivered to them b God himself! and yet, poor creatures! they never examine regard from what principle this their obedience flows: wheth from a principle of grace; or from the old corrupt princip of nature, new vamped from some new operations of the Co mon Spirit. Believe it, this is not that obedience, that G requires, nor that he will accept: an inward groan, if breath by grace, is of more account with God, and will be more ava able to the soul, than the most pompous and specious servic of unregenerate men. What is it to God, when you offer r only the blind and the lame, but the dead also? Is it not rather abomination, than obedience? The Apostle tells us, *Without wor faith is dead:* James ii. 20. and it is as true, on the other side als that works, without faith and other graces of the Spirit, are r only dead, but rotten and noisome. Every duty, which m

perform in a graceless state and condition, God must needs loath, and them for it: the *prayer* of the wicked is an *abomination* unto the Lord: Prov. xxviii. 9. it is as hateful unto God, as vapours, that ascend up out of tombs from putrified bodies, are unto us.

What, then! must such persons give up themselves to sin therefore? God forbid! no, rather let such think thus: "If our duties and our righteousness be so loathsome, what are our sins and iniquities?" Though every sinner be *dead in trespasses and sins*, yet is it less offensive to have a dead carcase embalmed than to have it lie open. Still, therefore, continue working; but, in your working, first aim at the obtaining of grace, before you aim at the obtaining of heaven and salvation: let it, at no time, content you, that such and such duties you have performed; but look what grace you have acted in them: what is there of God breathing in this prayer, that I now put up? how am I in hearing, in meditation, in discoursing of the things of God? is my heart holy and spiritual? are my affections pure and fervent? are my graces active and vigorous? and, are they vigorous in this work of obedience? Else, to perform duties, and to neglect grace that alone can enable us to perform duties acceptably, is only to go to hell a little more cleanly.

DIRECTION ii. If you would work out your own salvation, as you must look to the Actings of Grace as well as to the Performance of Duties; so you must LABOUR TO GROW AND INCREASE IN THOSE GRACES, THAT ARE MOST ACTIVE AND WORKING.

And they are two, the grace of Faith, and the grace of Love.

To grow strong in these graces, is the most compendious way for a Christian to dispatch his great work. I may call them the two hands of a Christian: and he, that is most active in these, works out his salvation *with both hands earnestly*.

1. *The Actings of Faith are of mighty advantage to the working out of our salvation.*

Two senses there are, in which salvation may be said to be wrought out.

In Title:

In actual Possession and Enjoyment.

Now faith is a working out of the one, and a compendious furtherance towards the working out of the other.

(1) Upon our believing, salvation is already wrought out for us, in Right and Title.

He, that believeth, shall be saved: here is the Title. The great work is then done and finished, when once faith is wrought. And, therefore, when the Jews came to enquire of our Saviour how they should do to *work the works of God:* John vi. 28, 29 our Lord tells them, *This is the work of God, That ye believe on him, whom he hath sent.* Nay, further, as a faith of adherence or acceptance gives a right and title to salvation; so a faith of full assurance is this salvation itself: for, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen:* Heb. xi. 1: in its justifying act, it gives a title to salvation; in its assuring act, it gives the substance of the thing itself: for it is much at one to a strong faith, to believe heaven, and to enjoy it.

(2) Faith doth compendiously further and promote the working out of our salvation, in Actual Possession.

And that, because faith is that grace, which fetcheth all that ability and strength from Christ, whereby a Christian is enabled to work. Faith is not only a grace of itself, but it is steward and purveyor for all other graces; and its office is to bring in provision for them, while they are working: and, therefore, as a man's faith grows either stronger or weaker, so his work goes on more or less vigorously. When other graces are in want, and cry *Give, Give;* then faith betakes itself to Christ, and saith, "Lord, such a grace stands in need of so much strength to support it; and such a grace stands in need of so much support to act it: and I have nothing to give it myself; and therefore I come to fetch supplies from thee." And, certainly, this faith, that comes thus empty-handed unto Christ, never goes away empty-handed from Christ. What is it that you complain of? is it, that the work stands at a stay, and you cannot make it go forward? is it, that temptations are strong and violent; that duties are hard, irksome, and difficult? why set faith on work to go to Christ, and there you may be sure to have supply; because faith is an omnipotent grace: *All things are possible to him, that believeth;* and that, because all things are possible to that God and to that Christ, on whom faith is acted. There is no grace, nor no supply, nor mercy laid up in the Lord Jesus Christ, but it is all in the hands of a believer's faith; and he may take from thence whatsoever he needs, to supply the present wants and necessities of his soul.

2. *Another working grace is the fervent Actings of Love.*

Love is the great wheel of the soul, that sets all the rest a moving; and makes it like *the chariots of Aminadab,* to run swiftly towards its desired object. There is a mutual depen-

dence between faith and love, in their working: love depends upon faith to strengthen it, and faith depends again upon love to act it. As we love not that, which we do not know; and our knowledge of God and of the things of eternity is by faith, not by vision: so those things, which we do know and which we do believe, yet if we love them not we shall never endeavour after them. The Apostle therefore tells us, that *faith worketh by love.*

There is a Threefold spiritual love required to expedite our great work.

A transcendent love of God.

A regular love of Ourselves.

A complacential love unto and delight in our Work itself.

Now when the affections go out after these objects of love, this will much facilitate our great work.

(1) The Love of God is a great help to our duty.

Our Saviour therefore urgeth obedience, upon this very account: *If ye love me, keep my commandments:* John xiv. 15. And, says the Apostle, *This is the love of God*, that is, this is a certain sign, or it is the constant effect of our love to God, *that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous:* 1 John v. 3. they are not grievous, because they are His commandments, who is the love and joy of our souls.

Divine love always conforms itself to divine precepts: and that, for Two reasons:

[1] Because this grace, as it desires the beatifical union to God in glory, hereafter; for love is the desire of union: so, now, it causes an unspeakable union of will, and a supernatural sympathy of affection, betwixt God and the soul.

Which union cannot be a union of equality or entity, as is in the Persons of the Blessed Trinity: and, therefore, it is a union of subordination of a Christian's will to the will of God. Now what is this will of God? The Apostle tells us: *This is the will of God, even your sanctification:* 1 Thess. iv. 3. And the same Apostle tells us, in another place, *We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk....in them:* Eph. ii. 10. And is this God's will, and shall it not be our work? Hath God ordained that we should walk therein, and shall we be averse from or slothful thereunto? How can we pretend that we love God, while we neglect the only thing which he requires from us, holiness and obedience?

God wills our holiness, because there is no better thing that he can will, next unto himself: the image of God, next to himself, is the most excellent and chief good. Every thing, the nearer it approacheth unto God, the more desirable it becomes in itself: now that, which comes most near unto God, and advances the soul in some resemblance and similitude to him, is holiness and endeavours after obedience; whereby we become conformable unto God, and attain some faint shadows and essays of the divine perfections. The soul wills in order unto God's will. God wills holiness, because it is most desirable: and we must will our own holiness; because, if we love God as we pretend to do, our wills must be conformable to his holy will.

[2] Love to God is a help to duty, because it is in and by duty, that we enjoy the presence of God, and have communion and fellowship with him.

These are the lattices, through which God appears to the longing soul: and, though he many times vouchsafes but half smiles and little glances; yet, in these reserved communications, the soul finds so much sweetness, as engageth it to a constant performance of duties all its days. "Here," says the soul, "God was wont to walk in his sanctuary: here, have I heard his voice: here, have I seen his face: his Spirit hath here breathed upon me: his consolations have here refreshed me: and, therefore, here will I wait upon him as long as I live." "I remember well," says the soul, "when, in prayer and meditation, my heart hath been filled by him, poured out to him, and accepted with him. I remember when he filled me first with sighs, and then with songs; and both alike unutterable: and, therefore, I will keep to the performance of these duties, waiting for the further discoveries and manifestations of my God unto me."

(2) As love to God, so a regular Self-Love will much help and further our obedience and duty.

And then is self-love truly regular, when men love their own souls, as God loves them. Now God's love to the souls of men is such, that, though he wills *all men to be saved*, yet he wills that none shall be saved, but *through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth*: and, whilst we love ourselves, if we observe the same method and order, this self-love is always commendable and necessary. Desires after eternal happiness and salvation are natural to that soul, that is truly conscious of its own immortality; and of its eternal, unalterable state and condition: and, when these desires are directed to future happiness through

present holiness, then are they regular and become gracious. We are not so straitly limited by God's sovereignty over us, but, while we fix one eye upon our work, we may fix the other on our reward. God is not so strict in his prerogative over us, as to require service from us, from what we have already received from him: he is not as a cruel lord and master to say, "Obey me, though afterwards you perish: see to it, that you love and glorify me, though I eternally punish you:" though, considering that infinite distance we stand at from God, we could object nothing against the equity of his proceedings. No, but God hath so graciously twisted his glory and our duty together, that, while we promote the one, we do also promote the other; and, while we work for God, we do but work for ourselves. Now are there any, that need to be persuaded to love themselves? Is it not the great and general sin, that all men love and seek themselves? And do not men, by becoming self-lovers, become self-destroyers? They do: but it is because they seek themselves out of God's way, that they lose themselves for ever. Religion and holiness are not such severe things, as to exclude self-love: nay, right self-love is that, which is no where to be found separate from true grace. Ministers call upon men to exercise self-denial and self-abhorrence; and this the foolish world mistake, as if they exhorted them to divorce themselves from themselves, to lay aside all respect and consideration of self, and to offer violence to the most common principles of self-preservation: no; would to God we all sought ourselves more earnestly and constantly than we do, and that we all knew wherein our greatest interest and concernment did lie! then should we not leave our great work undone; nor gratify the sloth of our corrupt humours, and the sinful propensions of our carnal part; nor should we think what we do for sin and Satan we do for ourselves: no; all this is to hate ourselves: and wicked men, at the Last Day, shall know, that they have been their own most bitter and most implacable enemies; that they would not be content with any thing less, than their own eternal ruin. A true Christian is the only selfish man in the world: all others are not self-lovers, but self-destroyers. What shall I say more than this? The Apostle asks, did ever any man hate his own flesh? did ever any man delight to gash and burn, to rack and torture himself? Truly I may ask the quite contrary: do almost any love their own spirits, their spiritual part, their souls? This, they wound and gash, by many a bloody sin: this, they burn and sear, by hardness and *impenitency*: this, they go about to torture and

torment in hell for ever. Oh, therefore, be persuaded, at leng to take pity on yourselves: considering, that you are but d stroying, while you think you are embracing yourselves; an that that will be found but self-murder at last, which you no call self-love.

(3) A complacential Love to and Delight in your Work, i a great furtherance of it.

A wicked man serves God grudgingly: he murmurs at duties and looks upon them only as tasks and burdens; thinking every thing which he doth for God too much, too heavy and weighty: the commands of God are all of them hard sayings and grievou impositions, that he cannot bear. He could believe Chris sooner in any thing, than when he tells him, *My yoke is easy and my burden is light:* Mat. xi. 30: here he cannot believ Christ. "Thus much time," saith the slothful sinner, "must spend in prayer: and there must I humble myself to God, whom I hate; and confess before him those sins, that I love; and be that grace, that I have slighted. So much time, must I spend i reading the Law, that I never mean to observe; perusing ove only the sentence of my condemnation. And, so often, must fix and dwell upon holy and spiritual thoughts; which never at any time, darted into or passed intransiently; but they did dis compose me, and leave a damp and sadness upon my spir behind them." And, therefore, because there is not a holy com placency and delight in the service of God, all such men endeavours are both faint, inconstant, and languishing whi they are about them, and seldom do they re-assume them agai But a true Christian works with abundance of delight a cheerfulness in the service of God: in every duty, his so is filled full of holy affections, by which it soars up to heave duties are meat and drink to him, spiritual manna, in which takes more satisfaction and contentment than wicked men do their sins; and therefore he performs these duties so earnest because he doth it with complacency: all that he repines at, that natural necessity, sinful weakness and infirmities and worl employments, do purloin so much of his time from this gr work. Now when once the heart is brought to such a fra and temper as this, thus to delight in obedience and in the wo and service of God, then will this working for salvation go with power.

DIRECTION iii. Another Direction is that in the Text: WO *FOR SALVATION* WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

A trembling hand best performs a Christian's work.

Now this fear is not a fear of distrust or despondency; for that is so contrary to this duty of working for salvation, as that it stupifies and benumbs all endeavours, and is a great enemy to the performance of this duty.

But,

1. It is *a Fear of Solicitude and Carefulness;* as it stands opposed to carnal security, and that presumption, that is the common and ordinary destruction of most men.

This holy fear is the best preservative of true grace. The Apostle therefore tells us; *Thou standest by faith: be not high-minded, but fear:* implying, that they would not stand long, though they stood by faith, unless they were upheld with godly fear: and the reason is, because it is the property of fear to foresee and forecast dangers, and to put the soul in a posture of defence and security before they approach. For, as the Wise Man tells us, the *prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished:* Prov. xxii. 3. they are rash and confident in their undertakings, and so they pass on and are punished. Fear makes a Christian circumspect and considerative with himself, how he may keep from miscarriages in the performance of his great work. "If God call me to such a duty, how shall I perform it? If, to bear such a cross and affliction, how shall I glorify him under it? If, to conflict with such temptations, how shall I resist and overcome them? Yea, how shall I do to break through all difficulties, duties, and oppositions, that I, who am but a weak and feeble Christian, may meet withal? and how shall I do to bear up?" And, thus pondering what may be his duty, and forecasting what duties God may call him unto, he is enabled to do what is his duty at present, and what also may by providence hereafter become his duty. Nothing overtakes such a man, unexpected; nor doth anything surprise him, unprovided for it. And thus a careful fear enables him in the performance of his great work.

2. *A Fear of Humility and Holy Reverence of God,* conduceth much to the working out of our salvation: and that, in Three particulars.

(1) It much helps us in our great work, to fear God as our Lord and Master, that sees and overlooks all our works; observing both what we do, and how we do it also.

That servant must be desperately bold, that will dare to be idle, or slight and perfunctory in his work, while his master's

eye is upon him. Christians should consider God's eye is alw upon them; in praying, in hearing, and in every duty that th perform; yea, in every action of their whole lives. And, if t eye of a master, that is but a fellow-creature, nay but a fellc servant, can have such awe and influence upon his servant as make him careful how he works and what he works, and to ma him diligent in his work; should not the consideration of Go eye being upon us, who stands at an infinite distance from much more cause a holy fear and diligence in us, in doing wl our Lord and Master commands us?

(2) Fear God also, as Him, from whom you have all yc Power and Ability to work.

Fear him, lest, at any time, through any neglect or misc riage of yours, He should be provoked to suspend his influer and withdraw his grace from you, and to leave you to your o weakness and impotency, upon whose influence all your ol dience doth depend. This is the Apostle's argument in the te: *Work....with fear....for God worketh in you, both to will and to* Holy diligence in obedience cannot be more strongly enforc on an ingenuous spirit, than by considering that all that streng and ability, which we have to work, is received from God; a therefore should be improved for God, lest, for our sloth, deprive us of that which we make no use of.

(3) In working, fear God also, as him, that will be the Jud and Rewarder of your works for ever.

You perform them unto Him, who is to pass sentence up them, and upon you for them: and will you then dare to them slothfully and negligently? God will try every man's wc with fire, and will call every action to a severe and strict accou Every man's work shall be seen through and through: and th it shall be known, who hath wrought the works of God, a who hath fulfilled the will of Satan; and the final doom a irreversible sentence shall then be pronounced according men's works. God *will*, says the Apostle, *render to every m according to his* works: *To them, who, by patient continuance well doing, seek for glory....and immortality*, to them he w render *eternal life: But unto them, that are contentious, and not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness*, he will render ur them *indignation and wrath, Tribulation and anguish, upon ev soul...that doeth evil:* Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. Would you but th fear God as an upright and impartial judge, that will render u every one according to his works, how would this prevail w

you, so to work, that, at last, you might be found of God in well doing, and receive the blessed reward and sentence of the diligent and faithful servant, to enter into your Master's joy!

DIRECTION iv. If you would work for salvation successfully, then WORK SPEEDILY, WITHOUT DELAY; AND CONSTANTLY, WITHOUT CESSATION.

1. *Work Speedily, without delay.*

Delays, in all affairs, are dangerous; but, in soul affairs, usually they are damnable.

For,

(1) The longer you procrastinate and delay, the greater and more difficult will your work be at last.

Corruption will be grown more tough: ill humours will be grown more stubborn: your heart will be more hardened: your affections, being more habituated, will be more firmly engaged to sin: the Devil will plead right to you, by prescription; and it is hard keeping an enemy out, that hath had long possession.

(2) Consider what a desperate folly it is, to put off your work till to-morrow: you are not sure that you shall live to see another day.

And oh! what hazards do those men run, whose hopes of heaven depend upon no better a bottom, than their hopes of life; and whose eternal salvation is subject to as many casualties and accidents, as their present beings in this world are subject to! Man's breath is in his nostrils: and, yet, how do men suffer their souls and their everlasting happiness to depend upon nothing surer than their breath; that breath that every moment goes forth from them, and they know not whether ever it shall return to them again?

But, suppose your life and days should continue; and you should reach unto that time, whereof you have boasted, and wherein you have promised to mind the concernments of your soul's eternal happiness; yet, consider,

(3) The grace of God is not at your disposal.

And then, either,

[1] The Outward Call may cease, or it may grow more faint and low. You may not be so daily importuned and solicited for heaven, as now you are. Ordinances and opportunities may cease; or you, for your contempt may, be given over to a contempt and neglect of them.

[2] The Inward Dictates of your own Consciences and t Motions of the Holy Spirit may cease. Conscience may bribed to silence: and the Holy Ghost may be commissiona to depart after this present opportunity; and never more m you have its breathings and movings upon your hearts, if you not now listen to them.

[3] If inward motions do continue, are you sure, after t moment's refusal, that you shall obtain that Grace from God, t may make you willing to close with those motions? Leave, n therefore, the eternal salvation of your precious and immo souls at such hazards and delays. *Now is the* acceptable *time now is the day of salvation: To-day*, therefore, *if ye will hear voice*, even *while it is called To-day, harden not your hearts*; this is the only time and season for working.

2. As you must work speedily, without delay; so you m work *Constantly, without cessation or intermission.*

To stand still, is to backslide; and to cease working, is to un and unravel what you have wrought. You are not like men, t row in a still water; who, though they slack their course, find themselves in the same station: but you are to go agai tide and stream; the tide of your own corruptions, and t stream of other men's actions and examples. And the least termission, here, will be to your loss: hereby you will be carr far down the tide; yea, and much pains and labour will sca suffice to regain what a little sloth hath lost.

So much for this text.

The Lord make what hath been spoken profitable! Amen.

THE

ASSURANCE OF HEAVEN AND SALVATION,

A

POWERFUL MOTIVE

TO

SERVE GOD WITH FEAR.

HEB. xii. 28, 29.

WHEREFORE WE RECEIVING A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED, LET US HAVE GRACE, WHEREBY WE MAY SERVE GOD ACCEPTABLY, WITH REVERENCE AND GODLY FEAR: FOR OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS text contains in it a Doctrine, a Use, and a Motive.

The Doctrine is, *We* have received *a kingdom which cannot be moved.*

The Use or Inference from thence is this: Therefore, *let us serve God.*

And the Motive, to enforce this exhortation, is in these words, *for our God is a consuming fire.*

First. In the first part, which is the Thesis or Position, *We* have received *a kingdom which cannot be moved,* we must know, there is a Twofold Kingdom: a Kingdom of Grace, set up in the heart of a saint, where Christ alone reigns as sole monarch and sovereign; and a Kingdom of Glory, prepared for us in the highest heavens, where we shall reign as kings with Christ for ever.

If we take it in the former sense, for the Kingdom of Gra so the Apostle saith, we have a kingdom, that is, we have it ready in possession. Christ hath established his dominion o every believer: and, though he sits personally upon his thr in heaven; yet he rules in us by the vicegerency and deputat of his Spirit that received commission from him, and also the law of his Word enacted by it.

If we understand it in the latter sense, for the Kingdom Glory, which seems most congruous to the design of the Apos so, also, we have a kingdom, and that in a Fourfold sense.

By Grace, giving us the earnest of it.
By Faith, realizing it.
By Hope, embracing it. And,
By the Promises, assuring of it.

First. We have a Kingdom of Glory, in the Earnest First-Fruits of it.

The comforts and graces of the Spirit are very often, Scripture, called *the earnest of our inheritance:* so you hav in 2 Cor. i. 22. and in Eph. i. 14. An earnest, you know always part of the bargain: so God, to assure us that he i earnest when he promiseth heaven and glory to us, hath alre given us part of it in the graces of his Spirit. Grace and gl are one and the same thing, in a different print, in a sma and a greater letter: here, we have heaven in seminal inch tion; hereafter, we shall have it in consummate perfecti glory lies couched and compacted in grace, as the beauty c flower lies couched and eclipsed in the seed: therefore Psalmist saith, Psalm xcvii. 11. That *Light is sown for the righte* that is, the light of joy and of a future life are in the grace God's children as in their seed, and they shall certainly bud sprout forth into perfect happiness.

Secondly. We have a Kingdom of Glory, because F realizeth things future, and giveth an existence and bein things that are not.

This is that grace, to which nothing is past nor nothing ture. It contracts all things into present time, and make actually existent. It draws things, that are at a great dista from it, near to itself: and thus the Galatians' faith represer the death of Christ so visibly to them, that the Apostle told th he was *crucified among* them: Gal. iii. 1. It dives down i the gulf of future times, and fetcheth up things that as yet

not. It is much at one to a strong faith, to have heaven, or to believe it: this grace makes heaven as really present, as if it were already in possession: and therefore it is called, in Heb. xi. 1. *the evidence of things not seen*, and *the substance of things hoped for:* it is the very being of things hoped for; the being of those things, that as yet have no being.

Thirdly. We have a Kingdom of Glory, as in the view of faith, so also in the embraces of Hope.

And therefore hope is called, the *anchor of the soul*.....that *entereth into that within the veil:* Heb. vi. 19. that is, into heaven: it lays hold on all that glory, that is there laid up and kept in reversion for us. Hope is, in itself, a solid and substantial possession; for it stirs up the same affections, it excites the same joy, delight, and complacency, as fruition itself doth. It is the taster of all our comforts: and, if they be but temporal, it not only tastes them, but sometimes quite devours them; and leaves us in suspense, whether it be not better to be expectants than enjoyers. Heavenly hope gives the same real contentment and satisfaction: it antedates our glory; and puts us into the possession of our inheritance, whilst we are yet in our nonage: only it doth not spend and devour its object, beforehand, as earthly hope doth.

Fourthly. We have a Kingdom of Glory, because God hath assured to us the possession of it by his immutable word of Promise.

And therefore it is called *eternal life, which God, that cannot lie*, hath *promised:* Tit. i. 2. God's word is as good security, as actual possession. It is this word, that gives us right and title to it; and this right we may well call ours. Hence we have it, and it is observable, Mark xvi. 16. *He, that believeth..... shall be saved:* here is assurance of salvation, for the future. But, in John iii. 18. it is, *He, that believeth not, is condemned already. He, that believeth, shall be saved: He, that believeth not, is condemned already.* Unbelievers are no more actually condemned, than believers are actually saved: only, what God promiseth, or what God threateneth, it is all one whether he saith it is done or it shall be done; for damnation is as sure to the one, and salvation as certain to the other, as if they were already in their final estate. So, then, we have a kingdom: that is, God, who cannot lie, hath promised it; and his promise is as much as actual possession itself.

This kingdom is described to us, in the text, to be immov- able: We have *a kingdom, which cannot be moved.* It is not lik the kingdoms of the earth, that are all subject to earthquak and commotions; but we have *a kingdom, which cannot be mov-* And, if we understand this of the Kingdom of Grace in hearts of believers, then the sense is, it can never be so mo as to be utterly removed: though it be shaken and batter- yet *the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal* o *The Lord knoweth* who *are his;* as the Apostle speaks, 2 Tim 19: indeed, as all earthquakes are caused by some vapours cluded in the bowels of the earth, so is there enough in us cause shakings and earthquakes: there are those corrupt a sinful steams of lusts, that are still working and heaving in o breasts; that, were not God's truth, wisdom, and power all e gaged to keep and preserve us, we should be soon moved fro our standing and overthrown. If we understand by it the King dom of Glory, that is certainly immoveable: We have *a king dom, which cannot be moved:* there, we shall be free from th temptations of Satan, from the infirmities and corruptions of th flesh, from the mutability and fickleness of our own wills; an shall have a blessed necessity imposed upon us, to be for eve holy, and to be for ever happy.

So much for the thesis, *We* have *a kingdom that cannot b moved.*

Secondly. From the thesis, the Apostle proceeds to draw Practical Inference: wherein we may observe, both what h exhorts us unto, and how we ought to do it.

The matter of the duty, to which he exhorts us, is, *Let u have grace, whereby we may serve God.*

The manner how we ought to serve God is set down in on word, and that is *acceptably: Let us.....serve God acceptably* which that we may do, he directs us to the means; and that is in all our serving of God let us address ourselves to him, *wit reverence and godly fear:* let us serve God acceptably, with re verence and godly fear.

I shall only, as I pass along, take a taste of this part of th text, before I fix upon what I principally intend. The wo here translated *reverence* signifies shamefacedness or bashfulnes such, as is commendable in inferiors, while they are in th presence of their superiors. And it implies in it two thing first, consciousness of our own vileness and unworthiness:

condly, an overawing sense of another's excellency. For modesty, or reverence, consists in these two things; in low and debasing thoughts of ourselves, and in a high esteem of others. This the Apostle exhorts us to in the text, by the word *reverence.* Whence observe this: That a due sense of our own vileness and of God's glorious majesty, is an excellent qualification in all our services to make them acceptable. Let us *serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.*

Thirdly. You have, in the text, the Motive, whereby the Apostle enforceth this exhortation: *For our God is a consuming fire.*

These words are cited out of Deut. iv. 24. where Moses, to bring the Israelites from idolatry, represents God to them as *a jealous God* and *a consuming fire.* And here the Apostle makes use of them, to compose men into a holy awe and reverence of God in serving him.

Whence observe,

First. That an irreverent and fearless worship of the True God, provokes him and deserves his consuming wrath, as well as the idolatrous worship of a false god.

Moses makes use of the same words, to deter the Israelites from idolatry and worshipping a false god, as the Apostle makes use of, to excite us to a reverence and worshipping of the True God.

Secondly. Whereas it is said, that *our God is a consuming fire;* observe, That our peculiar interest in God is no encouragement to cast off our most awful fear of God.

Our God is a consuming fire: though he hath laid down his enmity against us, yet he hath not laid down his sovereignty and majesty over us. Indeed these two expressions, *our God,* and *a consuming fire,* at first blush and glance seem to look strangely and wistly one upon another: but the Holy Ghost hath excellently tempered them. He is *our God:* this corrects that despairing fear, that otherwise would seize upon us, from the consideration of God as a consuming fire. And he is *a consuming fire* also: this corrects that presumptuous irreverence, that else the consideration of our interest in God might possibly embolden us unto.

I. You see now, from the explication of these words, what an excellent copious portion of Scripture I have unfolded unto

you, wherein indeed is contained the true art and method o serving God acceptably. It is the fear of God, that quicken us to serve him: and this fear of God is pressed upon us an wrought in us, by two strong principles: we have *a kingdom* and, what is strange too for those that have a kingdom of God *our God is a consuming fire*, and therefore let us fear him.

Now this is such a principle, that carnal men are not apt t apprehend. They say, "If we have *a kingdom, that cannot b moved*, why then should we fear? And, if *God* be such *a con suming fire*, why should we ever expect that kingdom, since w are but as stubble?" But our Apostle hath well conjoined then together: and, from that conjunction, I shall raise and prosecut this one PROPOSITION.

THAT, EVEN THOSE, WHO STAND HIGHEST IN THE LOVE AN FAVOUR OF GOD, AND HAVE THE FULLEST ASSURANCE THEREOF AND OF THEIR INTEREST IN HIM AS THEIR GOD, OUGHT, NOTWITH STANDING, TO FEAR HIM AS A SIN-REVENGING GOD AND A CON SUMING FIRE.

In prosecuting this Proposition, I shall shew how consisten the Grace of Fear is with other Graces of the Spirit: that it i no impediment to

Full Assurance
Love of God
A Spirit of Adoption
Holy Rejoicing, nor
Holy Boldness.*

i. In shewing you that the grace of Fear is NO IMPEDIMEN TO FULL ASSURANCE, I shall consider,

What Fear of God it is, that a believer ought always overawe his heart with.

Upon what Grounds and Considerations he is thus to d- What there is in a reconciled God, that may be ground and motive to overawe our hearts with fear of his majesty.

* I have borrowed this Division from a subsequent part of the Treatis in order to render the Author's method obvious, which, for want of it i this place, was obscure. I have also, with the same view, made a sligh alteration in his mode of expressing one or two of the subsequent head EDITOR.

1. *What Fear of God it is, that a believer ought to overawe his heart with.*

Fear, in general, is described to be a passion or an affection of the mind, arising from the apprehension of some great evil with difficulty avoidable.

And, as it is observed by some, it usually carries in it Three things.

A doubtfulness or uncertainty of the event, what it may prove: and this is always a torment to the mind.

A terror, that ariseth from the greatness of the evil apprehended and feared.

A careful flight and aversion of it.

(1) There is, in Fear, a doubtfulness and uncertainty of the event.

And this is a torment, when a man is racked in suspense and doubt what to expect; whether or no the vengeance of God will not fall heavy upon him; whether or no he be not fuel on which this consuming fire will for ever prey. Now this is not that fear, which the Apostle, in this text, exhorts us to serve God withal: no, to *serve God with reverence and godly fear*, is not to serve him with a doubtful, anxious, and solicitous fear of what the event may prove: nay, such a fear as this, is inconsistent with actual assurance; and those, who are perplexed with it, cannot say *we* have *a kingdom*, nor cannot fear their God as *a consuming fire*. There may be a genuine, awful fear of God as *a consuming fire;* where there is not the least doubt remaining concerning our final state; where the soul is fully assured, that God will be to him not a fire to consume him, but a sun to cherish him for ever. I will give you one or two remarkable scriptures to this purpose. In Heb. iv. 1. *Let us fear*, says the Apostle, *lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it:* here the Apostle quickens them to the exercise of holiness, from the fear of falling short of heaven: yea, though they had assurance by God's promise of it; *lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest*, yet you should fall short of it. And so the Apostle triumphs in his assurance, 2 Cor. v. 1. *We know that.....we have a house.....eternal in the heavens:* and yet, in verse 11. he quickens himself to the discharge of his ministerial office, from the fear of God's wrath; *knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men:* though he was assured of glory, yet he quickens

himself to the discharge of his ministerial function, by the fe of God's wrath. So that it is evident there may be a fear God's wrath exciting unto duty; where yet there is a full a surance, beyond all doubting and hesitation, of escaping wra So that this is not that fear, that the Apostle excites them wl have assurance unto.

(2) There is a fear of terror; a shivering in the soul, upc the apprehension of the greatness of the evil feared, but avoide too: and this is consistent with full assurance.

Thus the terror of past dangers sometimes causeth as muc terror, as if we were again to encounter with them. So, whe believers look back upon that wrath and fiery indignation, tha they have narrowly escaped; upon that lake of brimstone, tha boils and burns behind them, wherein thousands of others ar for ever swallowed up; this cannot but affect them with a hol horror and fear of God's wrath against sinners, though the have full assurance of his love.

(3) There is also, in Fear, a flight and aversion from the ev feared: and this, also, is consistent with full assurance.

Noah had full assurance, from the promise of God, for his preservation from the deluge; and yet it is said, that Noah, being *moved with fear*, built him *an ark*. Full assurance to escape evil is far from hindering, as some calumniate it, the use of means to prevent that evil: yea, the assurance, that we have to escape hell and wrath, is of the greatest and most effectual influence, to make us careful to use those means whereby we may escape it. See this in 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Having these promises.....let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God:* so, in Tit. ii. 11, 12, 13. *The grace of God, that bringeth salvation.....*teacheth us to deny *ungodliness and worldly lusts.....Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of.....our Lord Jesus Christ:* so, in 1 John iii. 3. *Every* one, *that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as* God *is pure.*

Thus you see what fear it is, that the Apostle exhorts believers to, who have a kingdom: not a fear of perplexing doubtfulness, but such as is consistent with their full assurance: that is, so to fear the wrath of God, as to have our hearts affected with terror at the greatness and insupportableness of that wrath, though they have escaped it; and to fear so, as to avoid all sin,

and all that exposeth to that wrath. In these two senses, they, that are assured that God is their God, ought to fear him as *a consuming fire.*

2. Let us now see *upon what Grounds and Considerations a believer, who is assured of God's love and favour to him, ought yet to fear him.*

(1) As a Consuming Fire.

[1] The consideration of that mighty and dreadful power, that God puts forth in the punishing and afflicting of the damned, may strike fear into the hearts of those, that are fully assured of God's love and favour to them.

Such a fear as this, the holy angels themselves have: though they are secured by Christ in that blessed state and condition that they enjoy; yet, to see God stripping and making bare his arm, to lay on weighty strokes of everlasting vengeance upon their fellow angels that are fallen, makes them to tremble and stand astonished at the almighty power of God: and this keeps them at a due distance, in their thoughts and apprehensions of his dreadful majesty. And should it not much more make us to tremble with an awful respect of the power of God, to consider how he crusheth and breaks the damned in hell, by his own almighty arm stretched out, in the full power of his wrath, to their everlasting destruction? It is from this power of God, that Christ himself enforceth the fear of God: Mat. x. 28. *Fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell:* though God should assure you, that he would never destroy you in hell; yet, because he is able to do it, therefore you should fear him.

[2] This fear may arise in the hearts of the children of God, who are most assured of his love, from the consideration of the wrath and dreadful severity of God, as well as of his power.

If a father corrects his slave in his wrath, this will cause fear and dread in the son, though he knows that wrath shall never fall upon him: so, a child of God, who is assured of the tender love and favour of God to himself, yet, when he sadly considers that wrath and indignation that is in God against the damned; when he sees his Heavenly Father angry, though it be not against him; this must needs strike a reverential fear and awe into his soul. Now this reverential fear will remain for ever: *The fear of the Lord endureth for ever.* Yea, when the children of God shall be made for ever happy in heaven, yet this fear shall be then increased, and not at all diminished: the more they see of the power of the wrath and severity of God executed upon the

damned, the more they fear and reverence this powerful, thi sin-revenging God. And this kind of fear is no prejudice tc their full assurance and joy, nor shall it be prejudicial to thei complete and perfect happiness in heaven.

[3] The consideration of the desert of sin, should cause a holy fear of God, even in those, that are fully assured of hi love.

When a child of God looks upon sin, and sees what wrath anc torment he hath deserved by it, though he be assured by the testimony of the Spirit of God that he is pardoned; yet it cannot but fright him to consider, that he should deserve so great condemnation: as a malefactor, though he be pardoned, yet if he be present at the execution of his fellow offenders, must needi be struck with fear and horror, that he should be guilty of the same crimes, for which they are to suffer such sharp and crue punishments. What the thief on the cross said unto his fellov thief, *Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?* the same may I say to believers: Do not you fea God, seeing you deserve, at least to be in the same condemnatio with those wretches, that lie howling in hell?

[4] Another ground of fear is, that it is in itself possible that all this wrath should be your portion for ever; even your who are most assured of glory.

And is not this just cause of fear; if not of expectation, yo at least of terror? Indeed, as God hath been graciously please to bind himself in a covenant of grace and mercy to you, so is impossible that this wrath should fall upon you: but, yet, su a supposition as this is enough to cause fear in the most assure heart; to think, that, if God had not engaged himself t promise to deliver him from that wrath, what then would ha been his condition to all eternity? Would not such thoughts these make you tremble? Suppose a man were fast chained the top of some high rock, hanging over a bottomless gul though he knew and was assured that he should not fall into being immoveably fastened there, yet, when he looks down th deep and dangerous precipice, and sees the gulf foaming an raging under him, will not a cold fear thrill through his heart think, "O! if I were not here fastened by a strong chain this immoveable rock, what would become of me?" even Believers, you, that are most assured to escape hell, this is yo condition: you are fastened to the Rock of Ages by the u changeable promise of God, that will ever hold you fast; b

yet, every time you look down into the bottomless gulf that is under you, where thousands are swallowed up to all eternity, doth not such a thought as this is fright you, "O! if I were not fastened to this immoveable rock; if God had not made an everlasting covenant with me, ordered in all things and sure; I should also have been swallowed up with the rest of the world, and have gone down quick into hell?" Alas! we are all of us held over the lake of fire and brimstone in the hands of God: some, he holds in the left-hand of his common providence; and others, he holds in the right-hand of his special grace: those, whom he holds only in the hands of his providence, he lets fall and drop, one after another, into hell, where they are swallowed up and lost eternally: those, that he holds in the hands of his grace, it is true it is impossible upon that supposition that ever they should fall into hell; yet, when they think, "O! if we were not upheld!" yea, how possible it was that they should not have been upheld; this apprehension must needs strike them with fear and terror: though not with a perplexing doubtfulness, concerning the safety of their condition; yet with a doubtful apprehension of the possibility of what would have been their condition, if God had held them over hell only, by the hand of his common providence.

[5] Though you are assured that you shall escape this eternal death, yet it will be a narrow escape: and that may cause fear.

It will be an escape with very much labour and difficulty. Though you are held in the hands of God, yet he leads you along to heaven by the gates of hell: and this is sufficient to cause fear. Our way to heaven is so strait, the rubs in it so many, our falls by them so frequent, our enemies so potent: that, though our assurance may make us not to fear but that, in the end, we shall escape hell; yet it will be high presumption for us, not to fear how we may escape it. The Apostle brings in the salvation of the elect themselves with a *scarcely*: 1 Pet. iv. 18. *If the righteous scarcely be saved.* Now this *scarcely* doth not imply that there is any uncertainty in the end, but only the great difficulty in the means of obtaining it. So, then, the end is certain; that is, a believer's salvation from hell: and that is just cause of rejoicing. But the means are very difficult and laborious: and that is just cause of fear.

Briefly, then, to apply it, in one word. Though you are assured, through faith, of the pardon of your sins, yet tremble

at the thought of that wrath and hell, that you have escaped. It is observed, that those are the fixed stars, that tremble most. So Christians, who are fixed immoveably in the unchangeable love of God, as stars fixed to the heavens in their orbs: yet they are most of all in trepidation and trembling, when they reflect upon themselves; and think, that, instead of being stars in heaven, they might have been firebrands in hell. Those, to me, are suspicious professors, that make a great blaze with their joys, in the apprehensions of their right to heaven; but never tremble, under the apprehensions of their deserts of hell.

(2) Having shewed you upon what account God is to be feared as he is *a consuming fire*, in the next place I shall shew you what there is in the consideration of God, as *our God*, that may enforce a holy awe and fear of him.

And, indeed, if ever it was necessary to press men to a due fear and awe of God, it is so now: since, on the one hand, the open profaneness of ungodly men, and, on the other hand, the pert sauciness of some notional professors who are apt to think that communion with God consists in a familiar rudeness, do plainly testify to all the world, that there is little fear or reverence of him in their hearts. And now, whilst I am shewing what reason there is, that God's dearest children should fear him as a Reconciled Father, let wicked men, in the mean while, sadly consider with themselves, what great cause then they have to fear him, who is their sworn enemy: if God's smiles are tempered with that majesty, that makes them awful; surely his frowns then must needs carry in them an astonishing terror, that makes them insupportable. We may observe how unexpectedly, sometimes, from the goodness and mercy of God, that is, the sweetest and most natural attractive of love, the Scripture draws an inference to fear God: Ps. cxxx. 4. *There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared:* not only a sin-revenging, but a sin-pardoning God, is here set before us as the object of our fear: these two sister-graces, fear and love, are nourished in the soul by the same attribute, God's pardoning mercy: the great sinner in the Gospel is said to love much, because much was forgiven her; and, here, much fear, as well as much love, is the result and issue of God's pardoning grace. And so you have it, in Hos. iii. 5. *They shall fear the Lord and his goodness.* And, in Exod. xv. 11. Moses, describing the most glorious attributes of God, tells us, that he is *glorious in holiness, fearful in praises:* even then, when we are to praise God for his mercy;

et are we to fear him, as being fearful in praises. And there-
re Nehemiah, in Neh. i. 5. praying to God, says, *O Lord....*
e great and the *terrible God:* wherein? is it in overwhelming
ingdoms; in bringing upon them decreed destruction? is it in
e fierce execution of his wrath against sinners? no; says he,
Lord....the terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for
em that love him. So again, in chap. ix. 32. O *God...the*
ighty and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy.

Let us now consider what there is in the mercy and favour of
od, as he is a Reconciled God unto us and in covenant with us,
at may justly render him the object of our fear.

[1] The consideration of that dreadful way and method, that
od took to manifest his mercy towards us, is sufficient to affect
ur hearts with fear, though we stand fully possessed of his
avour.

In Gen. xxviii. when God had made many gracious promises
ll along that chapter unto Jacob, of blessing him, of keeping
im in all his ways, and of multiplying his seed as the dust of the
arth, you would think this was no terrible thing: and yet,
ecause God reveals this mercy to him in an awful and amazing
anner, a gap is opened in heaven, a bright ladder reaching
rom earth to heaven; God on the top of it, angels on every
ound of it: though the message was joyful, yet the strange
ind of delivering of the message makes Jacob cry out, *How*
readful is this place! it *is none other*.....than *the gate of heaven!*
he very gate of heaven becomes dreadful, when it is represented
n such a majestical manner.

But, the way, that God took for his mercy to arrive at us, is
nuch more dreadful, than any such dream or vision; and, there-
ore, we should be the more deeply affected with fear and
rembling, even then when God speaks peace and pardon to us:
or, if we consider either the Terms upon which he is become
urs, or the Way by which he discovereth himself to be ours,
oth of them are full of dread and terror.

1st. It cannot but strike our hearts with fear, to reflect upon
hose dreadful Terms, upon which God is contented to be
induced to become our God.

His mercy towards us is procured upon terms of infinite justice
nd severity. Divine vengeance arrests our Surety, and exacts
om him the utmost satisfaction. That curse, that would for
ver have blasted and withered the souls of all mankind, seizeth

upon Christ in all its malignity. That wrath, some few drops c which scalds the damned in hell, was given him to drink off i a full and overflowing cup: He did bear *the chastisement of ou peace*, and by *his stripes we are healed.* Nor would God, upo lower terms, have consented to a reconciliation betwixt wretche man and himself, than the precious blood of his Only Son. A of old, friendship betwixt two persons was wont to be attest and sealed by a sacrifice, as we find it both among heathen autho and also in Scripture; an instance of which we have of Laban in Gen. xxxi. 54. where Laban and Jacob, returning to amity make a ratification of it by a sacrifice: so, the atonement, th God made betwixt us and himself, is solemnized by a sacrific even the sacrifice of his Own Son, *as of a Lamb without spot* blemish. In this blood, the treaty betwixt God and man stan ratified and confirmed. O dreadful mercy, that clasps ar embraces us about with arms dyed red in the blood of Jes Christ! But, is not this ground enough, to cause a holy fear God to seize upon every soul, that shall but seriously consid this sad tragedy of pardoning grace? if a king resolve to forgi a malefactor, upon no other terms than a pardon writ with th last drop of the heart-blood of his dearest friend, who is ther that is so hardened, that will not tremble at such a mercy as th is, though it save him? so is the case betwixt God and us: th contents of the pardon are joyful, but it is written all with th blood of Jesus Christ, reeking warm from his very heart; an who then would not fear even a forgiving God?

2dly. Consider the Way and Method, that God takes with u when he becomes our God; and that is most dreadful, and mus needs make the most confirmed heart to shake with fear an trembling.

Indeed God deals not with us in such rigour, as he dealt wit Jesus Christ his Son: but yet, usually, when he becomes ou God, when he enters upon us as his possession; first, he shake all the foundations of our hearts, breathes in flames of fire int our very marrow, cramps our consciences and unjoints our souls Oh, the tempests and storms of wrath, that God pours into wounded conscience, when it is under searching convictions Oh, the smart and anguish of a wounded spirit, when God instead of balm, shall only chafe it with brimstone! And ye this is the common method, that God useth to prepare souls fo himself: he seems to arm himself in all his terrors against them

singling them out to the conflict; and, when they give up themselves for lost, lying gasping for hope, scarcely at length are administered some few reviving comforts. It is with these, as it was with the children of Israel upon Sinai: first, they were astonished with a confused noise of thunder, the air full of lightning, the mountains all on a flame, and the earth trembling under them, before they heard that comfortable voice, in Exod. xx. 2. *I am the Lord thy God:* so is it with convinced sinners: God dischargeth his threatenings against them, that speak more dreadfully to them than a voice of thunder: he speaks to them out of the midst of flames, and every word scorcheth up their hearts; and, when they stand trembling and despairing, once at length they hear those reviving words, *I am the Lord thy God.* What hearts are there now, that such a dreadful mercy as this would not overawe? Those discoveries of God's love, that break in upon the soul in the midst of a doleful and gloomy night of despair and despondency, work naturally a sweet kind of terror and a shivering joy.

And that is the First Consideration. The dreadful method, that God takes to procure mercy for us, even by the death of his Son, and to apply mercy to us, even by the terrors of a convinced conscience, is a sufficient ground to affect our hearts with fear, though we stand fully possessed of his favour.

[2] Though God be our God; yet to consider, that it is possible to lose his favour and the sense of it, is enough to affect the heart with a holy fear, even of a Reconciled God.

It is true, God's original and fountain-love can never be dried up: Whom he loves, he loves *unto the end:* John xiii. 1. And *my loving-kindness will I* never *utterly take* away *from him:* Ps. lxxix. 33. But, yet, the streams of this fountain-love may be very much obstructed from flowing freely down upon us: though we shall never again be children of wrath, yet we may be children under wrath. Every presumptuous sin, which we commit, raiseth God's displeasure against us: he is angry with us, upon every more notorious and known sin, which we commit: and since, then, we are in danger every day of falling into gross and foul sins, and are kept only by his almighty and free grace from the worst, what cause have we to fear, lest we forfeit his favour and turn his displeasure against us! Yea, again, though we should be preserved from sin and continue in his love, yet we cannot assure ourselves that we shall continue in the sense and

comfortable apprehension of it: comfort is most arbitrary, and at God's free dispose; neither hath he engaged himself to bestow it upon any by any absolute promise: though now his lamp shines clearly upon thy tabernacle, and thou rejoicest in his smiles; yet how quickly may he wrap thee up in a dark night of desertion, and turn all thy songs into mourning! Thou, therefore, that art now assured that God is thy God, fear lest ere long thou mayest not think him to be so: certain thou art he is so now; yet, before it be long, possibly, through thy miscarriage, thou mayest not think him to be so: and it is all one as to comfort or discomfort, whether God be thy God or not, if thou dost not apprehend him to be so, and therefore fear him.

[3] Every frown and stroke toucheth to the quick, that cometh from a Reconciled God and a Loving Father; and therefore, the rather fear, because he is thy God.

Every little blow from a father strikes deeper and causeth more smart, than greater blows from other persons: others strike the body; but, when a loving father strikes, he wounds the heart. So is it here: the nearness of the relation between God and us, puts an anguish and sting into every correction. As the Psalmist speaks in his own case, Ps. lv. 12, 13. *It was not an enemy, that reproached me....neither was it he, that hated me....then could I have borne it...But it was thou,* a friend, *mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.* These are sad accents. And so is it here: the blows of a sin-revenging God may indeed break the back; but the blows of a gracious and reconciled Father break the heart. Fear, therefore, lest, through some miscarriage of thine (and such miscarriages thou art every day guilty of) thou shouldest provoke thy God to lay some heavy stroke upon thee; which will be the more smart, from the aggravation that provoked love puts upon it.

And thus you see now, in these Three particulars, what ground there is from the consideration of God as our God, to enforce a holy fear of his divine majesty upon our hearts. He is our God; therefore fear him, because the way that he became ours is most dreadful: he is our God, as yet; fear lest we may not apprehend him so long: he is our God; therefore fear him, because every stroke and frown from a God in covenant comes with an aggravated smart and sting.

ii. Now this Holy Fear, as it is no enemy to Full Assurance, as

I have shewed you, so neither, IS IT ANY WAY PREJUDICIAL TO A MOST ARDENT LOVE OF GOD.

Filial love and filial fear are twins: but not such as Jacob and Esau, that strive to supplant one another. The pure flame of divine and heavenly love is like other flames: the higher it mounts, the more it vibrates and trembles.

Indeed St. John tells us, 1 John iv. 18. that *perfect love casteth out fear.* It should seem then, that all fear of God is swallowed up in those hearts, that are once brought into a holy love. But the Apostle doth very well explain himself, in the reason that he gives of this assertion, in the next words: *perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment* in it.

Hence, therefore, we may distinguish of a Twofold Fear of God.

The one is tormenting; causing unquiet rollings and estuations in the heart, in a sad suspense of what our future and eternal state may prove: and this is slavish. Now this fear perfect love casts out and expels: for where divine love is perfected in the soul, there are no more such suspenses, hesitations, and doubtings, what will become of it to eternity. Now by *perfect love* may be meant, either that state of perfection, to which we shall attain in glory, where our whole work to all eternity shall be to love and please God; or, else, that perfection, that consists in its sincerity in this life. If we take it for that perfection of love, that shall for ever burn in our hearts when we ourselves shall be made perfect; so, it is certain that it will cast out all tormenting fears: for, certainly, if, in heaven, hope itself shall be abolished, much more shall fear be abolished; for, there, every saint shall have much more than a full assurance, even a full fruition of glory, and they shall know themselves to be for ever confirmed in that blessed state which shall prevent all doubts and fears. If we understand it of that perfection of love, that we may attain to in this life, so also the strong and vigorous actings of love to God cast out all tormenting fears: it is not possible, that that soul, which actually loves God with a vigorous and most ardent affection, should, at the same time, be racked with distracting fears of hell and damnation; for it is the sense of God's love unto the soul, that draws from it reciprocal love again unto God: *We love him,* says the Apostle, *because he first loved us*: that is, as strong as our apprehensions are of God's love to us, so strong will our love be in its returns to God again: water riseth naturally as high as its spring; wherefore, the assurance

of God's love, being the spring from whence our love flows such as is our love, such will be our assurance also: if then our love be strong in its actings, it must needs cast out fear; because it flows from that assurance, with which tormenting fear is utterly inconsistent.

But there is another kind of fear, that is not tormenting: and that is an awful frame of heart, struck with reverential apprehensions of God's infinite majesty, and our own vileness and unworthiness: and this, perfect love doth not cast out; but it perfects this awful, sedate, calm fear of God. The angels and the glorified saints in heaven, whose love is so perfect, that it can neither admit of an increase nor abatement, yet stand in awe and fear of the terrible majesty of the Great God: the same infinite excellencies of the Divine Nature, that attract their love, do also excite their fear. See how the Prophet makes this an argument to fear God: Jer. x. 7. *Who would not fear thee, O King of* Saints? for, said he, in all the earth *there is none like unto thee:* one would rather think that God's unparalleled excellencies and perfections should be a motive to love: "Who would not love thee, O King of Saints, since there is none in all the earth like thee?" yea, but filial fear and filial love are so near a kind and cognation, that they may well be enforced by one and the same argument: *Who would not fear thee?*....for, in all the earth, *there is none like unto thee.* This is the excellency of divine love: it is an attractive of love, and it is an excitement unto fear.

Well, then, though we have no chilling fear of a hot and scorching hell; yet let us have an awful, reverential fear of the glorious God, whose excellencies are such as cannot be matched, nor scarcely imitable by any in heaven or in earth.

iii. The Fear of God is NOT CONTRARY TO THAT FREE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, WHICH WE RECEIVE IN OUR FIRST CONVERSION.

It may, perhaps, seem to some, that the Apostle opposeth them in Rom. viii. 15. *Ye have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but....the Spirit of Adoption, whereby* you *cry Abba, Father.*

To this I answer: That, by *the Spirit of Bondage* here, the Apostle means the legal work of the Holy Ghost in conviction that is preparatory to conversion: which work, usually, is accompanied with dreadful terrors, apprehending God not as a reconciled Father, but as an incensed and severe Judge. Now

says the Apostle, *ye have not received* this *Spirit of Bondage again* thus *to fear:* this is not that fear, that the consideration of God, as your God and Reconciled Father, excited in you: this is not that fear, that the Apostle exhorts Christians unto; but an awful, reverential fear of God, whereby we should stand in awe of his dread majesty, so as to be preserved from whatever may be an offence to his purity. And if, in any night of desertion, it should happen that the hearts of true believers should be overwhelmed with dismal fears, apprehending God as enraged and incensed against them, standing in doubt of the goodness of their spiritual condition; if this seize upon them after they have had *the Spirit of Adoption,* let them know that this fear is not from a work of the Holy Ghost in them: they have not received *the Spirit of Bondage* again so to fear: it is not a work of the Holy Ghost to excite in them doubts and fears of their spiritual condition, after they have once had assurance of the goodness thereof; but it ariseth either from some ignorance, or from some sin that they have committed, that interposeth betwixt them and the clear sight of the discoveries of God's love.

Now for the better understanding of this place, because I judge it pertinent to my present purpose, I shall open it to you somewhat largely in these following particulars.

1. *The preparatory work of Conversion is usually carried on in the soul by Legal Fears and Terrors.*

I call that a Legal Fear, that is wrought in the soul by the dread-threatenings and denunciations of the Law. The Law, if we take it in its native rigour, without the merciful qualification of Gospel-grace, thundered out nothing but execrations, wrath, and vengeance against every transgressor of it; representing God armed also with his almighty power to destroy them. This is that glass, that shewed them their old sins in most ugly shapes: now they see them stare ghastly upon their consciences, that before allured them: the scene is quite changed, and there are nothing but dreadful apparitions of death and hell fleeting now before them; and God brandishing his flaming sword over them, ready to rive their hearts asunder. They, who lately were secure and fearless, now stand quaking under the fearful expectations of that fiery wrath and indignation, that they neither have hope to escape, nor yet have strength or patience to endure. This is that Legal Fear, which the curse and threatenings of the Law, when set home in their full acrimony, work in the hearts of convinced sinners.

2. *This Legal Fear is slavish, and engenders unto bondage.*

There is a bondage, under the reigning power of sin; and there is a bondage, under the terrifying power of sin. The former makes a man a slave unto the Devil, and the latter makes a man a slave unto God. And such slaves are all convinced sinners, that have not yet arrived to the free and filial *Spirit of Adoption;* but are kept under bondage under the wrath of God, and manacled in the fetters of their own fears. So saith the Apostle: Heb. ii. 15. to *deliver them, who, through fear of death,* and of hell that follows after it, *were all their life-time subject to bondage.*

3. *This Slavish Fear is wrought in the soul by the Spirit of God, though it be slavish.*

For it is his office, to convince, as well as to comfort; and to cast down by the terrors of the Law, as well as to raise up by the promises of the Gospel: John xvi. 8. He shall convince *the world of sin;* and therefore it is said in this place, Rom. viii. 15. We *have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear;* implying, that those terrors, that seize upon the conscience, are the work of the Holy Ghost: we bring ourselves into bondage, under sin; and he brings us into bondage, under fear. If therefore, at any time, thou, who art a secure sinner, art suddenly surprized with fearful and trembling thoughts concerning thy present state of sin and thy future state of wrath, beware thou listen not to any that would persuade thee it is nothing but a fit of melancholy, or a temptation of Satan to drive thee to despair; but know assuredly, that thy conscience is now under the hand of the Holy Ghost himself: he raiseth those tempests of fear in thee; and, as usually it is fatal to divert and hush them, so is it no less than ignorant blasphemy, to impute his works to melancholy, or to the temptations of Satan.

4. *When the soul is prepared for the work of grace by the work of conviction, when it is prepared for comfort by the work of humiliation, the same Spirit, that was before a Spirit of Bondage, becomes now a Spirit of Adoption.*

That is, the Holy Ghost persuades and assures us of the love and favour of God; and enables us, through divine light beaming in upon our consciences, to behold him as a gracious and a reconciled Father, whom before we trembled at as a stern and terrible Judge. The same wind, that, in a raging storm, tossed the sea to and fro in restless heaps, in a calm doth only gently move and fan it with pleasing purles. So is it here. That Spirit

of God, that, in conviction, raiseth a tempest in the conscience, afterwards breathes forth a sweet calm of peace and comfort upon it: the same Spirit, that, before, was a *Spirit of Bondage*, when the soul is sufficiently thereby prepared for grace, becomes a *Spirit of Adoption*. This is that *Spirit of Adoption*, that is here spoken of: and it is called so, because it witnesseth with our spirits, that we are the children of God by adoption. God hath but one Son by eternal generation, and that is Jesus Christ; called, therefore, *the only-begotten of the Father*, John i. 14. He hath many sons by creation; even all mankind: so Adam is called *the son of God:* Luke iii. 38. He hath many sons also by adoption; even all, that are effectually called according to the purpose of his grace; all, that are sanctified, who are of strangers made *heirs of God*, and co-*heirs with* Jesus *Christ* himself, who is the natural son of God; as it is Rom. viii. 17. Now because it is the work of the Holy Ghost to testify to us this our great privilege, that we are enrolled in the family of heaven and become the children of God, therefore he is called *the Spirit of Adoption;* that is, the Spirit, that witnesseth to us our adoption.

5. *To whom the Spirit hath once been a Spirit of Adoption, it never more becomes to them a Spirit of Bondage and Fear.*

That is, it never again proclaims war, after it hath spoken peace: it never represents God as an enraged enemy, after it hath represented him as a Reconciled Father. It is true, the Spirit of God always keeps up his convincing office in the soul of the most assured saint: it convinceth him of sin, and of wrath due to him for sin. There is a twofold conviction: there is a conviction of the evil of particular actions, and there is a conviction of the evil of our state and condition: now, though, upon particular miscarriages of God's children, the Holy Ghost secretly smiteth their consciences, shewing them the guilt and evil of their sins, thereby bringing them to repentance and a godly sorrow; yet the Holy Ghost never again testifieth to them, that they are in a graceless, unregenerate, and sinful estate and condition, and in a state of wrath and condemnation: it brings them to a deep humiliation, by convincing them of the evil of their actions; but it never brings them into legal terrors, by convincing them of a sinful state. Neither, indeed, can it be so: for the Spirit of God is a Spirit of Truth; and, to witness that we are yet children of wrath, who are indeed the adopted children of God, this were a false testimony, and therefore

utterly abhorred by the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of Truth. Doth the same fountain send forth sweet water and bitter? Doth there proceed from one and the same mouth, blessings and curses? Certainly, the same Spirit, that hath once pronounced us to be in the love and favour of God, never after pronounceth us to be cursed, and under the wrath of God.

But you will say, "Have not the best of God's children sometimes concluded themselves to be reprobated and cast away? Have they not lain under sad and fearful apprehensions of God's wrath? Have not some of them, who formerly walked in the light of God's countenance and flourished in their assurance, yet afterwards been so dejected, that they would not entertain any comfort, or hopes of mercy and salvation?"

To this I answer: It is true, it may indeed so happen, that those saints, whose joys and comforts are at one time fresh and verdant, at another time wither and drop off; so that they look upon themselves as rotten trees, destinated to make fuel for hell. Whence proceeds this? It is not from the Spirit of God: but as carnal men are apt to mistake the first work of conviction for melancholy or for temptation, so this really proceeds from one of these two causes. When the children of God, after full assurance, come again not only to entertain doubts of their condition, but also to despair of themselves, looking on themselves as persons that God hath singled out to destruction; this proceeds not from the Holy Ghost, but from melancholy or temptation. Sometimes, natural Melancholy obstructs the sense of divine comfort: as it is in clear water, when it is still and transparent the sun shines to the very bottom, but if you stir the mud, presently it grows so thick that no light can pierce into it: so is it with the children of God, though their apprehensions of God's love be as clear and transparent sometimes as the very air that the angels and glorified saints breathe in, in heaven, yet, when once the muddy humour of melancholy stirs, they become dark, so that no light or ray of comfort can break in to the desertate soul. And then, sometimes, the Devil causeth these tragedies by his Temptations, that so, if it were possible, he might drive them to despair: he hates their graces, he envies their comforts, and therefore he would persuade them that all their former joys were but delusions, proud dreams and presumptuous fancies, and that they are still *in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds*

iniquity; and, by such suggestions as these, when he cannot hinder the work of grace, he strives what he can to hinder the sense of comfort. If, therefore, those, that have once rejoiced under the comfortable persuasions of God's love to them, the Holy Ghost witnessing himself to them to be a *Spirit of Adoption* by being in them a Spirit of Sanctification, now find themselves under the bondage of legal fears and terrors and slavish dejections, looking upon themselves as under the revenging wrath of God and as persons devoted to destruction; let them know, that such fears proceed not from the convictions of the Spirit of God, who hath been a *Spirit of Adoption*, but from the delusions of Satan: for those, that once receive *the Spirit of Adoption*, never receive *the Spirit of Bondage again to fear;* that is, to fear with a slavish, tormenting fear.

6. *A Reverential, Filial Fear of God, may and ought to possess our souls, while the Spirit of God, who is a Spirit of Adoption, is, by the clearest evidences, actually witnessing our son-ship to us.*

Let men boast what they will of their high gospel-attainments, yet certainly they have not the genuine disposition of God's children, whose love to him is not mingled with fear, and whose fear of him is not increased by their love. Love! it is the gage and measure of all our affections: and, according to the proportion of our love to God, such will be our fear; that is, the more we love God, the more we shall fear his displeasure and the loss of his favour. It is in vain for us to pretend love to God as our Father, unless we fear him also as our Lord and Master. Christ was his *only-begotten Son*, and certainly had much more clear assurance of the love and favour of God, than any adopted sons can possibly have; yet the Scripture ascribes a holy, awful, reverential fear of God even unto him: Heb. v. 7. *When he had offered up prayers.....with strong* cries *and tears..... and was heard in that he feared:* it may be rendered, he *was heard because of his godly fear.* So, in Isa. xi. 2. *The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.....the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;* speaking of Christ. If therefore he feared God, who was himself to be feared as God, equal to him and his Eternal Son, how much more ought we to fear the Great God, who are, as it were, but upstarts in the family of heaven! we, wretched and forlorn outcasts, that were but lately raked out of the dunghill; and, by mere pity, taken up into the bosom of God, and nurtured as his children!

And, thus, you see that the fear of God is not in the least contrary to the free Spirit of Adoption.

iv. An Awful Fear of God is NO IMPEDIMENT TO A HOLY REJOICING.

Indeed slavish fear damps all true joy. Those, that fear and expect the revengings of God, cannot have any true joy. They may have a kind of mad jollity, that spends itself in noise and tumults: they may roar out songs of mirth, only to drown the loud roarings of their own consciences. Such as these are like your new liquor, that works over into foam and froth, when the bottom is thick and troubled: so, in this false joy, the countenance runs over with laughter, when yet the heart is brimful of the wrath of God. Of such the Wise Man speaks, Prov. xiv. 1 *Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful.*

But a Filial Fear of God puts no check at all upon our holy rejoicing in him. Spiritual joy is not of that flashy nature; but it is a sober and a severe grace: it is joy, mixed with fear. And because of the mixture of these two together, the fear of God with joy in the Lord, therefore we find these two are promiscuously ascribed each to other. So, in Isa. lx. 5. Their hearts *shall fear and be enlarged:* you know it is the property of joy to extend and enlarge the heart: fear contracts and draws it together; but, here, fear is said to dilate the heart, to denote to us, that a Christian's fear is always conjoined and mingled together with his joy. And so, on the other hand, it is said, Ps. ii. 11. *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling:* fear, with trembling, is more proper and natural; but, because of the mixture of these two graces in the heart of a Christian, therefore the Holy Ghost thus expresseth it, *Rejoice with trembling;* for great joys, as well as great fears, cause a kind of trembling and fluttering in the heart: as it was with the two women, whom the angels assured of Christ's resurrection, Matt. xxviii. 8. *They departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy;* so is it with those Christians, who, by the eye of faith looking upon the death and into the sepulchre of Jesus Christ, are assured that he is risen for their justification, cannot but have their hearts filled with a quaking and a fearful joy. Even a Christian's strong praises are breathed out with a shaking and a trembling voice.

So that godly fear is no impediment to a holy and a severe rejoicing in God as our Saviour.

v. Godly Fear LAYS NO CHECK UPON OUR HOLY FREEDOM AND BOLDNESS WITH GOD.

God hath established a throne of grace, whereon he sits; and unto which he invites his people to approach, with a becoming confidence: Heb. iv. 16. *Let us come boldly unto the throne of grace.* As that emperor counted his clemency disparaged when any delivered a petition to him with a shaking hand, as though he doubted of his favour: so God loves, when we make our addresses to him, that we should do it with full assurance of faith; nothing doubting of acceptance with him, and of an answer from him. He, that asks timorously, only begs a denial from God. But, yet, that this boldness may not degenerate into rudeness and irreverence, he requires that our freedom with him be tempered with an awful fear of him: we must come in all humility and prostration of soul, with broken hearts and bended knees, to touch that golden sceptre that he holds forth to us.

Thus you see, in these Five things, how consistent the grace of fear is with other graces of the Spirit. It is no impediment either to a full Assurance, to Love, to a Spirit of Adoption, to a Holy Rejoicing, or to a Holy Boldness.

Now because I have made frequent mention of Filial and Slavish Fear, that you may the better understand what each of these means, I shall briefly give you the difference betwixt them.

They differ, in their Concomitants, and in their Effects.

FIRST. Slavish Fear hath always Two dreadful Concomitants: and they are Despair, and Hatred or Enmity against God.

First. In Slavish Fear, there is always some degree of Despair.

This slavish fear is joined with dreadful expectations of wrath. A slave, that hath committed a fault, expects no other than to be punished for it without mercy: so those, that lie under this slavish fear, apprehend and account of God no otherwise than the slothful servant; as a severe lord and a cruel tyrant, that will exact punishment from them to the utmost of their deserts: they expect no other, but that certainly God's wrath will kindle upon them and burn them eternally; and this makes them live, as the Apostle speaks in Heb. x. 27. In *certain fearful* expectations of wrath and *indignation which shall devour* them as *adversaries.* This kind of horrid fear, I doubt not, is common to

most wicked men: and, though they brave it out, and most of them speak high matters of their hopes of heaven and salvation, yet, at the same time, their own hearts and consciences tell them sad and misgiving stories of hell and everlasting wrath.

But a true and filial fear of God looks at the wrath of God, with dread and terror; but not with expectation. There is this difference. Slavish Fear looks upon the wrath of God; and expects it: Filial Fear looks upon it as due; but not with expectations that it should be inflicted upon it.

Secondly. Slavish Fear is always accompanied with some degree of Enmity and Hatred against God.

It is natural for us to hate those, that we fear with a slavish fear. He, that thinks God will certainly punish him, must out of self-love needs be provoked to hate God. Hence is it, that the soul, that lies under the terrors of the Law, wisheth that there was no such thing as hell and eternal damnation; nay, that there was no God to inflict this upon it. This proceeds from this slavish fear of God.

But a reverent fear of God is joined with a holy love; as children who love their parents, but yet stand in awe of them.

So much for the Concomitants of this fear.

SECONDLY. For their Effects.

And that, both as to Sin, and as to Duty.

First. As to Sin.

First. Slavish Fear dreads nothing but Hell and Punishment; but Godly Fear dreads Sin itself. The one fears only to burn: the other fears to sin. As Austin saith well, "He fears hell only, who fears not to sin, but fears to burn; but he fears to sin, who hates sin as he would hate hell."

Secondly. Slavish Fear usually restrains only from external, and those also the more gross and notorious acts of sin: but Holy Fear overawes the heart from Inward and Secret Sins; yea, from the least sins whatsoever.

Secondly. And then, as for Duty also, in Two things briefly.

First. A Slavish Fear of God makes men to consult how they may fly from God: as Adam, when he had brought guilt upon his conscience by his fall, hid himself from God in the garden. Guilt loves not the presence of its judge.

But Godly Fear is still exciting the soul to approach near to God in duty. And therefore David saith, Ps. v. 7. *In thy fear will I worship towards thy holy temple.* The fear of God encourageth the soul in the performance of duty.

Secondly. Slavish Fear contents itself with external performances: just so much as will serve the turn, to satisfy the demands f conscience.

But Holy Fear sanctifies the Lord in duty, as well as satisfies conscience. And therefore you have it, in Isa. viii. 13. *Sanctify he Lord of Hosts* in your hearts, *and let him be your fear, and..... our dread.*

Thus much, briefly, for the difference betwixt Filial and Slavish Fear.

II. I come now to the APPLICATION.

USE i. And the First Use shall be by way of corollary. IF THE CONSIDERATION OF GOD AS A CONSUMING FIRE OUGHT TO AFFECT THE MOST ASSURED CHRISTIAN WITH A HOLY FEAR AND DREAD OF GOD, HOW MUCH MORE THEN MAY IT SHRINK AND SHRIVEL UP THE HEARTS OF UNGODLY SINNERS!

If it make God's own children tremble, to look into hell, and to see those heaps of miserable wretches that are there burning for ever, shall it not much more make you tremble, who are liable every moment to be bound in bundles, and to be cast in to burn among them? When a city is on fire, it is terrible, to see it rage, afar off; to see it spew up smoke and flames, though at a distance; and he, that is not affected with t, is inhuman: but he is more than stupid, that doth not tremle to see it devour whole streets before it, ruining all till it pproach near his own dwelling. Sirs, this consuming fire hath ready seized upon millions of others, and burnt them down to the lowest hell. Do not you hear Dives, in the Gospel, y "Fire, Fire?" The greatest part of the world is already rnt down: and, if their case makes not your hearts to shake d tremble, yet methinks your own should. This fire is catchg and kindling upon your souls; and, the next moment, may ake you brands in hell. But, alas! what hope is there to fright men that are fast asleep? Such a dead security hath ized upon the hearts of most, that it is almost impossible to ouze them; and there is but little hope, but that they will be urnt in this their sleep.

Yet, if it may be possible to awaken you, consider,

1. That *it is only God's wrath against sinners, that makes him terrible to his saints.*

They are afraid of that fiery indignation, that burned against

the wicked: and shall not the wicked then much more be afraid that must themselves feel it? *Our God*, says the Apostle, *is a consuming fire:* but to whom is he such a consuming fire? not to those, certainly, whose God he is: *He shall burn up all the wicked of the earth as stubble.* That God doth not always style himself a gracious God and a reconciled Father, but sometimes puts on dreadful titles, his children owe it to the wicked: against them alone it is, that he arrays himself with all his terrors. As a father may affright his children, by putting on those arms, that he useth only against his enemies; so God daunts his own children, by appearing in his dread power, his severe justice and consuming wrath: but how much more may it appal his enemies, upon whom he intends to execute all this in the utmost rigour and extremity!

2. Another Consideration, that may make the most secure sinner to tremble, is this: That *God himself will be the immediate inflicter of their punishments.*

They shall be consumed by fire, and offered up as a burnt-sacrifice to the wrath and justice of God; and that fire, that shall for ever burn them, is God himself: *God is a consuming fire.* I do not deny, but that there is another material fire, prepared and blown up in hell for the punishment of the damned; but, certainly, their most subtle and exquisite torture shall be from God himself, who is this *consuming fire.* This wrath of God, which shall for ever burn and enflame the souls of the damned, is called *fiery indignation*, Heb. x. 27. That fire, that destroyed Nadab and Abihu, was but a type of this; and the antitype infinitely transcends the type: the dreadfulness of their temporal death by fire was but a faint resemblance of the death of the soul. What fire must that be, of which that extraordinary fire, that fell down from heaven itself, was but a mere shadow? As the fire, that came down upon Elijah's sacrifice, did lick up the water that was poured into the trenches; so this *fiery indignation* of God shall, in hell, melt down the damned, as it were, and then lick up their very spirits and souls. It is said, Ps. civ. 4. that God maketh his angels *a flaming fire:* it is the nearest representation that is given of the angelical nature, that abounds both in subtlety and force: He maketh his angels *a flaming fire.* Now when Christ saith, Go into those flames of fire, *prepared for the Devil and his angels;* why the devils themselves are flames of fire: and what fire can be more piercing than themselves, who have power over fire? Yet the

a greater fire than they: *God is a consuming fire;* a fire, so finitely scorching, as will burn and torment even fire itself. It ould be unspeakable, terrible wrath in God, if he should make se of his creatures for the punishment of the damned: who ould bear it, if God should only keep a man living for ever in e midst of a furnace, though but of a gross, earthly fire and ames? or, if God should bind a man hand and foot; and cast im into a deep pit full of toads, adders, and scorpions; and ere let him lie for ever? God knows all the several stings, at are in his creatures; and he can take out of them the most arp and piercing ingredients; the sharpness of the sword, the flammations of poisons, the scorchings of fire, the anguish of ins, the faintness of diseases; and, of all these, can make a ost tormenting composition: and, if he should make use of is composition, what intolerable anguish would this cause! If, en, creatures can cause such torture, oh! what a dreadful thing it to fall into the hands of God himself! when God conveys wrath by creatures, it must needs lose infinitely in the very nveyance of it: it is but as if a giant should strike one with a aw or a feather: so, when God takes up one creature to strike other with, that blow can be but weak; and, yet, how terrible e those weak blows to us! What will it be then, when God all immediately crush us by the unrebated force of his own alighty arm? You, therefore, that persevere in sin, and in security o, consider who you have to deal with; not with creatures, it with God himself: and do you not fear that uncreated fire, at can wrap you up in the flames of his essential wrath, and rn you for ever? *Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be rong,* says God, *in the day that I shall deal with thee?* The ery weakness of God is stronger than men. God can look a an to death: the breath of a man's nostrils is a soft and quiet ing; and yet the very breath of God's nostrils can blast the ul, and burn it to a very cinder. Oh! then tremble to think, hat wrath his heavy hand can inflict upon thee: that hand, at spreadeth out the heavens, and in the hollow of which he olds the great waters of the sea; that hand of God, in which s great strength lies; oh! what wrath will it inflict upon thee, hen it falls upon thee in the full power of his might!

3. *This Consuming Fire, after it hath once seized upon the soul, for ever unquenchable.*

Indeed thou mayest hinder it from kindling upon thy soul.

As when a house is on fire, they use to spout water upon the walls of the neighbouring houses, to keep the flames from catching hold of them; so you may, by sprinkling the blood of Jesus Christ, and by moistening yourselves with the tears of true repentance, prevent this consuming fire from preying upon you: but, if once it kindles, it will there burn everlastingly. It is not like your sublunary fires: these spend the matter they feed on; and, be they of never so great force, they must at length themselves starve for want of fuel: yea, the sooner they consume, the sooner are they themselves consumed; as, in straw, and other light combustible matter. But God is such a fire, as consumes without diminishing; and his power is such a power, as destroys the soul, and yet perpetuates it. He is such a wise and intelligent fire, as consumes the damned, and yet repairs them; and, by tormenting, still nourishes them for future torments. As Minutius speaks: the same breath of God, that destroys the soul, still keeps it alive, that it may be eternal fuel for itself. Hence is it, that hell-fire is described to be such, as shall never be quenched: Mark ix. 44. And why? but because *the breath of the Lord, like a fiery stream*, is still kindling of it. How in the midst of this devouring fire must the damned dwell without any period, either to their being or to their torment: and, when they have lain there millions and millions of years, still is it but a beginning of their sorrows, and they are as far from a release and discharge as they were at the first. Think with yourselves, how long and how tedious a little time seems to you when you are in pain: you complain then, that time has leaden feet, and wish that the days and hours would roll away faster. Oh! what will it be then, when you shall lie in hell; when the intolerableness of pain shall make every hour seem an age, and every year seem a long eternity itself, and yet you must lie an eternity of those years there? This makes their torment doubly everlasting. Methinks, the dreadful thoughts of this eternally consuming fire, should make the stoutest heart to quake; or, at least, to cause a cold fit of fear, before this burning and scorching torment begins.

4. *God is such a Consuming Fire, as will prey upon the soul that tender and spiritual part of man.*

The more gross the subject is, the more dull are the pains that it suffers; but, where the subject is spiritual, there the anguish must needs be extreme. The sharpest torments, that the body is capable of, are but dull, in comparison of what the soul

can feel: when God himself shall lash the soul, that more refined part, all comparisons fall short of expressing the anguish of it: to shoot poisoned darts inflamed into a man's marrow, to rip up his bowels with a sword red hot, is as nothing to this. Think what it is to have a drop of boiling, scalding oil, or melting lead fall into your eye, and make it boil and burn till at last it falls out of your head; such torments, yea infinitely more than this, is it to have the wrath of God fall upon your souls. The body is a kind of fence to the soul: it damps and deadens the smart, as a blow upon a clothed man is not so painful as upon one that is stark naked: now if the soul sometimes feels such smart and pain through the body, what shall it feel when God shall pour his wrath upon it stark naked?

5. *The longer thou livest in thy sins impenitently, the more dost thou prepare thy soul to be fit fuel for this Consuming Fire to devour.*

This is but like the oiling of a barrel of pitch, which of itself was apt enough before to burn. Those, whom the wrath of God snatches away in the beginning of their days, are made fuel for that consuming fire: and, if it be done so to the green tree, what will be done to the dry and rotten tree? Thou, that hast stood many years rotting in the world, when God shall come and cut thee down and cast thee into unquenchable fire, how soon wilt thou kindle and how dreadfully wilt thou burn, having no sap left in thee to allay and mitigate those flames! Certainly, would but the most hardened sinner, here present, call his thoughts aside awhile, and seriously bethink himself what he hath been doing ever since he came into the world, this must needs make him fear and tremble; to consider, that, all this time, he hath, by his sinning, been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, heaping up coals, yea burning coals, upon his own head. Every time you sin, what do you else but cast in another faggot to that pile of much wood, prepared to burn you for ever? Oh, that these dreadful and amazing considerations might, at length, rouze and awaken your hearts to fear this consuming fire; and to tremble at that wrath, that is now kindling in God's breast against you, and which will, if you repent not, ere long kindle upon you!

"But," you will say, "to fear God, only because he is a Consuming Fire, merely because of his wrath and fiery indig-

nation, is but, at best, a Slavish Fear: it is but to fear him as the devils do, for they *believe and tremble;* and of what use and benefit will such a fear as this be?"

Answ. 1. It is true, to fear God merely upon the account of wrath is but a Slavish Fear; but, yet, it is far better to fear God slavishly, than to perish securely.

That will come with redoubled terror, which comes unexpectedly. How intolerable will hell be to those, especially, that never fear it till they feel it! When sinners shall see themselves surrounded with flames of fire, before ever they thought themselves in any danger; when they shall awake with the flames of hell flashing and flaming about them; what screechings and yellings will this cause! This is to perish, as a fool perisheth; to go on securely in sin, till unexpectedly a dart suddenly strikes through his liver. Whatever the event be, yet it becomes the reason of a man to be affected with fear, proportionable to the evil that he lies obnoxious to. Therefore, whether this slavish fear ends in torment or not, yet it is more rational to fear what we are exposed to it, than to be secure and go down into torments, and never to fear them till we feel them.

Answ. 2. This fear, though a Slavish Fear, is of great efficacy to deter men from the Outward Acts of more gross and scandalous sins.

He, that puts hell betwixt him and his sins, will scarce be so daring as to venture through a lake of fire and brimstone to commit them. God thought he had set a sufficient guard upon the Tree of Life, when he placed *cherubims and a flaming sword* to keep men from it. But, to keep men from sin, he hath placed a guard far more dreadful than angels or a flaming sword: he hath placed himself, *a consuming fire*, to deter men from sin; and they, certainly, that have any fear or dread of God upon their hearts, will judge it too hot a work to break through this fire to their lusts. The thoughts of hell and those everlasting torments due to sin, have doubtless been often used with good success to repel Satan's temptations.

Answ. 3. Where the Fear of Wrath doth prevail to restrain men from sin, this is a good effect; for it doth lessen and mitigate that wrath, that they fear.

On those, that add iniquity to iniquity, without fear, God will heap plague upon plague, without measure. He proportions men's punishments to their sins; and those, that fear most, shall

el least. That fear of theirs, which keep them from the gross cts of sins that others boldly rush into, shall likewise keep them rom the sorest torments that others shall for ever suffer.

Answ. 4. This Slavish Fear is isagogical: that is, it is preparatory to and inductive of a Filial and Holy Fear of God.

We usually fear God, first, as a Revenging Judge; before we come to fear him with a reverential, filial fear, as a Reconciled Father. As the poet of old fabulously fansied, that the giants heaped mountain upon mountain, that they might scale heaven: this is true in Christianity: the way to climb heaven, is, by laying one mountain upon another, even Mount Sion upon Mount Sinai. Those, commonly, prove the most stable and stayed Christians, that have been most harassed by legal terrors, before they enjoyed the sense of comfort: for the structure of grace in the heart is quite contrary to other buildings: it stands firmest, when it is laid upon a shaking and trembling foundation: it is a seed, that never thrives so well, as where the heart is most broken up, and wherein the wrath of God hath made long and deep furrows.

To conclude this, methinks what hath already been spoken should fill the heart of every carnal wretch with fear: methinks is should make him cry out, with those sinners in Sion, Isa. xxiii. 14. *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* Can the Drunkard hear these things, and yet put his intemperate cups to his mouth with a steady hand? Can the Swearer hear these things, and yet his tongue move steady in his mouth, and not tremble when he raps out oaths? Certainly, how secure and confident ever men may now be; yet there is a time coming, when the wrath of God shall melt down their hearts like wax, in the midst of their bowels. Death is a thundering preacher; and it will make you fear the dreadful representations of that fiery indignation, that shortly it will display before your eyes in all its terrors. Oh! when your eyes shall swim in the night and in the dark, and it cannot be long first, when you shall meet with those dreadful shapes and visions of a flaming hell and a more flaming God, it will be too late then to fear; and, alas! it will be too late then to hope: God will then laugh at your calamity; and mock at you, when this unseasonable fear cometh. Be persuaded, therefore, to entertain a fear of God, at last; though

but a slavish fear: this is the preparation, that the Holy Gho works in the heart, in order to a filial and a holy fear of God.

USE ii. Another Use, that we may make of this point, is th IF GOD BE A CONSUMING FIRE, HOW HIGHLY DOTH IT CONCERN TO LOOK OUT FOR A SCREEN, THAT MAY FENCE US FROM THO EVERLASTING BURNINGS!

We are stubble and fuel, fully prepared: our sins have mad us so; and, for us to stand it out against God, is no other than for dried stubble to challenge the devouring fire.

Now God, that he might not break forth upon us and destroy us, hath himself prepared a screen to hide and shelter us from this flaming wrath; and that is Christ, the Mediator. We have a lively type of this in Aaron: Numb. xvi. 48. when the rebellious Israelites mutinied against Moses, God did suddenly break forth upon them, and slew almost fifteen thousand of them dead upon the place: as fire runs on a train of powder, so did this wrath of God pass swiftly from one to another, till Aaron interposed and stopped it: there stood that mighty priest, as a bulwark betwixt the living and the dead, and intercepted the res from this destroying wrath; and, though it overwhelmed so man thousands, yet it could not bear down his powerful intercession he alone was the fence and safeguard of a perishing people Christ, upon the cross, maintains the same station; interposin betwixt the living and the dead: the wrath of God consumes a before it, that is not under the protection of that screen: there it stops; and, though it seized fiercely upon him too, yet it neve burnt through him to reach those that fled for security to tha refuge set before them. In a general conflagration, even cha and stubble may be secure, under the covert of an adamantin wall: though all the wicked of the world shall burn togethe and all believers be in themselves as combustible matter as they yet Christ interposeth as a wall of adamant betwixt stubble an stubble, and, when the wrath of God hath consumed the one, h stands and keeps off the impressions of it from the other. Indeed, there is a wall, that stands betwixt God and every wicke man; but it is a *wall of partition*, as the Apostle calls it, Eph ii. 14. it is a wall, that separates them from the love and favou of God, and hides his face from them: a partition of dry an rotten boards may keep off the light and kindly influences of th sun; but it is no fence against the rage of fire, but rather increase

and augments it: so, wicked men are separated from the love and favour of God by their sins; Isa lix. 2. *Your iniquities have separated between you and your God;* yea, and they keep off his cherishing influences, but they contribute to his fiery wrath. Now Christ is a wall of defence, that separates his from the wrath and indignation of God. A wall of crystal is a safe defence against the force of fire, yet is it no obstruction to the warm beams and cherishing light of the sun: such a crystal wall is Christ, that keeps off God's fiery indignation from us, but yet conveys to us the cherishing and reviving influences of his love.

Let me now persuade and prevail with you to betake yourselves to this shelter. The same storm of fire and brimstone, that destroyed Sodom, hovers over all the wicked of the world; and we are as Lot, still lingering behind: let me therefore hasten you, as the angel did him, to your Zoar; to get under the protection of Christ, whither the fiery indignation of God cannot pursue you. In the former instance, when the Israelites saw so many of their fellows slain by an unperceived stroke, what running and crowding was there, think you, to get behind the priest! we are all in the same danger, but we have a more prevalent High Priest: there are thousands dying and perishing under the wrath of God; and shall not we then, with fear and trembling, press close behind our High Priest, that by him we may be hid from this consuming fire?

USE iii. The next Use shall be, TO EXHORT YOU TO A HOLY FEAR AND REVERENCE OF THIS GREAT AND TERRIBLE GOD.

I lately gave you several considerations, enough to daunt the boldest sinners, and to bring them at least to a slavish fear: be persuaded now to advance it a degree higher, and to overawe your hearts with a holy, filial fear of God. It is the same exhortation, that Solomon gives us, Prov. xxiii. 17. *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.* This is a true Christian's frame; when, in all the affairs and actions of our lives, in what company soever we are, or whatever we are doing, the fear of God is still upon us; when, in all our converse in the world, this fear of God doth still fill and possess our hearts.

I shall only give you a few particulars, and leave them to your serious consideration.

1. This Holy Fear of God *will keep you from a Vain and Frothy Spirit.*

The heart of man is the great receptacle of thoughts. The most part of them are light and feathery: they fly up and down as thick, and to as little purpose, as moats in a sun-beam. It is strange to observe, what a giddy thing the mind of man is: as an empty vessel rolls to and fro, and is tossed up and down by every wave, never sailing steadily; so is the vain mind of man driven by every foolish and impertinent thought, till the fear of God, that is, the ballast of the soul, poise it and make its course steady and even. Certainly, if any thing be of force to compose the heart into a sober, serious frame, it is the consideration of God's great and dreadful majesty; the fear of which will fill us with noble and substantial thoughts, how we may escape his wrath, and how we may secure to ourselves eternal happiness These are important thoughts; and they ought to be our great and only care: that so we may approve ourselves to God; and be, at the Last Day, found of him in well-doing. Before the heart is ballasted with this fear of God, it runs after every vagrant thought, that comes cross us or fleets before us; as children run after every feather, that the wind drives: but the fear of God fixes this fleetiness, and brings the heart to a holy consistency and solidity in its thoughts. It is this fear that unites the heart: and therefore David prays, Ps. lxxxvi. 11. *Unite my heart* unto thee, that I may *fear thy name.*

2. The Fear of God *is an excellent Preservative against all Sin.*

Slavish fear may keep wicked men from committing gross and flagitious crimes: but this holy fear overawes the heart from secret and hidden sins; yea, from the sins of the heart, that none can see, but only God and a man's own conscience: and therefore it is said, Ps. xix. 9. *The fear of the Lord is clean;* that is it keeps the soul clean from the defilement of sin. There are defilements of two sorts: defilements of the flesh, when men wallow in gross and sensual sins; and defilements also of the spirit, and such are they that reside in the heart, and break not forth into outward act. From both these the fear of God cleanseth us: so, in 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Let us cleanse ourselves,* says the Apostle, *from all filthiness* both *of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* And, indeed, wherever the fear of God is implanted, it will overawe us, as well from offending God in our thoughts as in our actions; and make us, that we shall be as afraid of sinning against him by unbelief and impenitency, as by murder and blasphemy.

3. This holy Fear of God *is a most sovereign Preservative against Hypocrisy.*

What is hypocrisy, but a mocking of God to his face? It is a design to put a solemn cheat upon God. Certainly, where the fear of God overawes the heart, we shall not dare to abuse his holy and reverend name, as hypocrites do, in their making mention of him. When we speak of him with our lips, but never think of him with our hearts, this is to abuse the holy and reverend name of God; and it is a sure argument that they stand in no dread of God, whose hearts meditate vanity with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven. Will any dare, in the presence of a prince, while they pretend reverence to him, to use antic gestures? Would not this justly be interpreted a contempt of him? why all the religious gestures of hypocrites are but antic; and, while they move their lips in prayer without the corresponding motion of the heart, they do but make mouths at God; and how can they fear him, that are thus audacious to scoff at him? Yea, the Scripture sets it down as a remarkable matter, when hypocrites begin to fear God: Isa. xxxiii. 13, 14. *Hear ye*.....and *acknowledge my might*, says God: why? *The sinners in Zion are afraid: fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites.* It is much easier to terrify and daunt profligate sinners, than gross hypocrites; because hypocrites, by often dallying with God, wear off all sense and dread of God, and arrive at length to a plain contempt and scorn of him. If therefore you would, in every duty, approve your hearts in sincerity unto God, nourish in you this holy fear of his majesty. This fear is that, which makes a Christian single-hearted. And, as the Apostle commands servants, Col. iii. 22. to obey their masters not *as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:* so, where this holy fear of God possesseth the soul, it will cause all our obedience to be performed in the singleness and integrity of our hearts; not so much to be seen of men, as to be accepted of God. It is a remarkable place, in Josh. xxiv. 14. *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity:* the fear of God is of a mighty influence to sincerity, in all our services and performances that we render unto God: it is that, which will make the heart sincere in them: fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity.

4. This Holy Fear *will put us upon all Endeavours to please God, and to gain favour with him.*

This is the most natural effect of fear, to engage us to procure

their love, whose power we dread. The Devil knew no such way to get himself worship and adoration, as by terrifying the old heathen. And, still, he useth the same artifice in those parts of the world, where his kingdom yet remains: he appears in dreadful shapes, and terrifies them, on purpose that he may extort from them a blind, superstitious worship. So, where the soul is affected with a holy fear of God, it will engage it to please him, and to avoid whatever may kindle his anger: and therefore says the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 9, 10. *We labour, that.....we may be accepted of him:* and why so? Yes, says he, for we must be judged by him: the fear of being judged by God, at the tribunal of Christ, at the Last Day, engaged the Apostle to labour to please God and to be accepted by him.

5. The Fear of God *is an excellent Corrective of the base and degenerous Fear of Men.*

Our Saviour says, Luke xii. 4, 5. *Be not afraid of them, that* can *kill the body; and, after that, have no more that they can do. But....fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.* It is well observed by a learned author, that men may be considered, as they bear upon them some resemblance and impress of the Divine Majesty; as they are invested with authority and power, and constituted magistrates and rulers over us: this resemblance is so great, that the Scripture sytles them *gods; I have said ye are Gods*; and, so, we are to fear them with a fear of reverence and obedience, and to obey them in that which is lawful. And they may be considered also as standing in opposition to God; abusing their power by commanding things that are unlawful, and by persecution endeavouring to terrify men from the ways and service of God: and, so, they may be feared with a fear of flight and eschewal: When ye are persecuted *in one city, flee ye into another*: Mat. x. 23. we may so fear them, as to labour to avoid their rage, and to consult our own safety. But the fear, that is here forbidden, is, Fear not *them, that* can *kill the body:* that is, with a distrustful, perverting fear; such a fear, as causeth men, for the securing of their temporal life, to desert the profession and practice of godliness: with such a fear, fear not men. He will not, that truly fears God, thus fear men: no; the fear of God lays a check upon this sinful fear of men: he, that truly fears God, will not immoderately fear men; for it is the property of holy fear to represent the displeasure of God, as an infinitely greater evil than the loss of estate, liberty, nay of life itself, or whatever

e rage and power of man can either inflict or threaten: and is makes them choose affliction, rather than sin. See this fear-ss spirit in those three heroic champions, Dan. iii. 16. who, ough they saw *a burning, fiery furnace* before them, into which ey were threatened to be cast; yet all the terrors of it did not ght them to an idolatrous worship: with what a holy contempt d slighting did they answer king Nebuchadnezar! *We are not reful*, say they, *to answer thee in this matter:* and whence oceeded this undaunted courage, but only because they were ore afraid of God, who is *a consuming fire*, than they were of a ery furnace? A man, that truly fears God, reputes with him-lf, that to gain the favour of men with the displeasure of God, redeem a temporal life by an eternal death, is the foolishest rgain that can be made: he knows the rage of man is under e restraint of God, and that a hair of his head shall not fall the ground without his Heavenly Father's knowledge and ermission; and, if God doth suffer wicked men to inflict the most that their rage and spite can prompt them unto, yet it acheth only the earthly part, the dull part of man, the body: ey may persecute, torment, and kill us; but yet they cannot urt us: one momentary gripe of hell's torments is infinitely ore intolerable, than all the cruelties that men can possibly vent or inflict: one frown from an angry God hath more dread d terror in it, than all the rage and threatenings of the most arbarous and cruel tyrants. And that Christian, that makes ch an account as this, can never certainly so fear torment or eath, as to be drawn to sin against God, whose displeasure he ore fears than he fears either torment or death.

Now, to shut up this whole subject, I shall only mention a w particulars to you, whereby you may take a brief view of at there is in the Nature of God, that may justly affect us h a Holy Fear and Awe of him.

First. The consideration of God's glorious Majesty may strike into a Holy Dread and Terror.

And, therefore, says Job*, xxxvii. 22. *With God is terrible jesty.* This is that, which daunts the holy angels in heaven: ey cover their faces with their wings; as not being able to

* Elihu is the speaker, not Job. EDITOR.

bear the piercing rays of that glory, wherewith he is cloth An earthly prince, when he is set forth in the royalty : grandeur of his state, casts an awe upon those that appro near him: and how much more ought we to fear the great glorious Majesty of Heaven, who is always clad *with ligh with a garment!* that light, which no mortal eye can approa being always surrounded with an innumerable host of glitte attendants, each of which maintains more pomp and state t the greatest potentate on earth.

Secondly. God's Almighty Power should cause us to : before him.

He is the uncontrolable sovereign of all the world; to wl beck all things in heaven and in earth, yea and in hell too, subject. And, therefore, says Job*, xxv. 2. *Dominion and are with him:* not that God hath any fear, or stands in fe but the dominion and sovereignty of God causeth fear: it str the heart with an awful fear, when we consider that domi and fear are with God. That power and authority of God which he exerciseth his dominion, causeth a fear of him.

Thirdly. The severe and impartial Justice of God, whe he renders to every one according to his works, should ki in us a Holy Fear of God.

So the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 10, 11. We must receive, says according to what we have done in the body. Whence infers, that, *knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.* is terrible to receive from God's justice, according to what have done in the body.

Fourthly. The consideration of God's Omnipresence and (nisciency, may cause in us a Holy Fear of him.

His eye is always upon us: his presence is always with wherever we are; and he sees and observes whatever we And, therefore, let us fear him: his eye is awful.

Fifthly. The consideration of our absolute Dependance u God, should cause us to stand in Fear of him: lest, by voking him, who maintains our souls in life; in whom we and move, and have our beings; in whose hands are our bre our life, and all our ways; he should turn his hand upo and deprive us of all those mercies and comforts that nov heaps upon us.

So much, for this time and text.

* Bildad is the speaker, not Job. EDITOR.

ON

GLORIFYING GOD

IN

HIS ATTRIBUTES.

ON

GLORIFYING GOD IN HIS ATTRIBUTES.

1 COR. vi. 19, 20.

YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN: FOR YE ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE: THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY, AND IN YOUR SPIRIT, WHICH ARE GOD'S.

WITHOUT any more curious division, we may take notice of Three parts in these words.

A Doctrine:
A Reason: and
A Use.

The Doctrine is, *Ye are not your own.*

The Reason of it, *For ye are bought with a price.*

The Use, which is strongly inferred from both these, and is indeed the most natural and genuine result of the doctrine of our redemption purchased by Christ, *Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*

It is this last, which I principally intend to insist on; as that, unto which both the former parts refer, and in which they centre. Yet I shall not altogether wave the former branches; but more briefly represent what they administer to us, either of instruction or direction.

I. To begin with the PROPOSITION, *Ye are not your own.*

1. And, here, TWO THINGS must fall under our disquisition:
What this phrase implies, and
What it infers.
What significancy it carries in itself; and what obligation it lays upon us.

1. For the *Import of this Phrase, Ye are not your own,* because is a negative proposition and all negatives are measured by

their contrary affirmatives, we shall best conceive it, if we first rightly state, what it is for any essence to be its own.

Now here

(1) Certain it is, that no being can be said to be simply *its* own, but what is supreme, absolute, and independent.

For, if its being be derived from any superior cause, it holds it only upon courtesy. And, as we cannot strictly call that our own, which is but lent unto us; so neither is our nature and being our own, which is but bestowed upon us by the bounty of another, maintained by his continual influence, and subjected to his sovereign control and dominion. A being, then, that is its own, must not be dependent on, or beholden to any other; nor acknowledge any thing superior to it, from which it hath received, or to which it is indebted.

(2) That essence, which is its own, must be itself the end of all its actions.

The first efficient must, of necessity, be the last end: and therefore, whatsoever can direct any of its actions to an end higher and more ultimate than itself, is not the first cause, but a dependent and secondary one. It is impossible that any creature should be made for itself only; to seek and serve itself: for since every agent is excited to his operations by some end which he propoundeth to himself, if the creature were its own utmost end, the Creator could have no end at all in forming him, and consequently would never do it. Hence the Wise Man tells us Prov. xvi. 4. that *the Lord hath made all things for himself.* And indeed, he, who is the great Architect of the World, "The maker of all things visible and invisible," can fix no other end in any of his works, but himself, and his own glory.

(3) And, from these two principles, it evidently follows, that there is no being simply its own, but that, which is the First Cause and the Last End of all beings: and that is God.

He only is his own: all other things are of him, and for him: they are all derivative from him, dependent upon him, and subordinate unto him; and, therefore, they are not their own.

[1] They are all Derivative beings; and flow from the First Source and Fountain of Being, even God himself.

Before the creation of the world, all was an Infinite God and an Infinite Nothing. But, his goodness delighting to communicate itself, he designs a numberless variety of creatures and, by his almighty word, impregnates the womb of this great nothing, and makes it fruitful; causing all things to start up

the same form and order, which he had before conceived in the eternal ideas of his own mind. Now, since all things are by participation from the First Cause, and all their perfections are but faint strictures and glimmering resemblances of his, it is most unreasonable that those should belong to themselves, who were made by another; and that they should be their own, who, without his influence and efficacy, had still been nothing.

[2] All other beings are Dependent, and owe their continued preservation to the goodness and powerful influx of God.

Indeed, preservation is nothing else, but a prolonged production. For, as we see the light of the sun preserved in the air, by a constant emanation that it hath from the sun; and that, as bright and glorious a creature as it is, yet it cannot subsist one moment upon its own succours; and that there needs nothing else to blot it out of our hemisphere, and to involve all in night and darkness, but only the sun's withdrawing itself: so is it with us, in respect of God. We depend upon him, as necessarily as the light depends upon the sun: he is the fountain of our life and being: the continuance of it, thus long, is by a continual emanation and streaming of it forth from him: should he withdraw his preserving influence from us, we should instantly dissolve, and fall all abroad into nothing. And, therefore, it were insupportable arrogance for us to think ourselves our own; who are what we are by his creating power, and while we are by his preserving influence.

[3] All other beings are Subordinate to the First; made for his ends and uses, and to be employed in his service.

Never had there been any such thing as a world and creatures in it, but that the all-wise God intended them all as the instruments of promoting his glory. And this they all do. Some, indeed, only objectively; as brute and inanimate creatures, by exhibiting the prints and footsteps of the power, and wisdom, and being of their Almighty Creator: and, therefore, the Psalmist tells us, that *the heavens declare the glory of God;* Ps. xix. 1. that is, the beauty, splendor, and harmony of that most excellent piece of the creation, do evidently demonstrate the infinite wisdom, power, and majesty of the great Architect; who hath framed such a glorious roof for our house here on earth, and so glorious a pavement for his own in heaven. But, because glory requires celebration, therefore God hath created other ranks of rational and intellectual beings, who might actively

serve and glorify him; and, by taking notice of his attribut so conspicuously shining forth in the works of Creation a Providence, ascribe unto him the praise that is due unto h name for such his wonderful works: and these are angels an men; both which he made for himself, in a more especial an peculiar manner; communicating to them more exalted perfec tions, and more express resemblances of his divine attributes than to other inferior things. And, although endless multitude of these have, by their apostacy and rebellion, defeated th primary end of their creation, refusing to glorify God actively yet God will certainly fetch his glory out of them; and, tha they may not be made in vain, will glorify himself upon them passively, in inflicting that wrath and vengeance, that shall mak him known and revered as an infinitely just and jealous God though they transgress the law of their own natures, yet they can not transgress the law of the Divine Providence: God will mak them serve to the promoting of his glory; if not voluntarily, a the vessels of his mercy, yet by constraint and a sad necessity as the objects of his wrath and fury. And thus Solomon tells u that God *hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicke* also *for the day of* wrath: and so, likewise, in that doxology c the elders, Rev. iv. 11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to recei glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all thing and for thy pleasure they are and were created:* and therefor certainly, if all things were created for God as their highest an ultimate end, all things are his, and not their own; and the rigl and title to them is in him, by whom and for whom they we made.

And thus you see the Import of this Phrase, *Ye are not yo own:* that is, you are not supreme, absolute, independent being left only to your own ways and wills; but ye are God's; create supported, and governed by him, and accountable to him f all your actions.

Indeed the Apostle, in the text, gives us another reason wh we are not our own: and that is, upon the account of o Redemption by Christ: *Ye are not your own: for ye are boug with a price.* Redemption gives him as much, if not a great title to you, than Creation: for it was not so considerable a effect of the divine power and goodness, to create, as to redee you: the one was but the expence of his breath; the other

the expence of his blood. But, because this falls in with the second part of the text, I shall at present wave it, reserving it to its proper place.

Briefly, therefore, when the Apostle saith *Ye are not your own*, it is as much as if he had said, "You have no right nor title to yourselves: ye are not your own proprietors, nor to look upon yourselves as lords over your own beings. There is another Lord, to whom ye appertain; and that is God: whose right you infinitely wrong, if you acknowledge not yourselves to be his inheritance and possession." Indeed it is a sacrilegious invading of the divine prerogative, for any creature to pretend to be its own, or to live as though it were so. This is no less, than impiously to ascribe an all-sufficiency to itself.

And, thus much, for the First General, what it implies not to be our own.

2. Let us consider *what it Infers, and what Obligation it lays upon us.*

And this I shall endeavour to shew you, in these following corollaries.

(1) If we are not our own, then certainly we ought not to seek our own.

Self-seeking is the very bane of Christianity. It is that worm, that lies at the root, and eats out the very life and sap of it. A self-seeking Christian is a downright contradiction, an absurdity in religion: for the very first lesson, that Christ teaches in his school, is that hard one of self-denial; and our Saviour hath told us, that whosoever refuseth to *deny himself*, and to *take up his cross*, cannot be his disciple.

But, as there is in every Christian a twofold self: a spiritual, heaven-born self, the new man, the divine nature, the impress and stamp of the image of God upon the soul, consisting in the sanctifying principles both of knowledge and holiness, and all the habits of special grace infused into us by the Holy Ghost in our first conversion; and, likewise, an earthy, dreggy, and inferior self, the utmost tendency of which is only the satisfying of the sensual part of man, and all its good things are only such as the world and its stock can furnish it withal: as, I say, there is this twofold self in every true Christian, so must we distinguish likewise of a twofold self-seeking.

[1] There is a seeking of those things, which are grateful and pleasing to the Spiritual Self of a good Christian; those, which may promote its interests and concerns, and make it flourishing and vigorous in us.

And this is a self-seeking so far from being condemned, that it is our highest praise and glory.

The tendency of the new nature is towards Two things:

The Increase of Grace in us, here; and

The Participation of Glory, hereafter.

For the First, all grant that we ought to labour.

But, for the Second, some have been so weak as to doubt, whether we might make the eternal glory and happiness of our souls the end of our duties and endeavours: and, with many high-flown inconsistencies, that seem to have in them much of spiritual rapture, but indeed are nothing else but idle dreams and false delusions, tell us that we must serve and obey God only out of love and gratitude, neither for hope of reward, nor fear of punishment; and condemn all that obedience, which respects these, as sordid and mercenary, unworthy of the true and generous spirit of the Gospel. But, if we should tell these men, that they pretend to a greater degree of spiritualness than ever Moses did, possibly their pride and self-conceit would make them assume it: for, alas! Moses was but a poor Old-Testament Saint, and we read of him, Heb. xi. 26. that *he had respect unto the recompence of the reward*: but, though they think themselves more spiritual than he, what! are they likewise more spiritual than St. Paul? and yet he tells us, Phil. iii. 13, 14. that he reached *forth unto those things, which are before*, pressing *toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*: or have they attained to an elevation of spiritualness beyond our Lord Jesus Christ himself? of whom the Apostle witnesseth, Heb. xii. 2. that, *for the joy that was set before him*, he *endured the cross* and despised *the shame*. It is allowable, therefore, yea it is necessary, to be selfish; to consider our own interest and our own advantage, in this case: for, since our very nature is so tempered, that the two great advantages which we have to quicken it, are hopes and fears, I shall very much doubt that those will prove but slothful and negligent Christians, who shall, out of a fond conceit of greater spiritualness and perfection, lay these spurs aside; and pretend to make use of other arguments, which, though they seem more specious, yet, I am sure, must needs be less effectual.

Others again, who do allow that our obedience may be directed unto God, with an eye and respect unto the reward which he hath promised us, yet question whether we ought chiefly and principally to regard our own happiness or his honour, our own glory or his. I answer: This is but a nice and needless scruple: and, though many infirm and tender spirits may be much puzzled in directing their obedience, yet this solicitude is but vain; for, whilst they do either, they do both: for what is the glory of God's grace and mercy? is it not the accomplishment of our salvation? and therefore, certainly, whilst I endeavour to promote mine own salvation, I do as much endeavour to promote the glory of God: although, perhaps, in every duty I do it not with a distinct particular act of reflection; yet, so long as I endeavour to promote mine own salvation, I do implicitly and interpretatively endeavour the advancement of God's glory; for that is the next and immediate means to this: we need not, therefore, be anxious, whether we seek ourselves, or the honour of God; for, in thus seeking ourselves, we do nothing else but seek his honour and glory. Let us again consider what is our happiness and felicity: our objective happiness, is the infinite and boundless good, even God himself; our formal happiness, is our clear vision and full fruition of him, and the near conjunction of our souls unto him by love and inherence: now, certainly, his infinite goodness will never reject those duties as sordid and mercenary, that aspire to no greater, no other reward but the enjoyment of himself: in thus seeking ourselves, we seek God; and, the more intensely we thus love our own souls, the more supremely do we love God, while we breathe and pant after the fruition of him with the holy impatience of an amorous spirit: in this sense, therefore, although we are not our own, yet we may seek our own: we appertain not to ourselves, but to God; yet, certainly, when this self which we seek hath God for its object and end, we seek him in seeking of ourselves.

And that is the First kind of seeking, which is not only warrantable but necessary.

But

[2] There is a seeking of those things, which are only conducible to the ease, profit, and advantage of the Natural and Earthy Self.

And these St. John hath briefly summed up in three things: *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes*, and *the pride of life:*

which is but to tell us more enigmatically, that they are pleasure, riches, and honours. Self is the center of all the actions of worldly man; and, whatsoever he doth are but so many lines which, though they may seem far distant one from another, yet all meet together there.

Indeed, there is a seeking of these worldly advantages, which is not justly to be branded with this black mark of self-seeking.

And that is,

1st. When we seek them only by lawful means.

As industry in our callings, and prayer to God for a blessing upon it; detesting all the wicked and base methods of fraud and superchery.

2dly. When we seek them with due moderation.

When our care about them is but prudent and provident; not carking, nor distracting.

3dly. When we seek them at allowed seasons.

The shop must not intrench upon either the church or the closet; nor the duties of our particular callings, as we are men, devour the duties of our general callings, as Christians. Both are beautiful in their season; and, indeed, the one is an excellent preparative for the other. How comfortably may that man follow his vocation all day, who hath begun the morning with God, and humbly implored his blessing and assistance! and how sweetly may that man close up his day's task with prayer, who hath used such care and conscience in his calling, as to bring no new guilt to confess in the evening!

4thly. When we seek these things with a due subordination to the higher and more noble ends of piety and holiness.

And that is,

(1st) When we seek them, that we may avoid those temptations, which possibly the want of them might expose us unto.

Thus Agur prays, Prov. xxx. 8. that God would feed him with *food convenient*, lest he be *poor, and steal, and take the name* his *God in vain:* that is, as I conceive, lest he should be, first tempted to theft; and, then, to perjury to conceal it, if suspected.

(2dly) When we seek them, that we may be the better furnished for good works.

For earthly comforts and enjoyments, if they be well improved, are excellent instruments to promote the glory of God in furthering the good and welfare of others. Hence the Apostle

Eph. iv. 28. *Let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.* And indeed it will require somewhat of a plentiful estate, to be able *to maintain good works*, as the Apostle twice useth that expression, Titus iii. 8. and at the 14th verse.

If these rules be duly observed, he is no self-seeker, who diligently may seek after these temporal accommodations.

But, when gain shall be preferred before godliness; and all the crooked ways of deceit and fraud made use of, only to amass together a heap of ill-gotten trash: when thou wilt rather choose to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, than to cast overboard any part of thy wealth, though it be to save thy soul from being drowned and sunk in perdition: when this golden idol shall be set up by thee; and God, and Christ, and religion, and conscience, all sacrificed unto it: what is this, but a base self-seeking, unworthy of a Christian, nay of a man? too impious for a Christian, too foolish for any man: for, in thus seeking themselves, they lose themselves for ever. And this is that, which the Apostle so grievously complains of, Phil. ii. 21. *All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.* A mean and sordid temper this. And, as it is sordid; so is it, likewise, most unjust and unreasonable: for consider, you are not your own, but God's: he hath manifold titles to you: you have no self of your own, but you, and all, are his: and what presumption is it for you to provide for what is his, otherwise than he hath ordered; yea, contrary to his express command!

That is the First Inference.

(2) If we are not our own, we may infer, that certainly we are not at our own dispose.

And this should teach us patience in all the cross and sad occurrences of our lives. We are not our own; and, therefore, we may not carve out our own condition to ourselves, nor prescribe to God what we would have done, or what we would avoid: for this is boldly to intermeddle with that, which doth not belong to thee. Thou art God's; and what is it to thee, O busy man, what he doth with his own? If it seemeth good to him to chastise thee with poverty, reproach, pains, and diseases, or to take from thee any of thy dearest and most desirable comforts, what hast thou to do to interpose with thy complaints and murmurings? May he not do what he will with his own? Thou art no farther interested in any of these things, than to bear them meekly as a Christian; and voluntarily to resign up

thyself unto him, unto whom thou dost naturally and necessarily belong.

(3) If we are not our own, we may very rationally infer, that we ought not to follow our own wills and our own affections.

Indeed, the great contest between God and man ever was, and still is, about sovereignty. It hath been the perpetual quarrel of all ages, which shall be the chief; and whose will shall take place, either his or ours. The first crafty temptation, *Ye shall be as gods*, hath strangely prevailed upon us ever since: we would fain all be gods, independent and uncontroulable. Now check this rebellion of thy will and affections, by considering that thou art not thine own, but God's: he hath the supreme right to thee; and thou art injurious to his right, if thou settest up thy will a competitor with his. Yea, indeed, thou oughtest to have no will peculiar to thyself, but it should be all melted down and resolved into God's. And, therefore, the Apostle puts an excellent form of words into our mouths: James iv. 15. *If the Lord will*, we will do thus and thus. So say thou, "If the Lord will, I will." Bring thy will to conform unto his Will of Precept, absolutely; for that he hath made known unto thee in his word: and neither will nor desire what he hath therein forbidden thee. Bring it also to conform unto his Will of Purpose, conditionally; for that is hidden and secret to us, until the event declare it: but, when God hath manifested it by the effects, bend thy will unto it; and quietly acquiesce in all his dispensations, as infinitely wise and gracious. Say thou unto him, "Lord, I am blind and ignorant; and cannot see through the consequences of things. That, which I apprehend at present would be for my advantage, may possibly prove a snare and a curse unto me. Thou comprehendest all, in thy infinite wisdom; and, therefore, I resign up my choice to thee. Do thou, Lord, choose for me: and, howsoever thy providence shall order my affairs, make me as thankful for disappointments, as I ought to be for successes." This is a right, Christian temper, worthy of him, who acknowledgeth himself, not to be his own, but God's.

(4) *Ye are not your own;* look not then upon any thing as your own.

Certainly, if thou thyself art God's, whatsoever thou fondly accountest thine is much more his. Shall the principal be his, and not the accessaries? Thy friends, thy children, thy estate, thy good name, are not indeed thine: and, though common

words and language call them so; yet take heed that thou dost not lay any emphasis upon it. Thus Nabal, that blunt churl, accents his selfishness: 1 Sam. xxv. 11. *Shall I take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shepherds?* alas! poor wretch, there is nothing of all this thine: nay, thou thyself art not thine, but belongest, if not to the grace, yet to the dominion of God. Indeed we must distinguish between things being ours for our good and benefit, and being ours as to absolute title and dominion. Neither way can a wicked man call any thing his: his table is a snare; and that, which should have been for his welfare, is become a curse unto him. But it is not thus with the godly: for the Apostle tells us, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. that *whether.....the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are* theirs; *and* they *are Christ's; and Christ is God's:* this argument is very cogent, as to the benefit and good, that shall redound unto them from every thing they enjoy; in this sense, all is theirs, because they are God's. But, because they are God's, therefore nothing is theirs as to absolute right and sovereign dominion. Both they and wicked men have a natural right to many blessings, and a civil right to many more: but neither of them have a supreme, free, and independent right, to any thing which they enjoy; but all is God's, lent to them for their use and his service.

(5) *Ye are not your own;* let not then any sin be your own.

You are God's peculiar people; let not any sin be your peculiar sin. Shall we ourselves be God's, and yet any sin be ours? what is this less than, by a kind of practical blasphemy, to transfer our sins upon God?

And, so much, for the First Part of the words, *Ye are not your own.*

Thus have we considered the proposition, *Ye are not your own.* Ye have not a sovereign right over your own beings, to seek your own interests, to dispose of your own affairs, to follow your own wills and appetites; but you entirely belong unto another.

ii. And, lest you should be put to seek for an owner, since you are thus denied, and, as it were, turned out of the possession of yourselves, the Apostle informs you WHO IT IS, THAT LAYS IN HIS CLAIM TO YOU; even the great and universal Lord

both of Heaven and Earth, whose all things are by a most absolute and indisputable right: Ye are God's.

Indeed, God hath manifold titles to you.

1. *As he is your Almighty Creator.*

When thou layedst huddled up in the great chaos and confusion of mere possibilities, he beckoned and called thee forth bade thee be, and take thy place and station in the order of things: and that, not in a vile and contemptible nature, a worm or a fly, which we crush or sport to death; but a man, one of the peers and nobles of the world. See how magnificently David speaks of thy original: Ps. viii. 5, 6. *Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands.* Thou art born a king; crowned, in thy very cradle and thy being, in the scale of creatures, is but one round lower than that of the angels.

Thy Body, which is the basest and most disgraceful part thou hast, yet of how excellent a texture and frame is it! such various springs of motion, such secret channels and conveyance for life and spirits, such a subserviency of parts one to another in their mutual offices, and such a perfect beauty and harmony in the whole, that David might well say, Ps. cxxxix. 14, 15. *I am fearfully and wonderfully made.....and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.* Yea, not only a David, but Galen a heathen, when he had minutely inspected the admirable artifice that appeared in the frame of our bodies, the structure and use of the several parts, and the many wonders and miracles that were woven up in every one of them, his speculation of nature led him to adore the God of Nature, and he could not forbear composing a hymn in the praise of our All-wise Creator. Now whose is this elegant piece of workmanship, but God's? *In his book*, saith the Psalmist, *were all* our *members written, which* afterwards *were fashioned:* as architects do usually draw a model of those buildings, which they intend for more than ordinary state and magnificence before they erect them; so God doth as it were, delineate a draught and platform of man in his book, that is, in his own counsel and decree; and limns out every member, giving it its shape and proportion in his own ideas and afterward, according to that perfect pattern, sets up the frame: he first makes the materials, and then brings them together; and causes all nature to contribute what is most fit and proper for it.

And yet these bodies, though they have so much cost and care bestowed upon them, are but a case and covering for the Soul. That is perfectly spiritual; and hath no other cause of its being, but only that God, who is *the Father of Spirits.* It is a spark, kindled immediately by his own breath: not formed out of any pre-existent matter, as corporeal beings are; but created out of pure and unmixed nothing, by the same almighty word, that spake out angels, and all the glorious hosts of heaven, and made them emerge into being. And when the body is sufficiently furnished with all the organs and instruments necessary for the function of life, then God bestows a soul upon it. Not as if the soul did pre-exist before its union; but it is created in that very instant when it is united to the body. And this is the meaning of that known maxim of St. Augustin, *Creando infunditur, & infundendo creatur:* "It is created in infusing, and infused in creating."

Since, then, God hath created us; and chosen us, out of the infinite number of things possible, to bestow an actual being upon us: since, if he had so pleased, we might have been as much nothing to all eternity, as we were from all eternity; and might have lain hid in that vast crowd and multitude of souls, which might have been, but never shall be; only, God hath been pleased to lay the ideas of them aside, and to pick and cull us out to be his creatures, to prepare us such exquisite bodies, and to breathe into us such rational and intellectual spirits: shall we not with all thankfulness acknowledge, that we appertain unto him, who without him should have continued a long and endless nothing? Hath not he, who created us, an absolute and sovereign right to do to us and to require from us, whatsoever pleaseth him? Thus the Psalmist infers it, Ps. c. 3. *It is he, that hath made us, and not we ourselves;* and therefore it follows, *we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.* And,

2. *We are his, upon the account of Preservation.*

He still maintains those beings, which at first he made; and exerts the same almighty power to continue thee in thy being, as at first he did in producing it. Every new moment that passeth over thee, thou art, as it were, again created; fetched out of nothing: for all that part of thy life, which is already passed, is become a mere nothing. So that, whether thou lookest to the time that is before thee, or to that which is behind thee; yet, still, thou flowest along, from that which is nothing, to that which is nothing: and yet, still, thou thyself art pre-

served in being, and art not swallowed up in the same nothing, that yesterday or the last year are dissolved into. To whom owest thou this, but only to that God who is *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever?* He makes all the differences of time in thy age, in whom time itself makes no difference. It is his visitation, as Job speaks, that preserves our spirits: Job x. 12. nor can we subsist one breath, or one pulse, nor one moment longer, than he is pleased to wind off our time to us, from that great bottom of eternity which he holds in his own hand. If thou canst find out any one such day or hour, wherein thou canst maintain thyself, without any charge to God or dependance upon him; if thou canst either live, or move, or be, without the continual influence of the divine power and providence; then, for that time, thou mayest glory in thine own sufficiency, acknowledge no superior, be thine own, and live wholly to thyself: but, certainly, whilst thou owest both the beginning and the progress of thy being unto God, thou owest thyself to him, and art his.

But this is not all; for,

3. God hath another right and title to us, *as he is our Governor.*

Now the two chief and comprehensive parts of government are Protection and Provision: to defend those, that are under their charge, from harms and injuries; and, to supply them with necessaries.

But,

(1) God doth mightily protect us from those innumerable evils and mischiefs, which would else befall us.

Perils and mishaps are thick strewed in all our ways; and death and ruin lie every where in ambush for us: in our food, our affairs, our recreations, at home and abroad, every where death and danger take their stand and aim at us; dangers, that we could neither foresee, nor prevent, but only the watchful providence of God hath watched over us hitherto: He hath given his angels charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways. In their hands have they borne us up, so that our feet have not dashed against a stone. Who can particularly recount the infinite number of those private mercies, which we have received? or how often God hath diverted and struck aside many sad casualties, that were just befalling us; and plucked us back, when we were just upon the very edge and brink of destruction? Or, if we consider the boundless wrath and malice

of the Devil against us, or wicked men his instruments, have we not great cause thankfully to acknowledge that powerful restraint, which God lays both upon him and them? the Devil implacably hates us; and would, every step that we take, tear our souls from our bodies, and our bodies in pieces, and both from God: wicked men, who are inspirited and acted by him, would soon fill the world with the direful effects of their hellish natures; and *by killing, and stealing, and swearing, and lying, and committing adultery, they* would *break out until blood touched blood:* but only God holds them both in a strong adamantine chain, so that they cannot come near to hurt us, but by a special permission.

(2) Neither is God only a shield to us, but a Sun. *The Lord God is* our *sun and shield:* Ps. lxxxiv. 11. He not only protects us from dangers, but he likewise cherishes us and provides for us.

We live upon his allowance; and are maintained by him, as those, who belong unto his family. All are waiters at his table, and *he giveth them their food in due season:* He crowneth the year with his blessings, and filleth our hearts with food and gladness: he better manures the earth by his blessing, than the husbandman can by his industry; and makes our sustenance to grow and spring up round about us, allotting unto every one a needful and convenient portion.

If, then, God doth thus protect thee and provide for thee, hath he not a right and title to thee? Is not that life his, which he hath defended from so many deaths; and rescued, when thou hast been surrounded with dangers? If thou wilt not acknowledge thyself his, why dost thou live in his family, eat his bread, and wear his livery, and maintain thyself at his expence? It is but reason and justice, that thou shouldst either refuse his benefits, or not refuse his commands and service.

But, yet farther,

4. We are God's *by Covenant-Engagement and solemn Promise.*

In our baptism, we were consecrated and devoted to be the Lord's, to fight under his banner against all the enemies of his glory and our salvation: therein, we have renounced and abjured the usurpation and tyrannical power, that sin and Satan have exercised over us; and, with the greatest solemnity, have bound ourselves unto the service of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our baptism is a seal: not only on God's part, of the truth and stability of his promises, that we shall obtain remission of our sins and eternal life, upon the performance of the con-

ditions of faith and new obedience; but it is likewise a seal on our part, obliging us to fulfil unto God the promises we have made, of believing in him and obeying him. In this ordinance, you have sealed and delivered yourselves up unto him; for it is the initiating ordinance: it enters you into the Church, registers you among the number of the faithful, lists you under the spiritual banner: it is, as it were, heaven's press-money, which as soon as you receive, you are enrolled under Jesus Christ, the great Captain of your Salvation: that sacrament is your military oath, properly so called; and you are bound, by the most serious engagements that can be laid upon a creature, to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant to your lives' end. Now, unless thou thinkest these vows to be written only on the water that sprinkled thee, and wiped away together with that; unless thou accountest thy baptism nothing else but a long-received custom of the place where thou livest, a solemn piece of pageantry, and only a ceremony used on a festival day; thou must needs look upon thyself engaged by the stricted bonds, that truth, religion, vows, and oaths can lay upon thee, to be that God's, unto whom thou didst then professedly give up thyself; and whose badge and cognizance thou then tookest upon thee, that thou mightest be known whose thou art, and to whom thou appertainest. And,

5. We are God's *by Profession, and our own voluntary and free Acknowledgment.*

We have taken, and still do own, him to be our Lord. And, although, in works, too many deny even *the Lord that bought them;* living in a direct contrariety to their vows, covenants, and engagements: yet, in words and in profession, all acknowledge him to be their Lord and Master. And, though Christ might very justly upbraid too many among us, who are either professors at large or hypocritical dissemblers, as he did the Jews, Luke vi. 46. *Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* yet this very profession of his name is but the strengthening of his title to us; and all those appellations of our Lord, and our Master, our God, and our Saviour, by which we call him, are but so many acknowledgments of his right unto us. And, if we contradict this profession by an unholy and profane life and conversation, all that we shall get by such fawnings will be, that he, whom we have so often acknowledged for our Lord and Master, may the more justly and the more severely punish us for our disobedience. And consider

again, how often hast thou renewed thy baptismal vows! of how many vows and promises have thy fears, and thy dangers, and thy diseases, and thy convictions, been both the causes and the witnesses! hast thou not, again and again, given up thyself unto God, and bound thyself by vow never to repeal nor recall it? when death and danger have stared thee in the face, and all other hopes and helps have failed thee, hast thou not promised and sworn, that, if he would save and deliver thee that once, thou wouldst be the Lord's, and serve and fear him only? God hath heard thy prayers, and accepted thy vows, and rescued thee from thy fears and dangers: and, though he had a sovereign right and title to thee before, upon other accounts; yet, to shew how grateful and pleasing the free-will offerings of a devout soul are to him, though we can offer him nothing but what is his own, yet now he especially expects that we should give up ourselves to him by obedience, as we have frequently done by promise, and should at length fulfil what we have so often engaged.

Yea, again,

6. Some are God's *in a more Especial and Peculiar Manner.* His chosen and beloved ones; who have, from the heart, given up and devoted themselves to the service of God; and not only bear his mark upon them, in the enjoyment of external privileges and church-ordinances, but bear likewise the stamp of his image upon them in the inward sanctification and renovation of their souls.

These, God *hath set apart for himself:* Ps. iv. 3. They are his *peculiar people:* Titus ii. 14. and, 1 Pet. ii. 9. they are called by many special and discriminating titles: *a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people:* they are called his portion, and the lot of his inheritance: Deut. xxxii. 9. *The Lord's portion is his people: Jacob is the lot of his inheritance:* they are his jewels: Mal. iii. 17. And, certainly, whatever a man will most earnestly plead his right in, it will be his jewels, his portion, his inheritance, his peculiar treasure; those things, which are of the greatest value and dearest esteem. So God stands much upon his right to his own people and children, whilst all the wicked of the world, although they are his, yet they are in his account vile refuse creatures; more despicable in God's eyes, than true saints are in theirs; the dung and dross, the filth and offscouring of all things. These, indeed, are God's, by the obligation of common nature; but his holy

ones are his, by the privilege of special grace. There is a stric and close bond of union between Christ and them: on his part by his Spirit; on theirs, by their faith. And, being united unt Christ as their Head, they are likewise united unto God, a his: for *the head of Christ is God;* as the Apostle speaks, 1 Co xi. 3.

7. We are God's *by the right of Redemption.*

This I have reserved to the last place, because it is the Se cond General Part of my Text, as being the Reason of th Proposition. *Ye are not your own,* but God's: *for ye are boug with a price.*

This, indeed, is a strong title, that God hath to us; a supe addition to the rest. God did, at first, create us in a state perfect holiness and felicity; but we sold ourselves to Satan and are become his vassals and bond-slaves. We have throw God's yoke from off our neck, and his burden from off ou shoulders; and have broken his bonds asunder, and cast awa his cords from us; and have taken upon us the yoke of the Devil the burden of sin and guilt, a load that would sink us into th very bottom of hell. We stand forfeited to the divine justice liable to the eternal wrath of the Great God; ready to be dragge away every moment unto torments. But, in this our forlorn an desperate condition, that so noble and excellent a piece of th creation might not for ever perish, Infinite and Sovereign Merc interposeth; prepares a ransom for us, which is paid down t the very uttermost farthing of all that the justice of God coul demand; and so rescues us from that perdition and miser into which we had plunged ourselves.

Now the love and mercy of God, in redeeming us, is fa more eminent than in creating us. And therefore his right an title to us, upon this account, is far greater, than upon th other.

For,

(1) Creation only gives us a being, brings us only out the dark shade and state of nothing: and, in this our fall and sinful condition, it only capacitates us for woe and mise But redemption finds out an expedient, and opens a way for unto bliss and happiness.

And although, perhaps, metaphysically considered, it is bet to be wretched than not to be at all; yet, certainly, in a natu and moral sense, it is not so. For so saith our Saviour: Ma xxvi. 24. *Woe unto that man, by whom the Son of Man is betrayed*

it had been good for that man, if he had not been born: that is, it had been better for him never to have had a being, but to have lain eternally forgotten in the purpose and decree of God, than that he should have a being, an immortal soul bestowed upon him, to be for ever most exquisitely tormented for this horrid sin of betraying the life and blood of his Lord and Master. Creation frees us not from so great an Evil, neither confers upon us so great and inestimable Benefits, as redemption doth. Alas! what torture or vexation is it to mere nothing, that it must eternally remain so? will not this be the hearty wish and desire of all the damned wretches in hell? would they not account it a kind of salvation, to be annihilated; that their souls and bodies might fall asunder and flit away into nothing, so that they might escape the everlasting residue of their torments? and, if sores and botches, and temporal losses and afflictions, could so far transport even holy Job, who yet is represented unto us as the mirror of patience, as to cause him to curse the day of his birth, and to wish that he had never seen the light; how much more shall we think will those infernal wretches, on whom God exerciseth the whole skill and power of his wrath, wish that they had been toads or serpents, rather than men! yea, that they had never been at all, but had lain undisturbed in a dark and gloomy nothing; since they shall have more sufferings and anguish to torture them, and no patience, no comfort, no mercy for ever to support them! Neither doth creation confer upon them so great and inestimable Benefits, as redemption. It is true, we have an excellent being and nature bestowed upon us, as creatures of a higher form than others, the chiefest of all visible and corporeal things: we are endowed with rational and intellectual faculties; and are capable of pleasures, not only such as brute beasts are, but of speculative and mental delights, which are far more noble and more refined: but yet, alas! what are we, but lords perhaps of the world, and all the while slaves to the Devil? miserable drudges to our own vile and base lusts, for gratifying of which these excellent natures, which we boast and glory so much of, must for ever lie under most inconceivable horror and torments? But redemption brings us into a capacity of far greater happiness, than that, from which we fell: it gives us hopes, that, though we lost paradise, we may gain heaven; yea, and assures us, that we shall certainly do so, if we do not wilfully neglect that great salvation,

that is purchased for us; and frowardly choose death and our own destruction, before eternal life and joy. So that you see creation is a mercy and blessing to us, chiefly upon the account of redemption; and we are obliged to bless God, that he hath by creation made us subjects capable of that glory and happiness, which he hath prepared for us by redemption. And,

(2) God's mercy in redeeming us is far more eminent and conspicuous, than in creating us; because it hath been far more expensive to him.

In creation, there needed no more but an almighty fiat *Let it be; and it was so:* here was nothing of preparation, no difficulty, nor cost; nor was there any more labour or trouble, than only to will, and speak it. But, in redemption, God must not only act, but suffer; not only speak, but bleed. In creation there was nothing that might abase or traduce God, nothing but glorious demonstrations of his wisdom and godhead: he humbled not himself, nor descended from his throne, when he formed us; but he only spake a quickening word, and all creatures presently sprung up, and paid their homage and obeisance to their great Creator. But, in redemption, God himself doth, as it were, lay aside his glory, and humble himself, first to become a creature, and then accursed: he must be wounded, that we might be healed: he must die, that we might live: he must be debased, that we might be exalted. And therefore, certainly, if love and good-will are to be measured, either by the greatness of the benefits conferred upon us, or by the difficulty and damage that accrue to the benefactor, God's mercy in redeeming us, when miserable and lost and undone, is infinitely more considerable, than his mercy in creating us and giving us a being. And, yet, if creation alone gives God so great a right to us, that those beings, which we received from him, should therefore be entirely his; shall not redemption make us much more his? shall we not be his, who hath redeemed us from being wretched and miserable; since we are his, who hath given us to be? And, therefore, well might the Apostle argue, *Ye are not your own,* but God's: *for ye are bought with a price.*

And thus you see how manifold titles God hath to us; as he is our Creator, our Preserver, our Governor, and Benefactor: as we are his Covenant-Servants, united unto him, not only by his benefits, but by his grace; and, lastly, as we are redeemed by him from the service of sin, and the wages due unto it.

But, before I proceed to consider this part of the text as it stands absolutely in itself, give me leave to close up what hath been now spoken concerning God's right unto us, with two or three Inferences.

First. See, here, how dear we are unto God, and how highly he esteems of us, that he thus strengthens his right to us by so many multiplied titles.

As those, who prize any possession, seek to confirm it to themselves by all the ways that law and equity can find out; and have writings upon writings and evidences upon evidences for it, that their title to it may be unquestionable: thus seems God to deal with us. A single right, for so dear a portion and inheritance, is not enough: and, therefore, though he hath made us, and preserves us, and bountifully supplies us, though we profess ourselves to be his own; yet, to prevent all doubts and suits, he buys us too. He buys what is his own, that it might be more his own: and, because justice and vengeance lay in their claim to us, that the title of his mercy might not be litigious, that there might be nothing in himself to hinder his quiet enjoyment of us, he pays down a full price to justice, and satisfies all its demands. So dear are we to God! And,

Secondly. See how unfaithful we are to him, that we need so many bonds and engagements laid upon us to secure us.

So slippery and deceitful are our hearts, that we are still starting aside from him; and, though we have no right to dispose of ourselves, yet are we still selling or giving away ourselves to every lust and vanity. And, therefore, as we use to deal with those who are of a suspected honesty, lay all the bonds upon them that possibly we can and make them enter into strict and punctual engagements, so doth God with us: he trusts us not upon a single obligation; but makes us enter into bond upon bond; and all scarce sufficient to make such fickle and treacherous creatures stable and faithful to him.

And,

Thirdly. Hence learn, that all impiety and irreligion are the highest wrong and injustice in the world.

Will a man rob God? saith the Prophet Malachy: ch. iii. 8. intimating, by the very question, that this is such a horrid and heinous sin, as that it is not easy to be supposed any man would be so profligate a wretch as to be guilty of it: and therefore sacrilege, a stealing and purloining from God, is justly

branded as one of the most foul and odious sins that c
committed. And yet this is a sin more commonly comm
than most men think of. Every wicked man is guilty of
lege. He robs God, steals from him, and alienates that
is properly his due. Thou stealest thyself from him, thy
and thy affections, thy love and thy service: these thou
to thy lusts, and to the world; and maintainest his sworn
mies upon his right and due. If it be sacrilege, to co
things hallowed and dedicate to profane and common use
not thou then a sacrilegious wretch, who stealest away th
from God, which is by so many just titles his own; and
vertest it not only to common, but filthy and unclean uses?
Apostle tells us, that we are the temple of God: 2 Cor. v
our hearts are the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the "Holiest of H
in this temple; and all our faculties are dedicated thing
holy utensils for the worship and service of God. And,
shall we pollute this temple; set up idols there; and ser
lusts and follies with those very instruments and vessels,
God hath made and prepared for his own service and wo
And, yet, how many such sacrilegious persons are there
worldling sets up an image of gold in the temple of God
therefore covetousness is, by the Apostle, called idolatry,
iii. 5: Mammon is his God; and all the hallowed vessels
temple, his thoughts, designs, and affections, must all b
ployed in the service of this idol. The sensual unclean
turns this temple of God into a stew; and, with the he
makes his temple the scene of all his impurities. The b
drunkard makes this temple the place of all his riot and e
and, with impiety as great as Belshazzar's, makes the bow
vessels of God's sanctuary serve him only to quaff and c
in. And, indeed, there is no sin whatsoever, but it is c
cated of sacrilege. For what is sin, but, as the Schools
it, an aversion of the soul from God, and an inordinat
version of it to the creature? now to convert that to the cr
which is proper and due to God, is to rob him, to tak
what he hath hallowed, to pollute and profane things de
to defile his temple. And, now, to close up this, consid
dreadful threatening of the Apostle, 1 Cor. iii. 17. *If a*
defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.

And, thus much, for the Proposition in the text, ye
your own, but God's.

II. The next thing to be considered is the REASON: *For ye are bought with a price.*

The force of this reason I have already shewn you. I shall only now consider it absolutely, as it is in itself.

In these words is held forth unto us the great mystery of the Gospel, our redemption by Jesus Christ. I shall not treat of it in that latitude, that a full and complete handling of this subject would require; but confine myself to speak more briefly only to these few heads.

What this price of our redemption is.

To whom this price was paid, and of whom we were bought.

How the payment of a price can be consistent with the free mercy and grace of God in saving us.

What it is, that we are by this price redeemed from.

i. Let us consider WHAT THIS PRICE IS, WHICH IS PAID DOWN FOR OUR REDEMPTION.

And that is a price infinitely inestimable, consisting in all those dolorous sorrows and sufferings that our Lord Christ underwent in the days of his flesh, when *it pleased the Lord to bruise him.* In his nativity and circumcision, was this rich exchequer first opened; which was never afterwards shut, till he paid out to the very last farthing, the very last drop of his most precious blood, as a full and satisfactory price of our redemption. But, though the whole course of his humiliation and abasement was part of this price which he paid; yet, because the chief and greatest sum of it was told down to God in his death and last passion, and all his other sorrows and sufferings were completed in this, therefore the Scripture doth principally ascribe our redemption to the blood of Christ. So, 1 Peter i. 18, 19. *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold.... But with the precious blood of Christ.* His soul was made *an offering for sin:* Isa. liii. 10. *The blood of Jesus Christ....cleanseth us from all sin:* 1 John i. 7. and many other places to the same import. Now the blood and death of Christ, and all other parts of his exinanition, carried in them a sufficient, yea a redundant value, to expiate the sins of the whole world; from the infinite virtue of the hypostatical union of the divine with the human nature, whereby his blood became the blood of God; his sufferings, the abasement and humiliation of God: and this made it a

price, not only equivalent unto, but infinitely surpassing and outbidding the purchase, for which it was offered.

ii. Let us consider, TO WHOM THIS PRICE WAS PAID; and that is to our great creditor, God.

The Socinians, on purpose to undermine this fundamental doctrine of Christ's satisfaction, tell us, that, if we are redeemed by a price in this strict and proper sense, that price must then be paid into the hands of Satan, because we are in bondage under him: but this is as weak, as it is impious: for, indeed, Satan is not our creditor; we owe him nothing, but hatred and aversation: neither is any man, that is kept in ward for crimes or debts, properly said to be his goaler's prisoner, but the king's or the creditor's; so, though we are naturally in bondage under Satan, yet he is but our goaler: we are not his prisoners; but God's, who is both our sovereign, and our creditor. And therefore the price is not to be paid to him, by whom we are detained: but to him, by whose authority or by whose suit we are detained; and that is, the justice of God: and therefore Christ, by satisfying the justice of God, releaseth us from under the power of Satan. We are under a twofold bondage to the Devil: the one moral, by our sins and vices, doing his work and toiling in his drudgery; and thus we are his slaves: the other legal, by the guilt of sin binding us over and making us liable unto his plagues and torments. Christ hath redeemed us from both: improperly, from the former; by the power of his grace breaking asunder our chains and fetters in our conversion, and so setting us free from the service of sin and the Devil: most properly, from the latter; by the infinite virtue of his merits ransoming us from that death, and woe, and wrath, to which we stood exposed, and which else the Devil would have inflicted upon us, as being the great minister and executioner of divine vengeance. Now we are not properly redeemed from our moral bondage, our slavery to sin and Satan, but conquered: therefore no price was paid to him, under whose vassalage we were held. But we are properly redeemed from our legal bondage; from our liableness to eternal death and sufferings: yet the price ought not to be paid to Satan, but unto God, whose minister and executioner Satan is.

And this is in answer to the Second Enquiry.

iii. The Third general Enquiry is, HOW THE PAYMENT OF A FULL AND SATISFACTORY PRICE CAN BE CONSISTENT WITH THE FREE GRACE AND MERCY OF GOD IN SAVING US.

For the Scripture speaks so much of God's mercy and free grace in saving sinners, that some have thought it very difficult to reconcile those expressions with the notion of a price of redemption, properly so called. The chief sense in which grace is said to be free, is, that it gratuitously confers upon us the benefits of our redemption without merit or desert. If then these be merited, if an equal price be paid down for them, what becomes of all those magnificent exaltations of free grace, which the Scripture seems so much to glory in? *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake: By grace are ye saved, &c.* Certainly, what is so dearly bought and purchased as by the blood of Jesus Christ, cannot be said to be a free and gratuitous gift.

To this I answer, in the general, that these things are not at all inconsistent: and, therefore, it ought to be no prejudice to our most high veneration of the infinitely rich and infinitely free grace of God in our redemption, although that redemption be purchased for us, and a price paid down fully answerable to the demands of divine justice.

I shall endeavour to clear up this, in these following particulars.

1. *We are not so freely redeemed, pardoned, and saved, as to exclude all merit and desert on Christ's part.*

This is not necessary to the establishing of free grace, that our Saviour himself should be the object of it. For God transacted with his Son, only upon the terms of strict and impartial justice: nor was there ever any one sin, that he was pleased to take upon himself, that was pardoned to him; but a plenary satisfaction was exacted from him, and justice had out its full due in his sufferings. Every sin stood him as dear, as it would have done the sinners themselves, had God resolved never to have administered mercy and grace unto them: and, therefore, saith the Apostle, Col. i. 14. *In* him *we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:* and, *without shedding of blood* there *is no remission:* Heb. ix. 22: and, *This is my blood.... which is shed....for the remission of sins:* Matt. xxvi. 28. All our sins were laid upon him, and imputed to him; and he underwent and eluctated the whole pressure of those punishments, that were due unto them, and is now set down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, to make intercession for us. So that,

though never any who was a sinner, either through the corruption of nature or actual transgression, hath attained to the joy and happiness of heaven, but only through the pardoning grace and mercy of God; yet he, who was the Greatest Sinner (as Luther made bold to call him, and so he was by imputation) is now triumphing in those regions of bliss, crowned with glory, and arrayed with infinite majesty, whose sins yet were never pardoned, nor ever had he the least free grace or mercy shewn him; but, whatsoever he hath obtained either for himself or for us, the possession of it for himself and the possibility and assured hopes of it for us, he hath most dearly bought and purchased. Yea, indeed, in respect of this purchase made by Christ, we receive nothing at all of free grace from God; but, whatever we have or expect is paid for to the very utmost of what it is worth: for, as we ourselves are bought with a price, so is every thing we enjoy: even the most common and vulgar blessings, that are promiscuously distributed among the sons of men, all flow to us in a stream of blood.

But, yet,

2. *In respect of ourselves, our redemption, pardon, and salvation, and all the mercies we enjoy, are of mere free grace.*

No merit, no price is required from us: but all is excluded on our part, besides a grateful acknowledgment and an humble expression of our duty, by that rich mercy, which requires these from us; not as the price of our redemption, but only as a testimony of our love and ready obedience. Alas! could we pray, till our knees took root in the earth; could we weep whole rivers, and, after our tears were spent, drop our eye-balls too; could we fast ourselves into ghosts, and sigh away our souls into air; should we give all our goods to the poor, and our body to the flames: yet all our prayers, and tears, and fasting, and alms, and all the stock of our own righteousness, yea should it be supposed that a tax and subsidy should be levied upon the good works of all mankind and put into one common treasure for the use and benefit of any one particular soul, yet it would not be found a price rich enough for its redemption, nor at all available to buy off the guilt of the least sin. For, whatsoever is required of us, is but debt and duty; and therefore cannot be meritorious: and, whatsoever is not required of us, is but will-worship and superstitious devotion; and therefore cannot be acceptable. So, then, it is no derogation at all from the free grace of God, that he pardons and saves us upon the intervention

of a price; that our pardon is bought, and our inheritance is purchased: for we ourselves have not been at any part of the charge: we have not so much as cast in one mite into this treasury; but all is as freely and gratuitously bestowed upon us, as if it had never been purchased at all.

And, again,

3. *The relaxing of the rigour of the Covenant of Works, so far forth as to take off our personal obligation to punishment by the commutation of persons, accepting the substitution of another, of a Surety, of a Redeemer, is an act of infinite free grace and rich mercy.*

For, by the letter of the Law, *Do this and live*, implying the contrary threatening of death in case of disobedience, every sinner stood bound to suffer the whole curse and penalty in his own person: and God might for ever have refused to recede so far from his own right, as to admit of any satisfaction made and tendered by another; but might have seized upon us, who were the transgressors, and bound us over to answer it at the great assize before his dreadful tribunal, and to suffer for it eternal torments in hell. Now, O Sinner, though God hath received a price and ransom for thy soul at the hands of another, is this any diminution of the absolute freeness of his grace towards thee? Dost thou envy that he receives satisfaction for thy sins, since he receives it not from thyself? Or, dost thou grudge and repine that he should glorify his justice and severity upon another, since he intends only to glorify his mercy and grace upon thee?

"Yea," you will say, "this indeed is something of mercy and free grace, that God hath stricken my name out of the bond, and put in my Surety's, whereas he might justly have exacted the forfeiture from myself: but, had it not been a more glorious demonstration of free grace, absolutely to have forgiven the whole debt, and to have required no payment, no satisfaction at all? We see that, among men, he is accounted most bountiful, that forgives the surety as well as the principal. For, what singular act of mercy is it, to release the debtor, and yet rigorously to prosecute his sponsor and undertaker, from whom he is sure to recover all his right and demands? If God had been pleased thus totally to part with his right, and neither exact it from us nor our Surety, had not this been a far more generous mercy, and a more glorious demonstration of his infinite free grace?"

I answer, No. And therefore assert,

4. That *God's free grace is more gloriously demonstrated in the redemption of the world through a price, than it would have been, if he had only freely and arbitrarily remitted to them their offences and delivered them from eternal death, without requiring any satisfaction.*

And this will appear most clearly, if we consider but these Two things.

(1) Who the Person is, that is appointed our Surety and our Ransom.

Is it an angel? truly, if it were, this had been wonderful love, that God should part with so bright and glorious an attendant, send him down to earth, cruciate and torment him for the sins of such vile worms as we are. But, oh astonishment! when, not an angel, but the God of Angels: not a servant, but a Son, yea the Son of his Eternal Love and Delights, is, by the Father himself, appointed to such unspeakable miseries and dolours; and thrust under the sword of justice, when it was just falling upon us, only that he might ward off the blow, and save us from so great and inevitable a ruin, though it was to the death and ruin of his Only Son! Now judge, yourselves, whether it be not infinitely more expressive of the divine love, to save us by devoting his Own Son to be an execration and a sacrifice for us, than if he had only, out of his absolute prerogative, pardoned our sins, and, without more expence or difficulty, received us up into glory. This, indeed, had been grace; but it had been more thrifty and sparing, than that method, which God hath now designed for our salvation, through the blood and sufferings of Jesus Christ. And, therefore, the Scripture every where lays an accent and emphasis upon this: Rom. viii. 32. *He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all:* and, John iii. 16. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son* to save it. God lay under no necessity of saving us at all, and much less lay he under any necessity of saving us in so chargeable a manner as by the death of Christ: but yet *it pleased the Lord to bruise him;* to *make his soul an offering for sin;* and to cause to meet together upon him, all our iniquities and all his plagues and curses. And wherefore was this? not only that justice might be satisfied, but that mercy might also be satisfied; and free love and grace might be glorified in such a stupendous expression of it. The divine wisdom approves of this way of redemption, because divine love dictates it to be most advantageous to commend itself unto us: and that ever-adored design

of a Mediator took place in God's eternal councils, that it might be a means, as well for the demonstration of mercy, as for the satisfaction of justice.

And consider,

(2) That God himself furnished and enabled our Redeemer to pay down the whole of that price, which he exacted from him.

For the Son of God had not been passible, had he not become the Son of Man. He had not been wounded, nor buffeted, nor crucified, nor bled, nor died: he had not had any stock nor treasury of merits to have ransomed us; had he not taken *upon him the form of a servant*, had he not appeared *in the likeness of sinful flesh*. And, whence had he this, but only of God's providing? Heb. x. 5. *A body hast thou prepared me.* Now is it not as much free grace, to furnish our Surety with means and abilities to make satisfaction, as to forgive us without requiring any satisfaction at all? Yea, let me add, that free grace is much more glorious, inasmuch as the price with which our Redeemer is furnished, is more than sufficient to pay the debt.

And thus you see, that the intervention of a price is no derogation at all from the freeness of God's grace; yea, rather, this method of redeeming us mightily enhances his mercy, and makes it more rich and glorious. And therefore it is very observable, how the Scripture joins these two together, Free Grace and the Purchased Redemption, as if it would on purpose stop the mouths of those, who, by pleading the inconsistency of these, seek to undermine the greatest support of all our faith and hope, and the most dear and precious truth of the Gospel, I mean the satisfaction of Christ for our sins. See Rom. iii. 24. We are *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:* and, Eph. i. 7. *In* him *we have redemption through his blood*, even *the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.* What can be more express, to reconcile the grace vouchsafed by God, with the price paid for it by Christ? it is free grace, that justifies us; but yet we are justified through redemption: we are redeemed through his blood; but yet this is likewise according to the riches of his grace. And indeed both are easily accommodated: it is of price and purchase, in respect of Christ; but it is of gift and free grace, in respect of us: free, in that God was pleased to accept a Surety for us; and much more free, in that this Surety was his Son.

And, so much, for the Third Inquiry.

iv. The Fourth is, WHAT WE ARE REDEEMED FROM, by that price, which Jesus Christ hath paid down for us.

This I shall briefly shew you, in these following particulars.

1. We are redeemed *from the dread Wrath and Vengeance of God.*

And what an inestimable mercy is this! Vengeance follows a sinner close at the heels, pursues him through all the threatenings of the Law, brandishes its flaming sword over his head, and is ready every moment to plunge it into his very heart. The poor guilty sinner trembles, under the direful expectation of that fiery indignation, which will for ever consume him: he flies, but knows not whither; is destitute of hope, as he is of help. Now, in this forlorn and desperate condition, for one that might shew unto him a City of Refuge, and guide his trembling steps, and his amazed soul into it! now, for a messenger of peace, an interpreter, one of a thousand, that might declare unto man his righteousness! It is done, O soul: Christ Jesus meets the avenger of blood in his pursuit of thee, offers himself to his sword, falls and dies under his hand; whilst thou fliest into thy refuge, and art free both from thy fears and dangers. We find the high-priest, under the Law, a notable type of Christ in this particular: for the slayer was to abide in the City of Refuge till the death of the high-priest, and then to be set at liberty: Numb. xxxv. 28: so, by the death of Jesus Christ our High-Priest, we are set at liberty, and may walk in safety, being secured and warranted from the wrath of the avenger. Indeed, the wrath and justice of God is the most dreadful and formidable enemy we can have; but, even this enemy, thy Saviour hath satisfied and reconciled: he hath bought out thy peace for thee; and now thou mayest safely treat with justice itself, as thy friend and patron. The divine wrath is pacified; and God is more contented and recompensed by what thy Redeemer hath suffered for thee, than if he had haled thee forth to suffer in thine own person. God infinitely more acquiesceth in the sufferings of his Eternal Son, than he could have done in thine: for thine could have paid his justice but by small parcels at a time, and therefore must have endured eternally; but Christ Jesus paid down the whole sum and debt at once, so that justice could no longer be so if it did not perfectly free us who believe from any farther obligation to wrath and punishment. It is *Jesus*, saith the Apostle, who hath

delivered us from the wrath to come: 1 Thes. i. 10. And therefore, O doubting and trembling Christian, be not so injurious to thy God, as to fear he will revenge those sins upon thee, for which thy Redeemer hath so fully satisfied: thou mayest *go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart, for God* hath accepted thee: he is at peace with thee, and smiles upon thee. But, if thy conscience still lour, and speak nothing but thunders and threatenings, tell it that thou hast a Peace-Maker: the blood of Jesus, shed upon the cross, hath pacified God; and his blood, sprinkled upon thy conscience, will likewise atone and pacify it towards thee.

2. We are redeemed *from under the Slavery and Vassalage of the Devil.*

He is that mighty tyrant, that hunts after our souls to destroy them; that great dragon, that casts out of his mouth whole floods of persecutions and temptations to overwhelm us. And, if his rage be so inveterate against us here on earth, how implacable, think you, would his malice be towards us in hell! how would he triumph in our eternal perdition, who is now so aborious and solicitous to procure it! But, thanks be unto God, who *hath delivered us from the snare of the fowler;* so that now, through the redemption purchased for us by Christ our Lord, we may safely defy his spite, and contemn all the poor and impotent effects of it.

His power is seen chiefly in three things; in tempting, in accusing, in tormenting. But, by the virtue of the sacrifice of Christ, and the price that he hath paid for our redemption, this threefold power is either wholly taken from him, or else much abated.

(1) His Tempting power is restrained and cut short.

He can tempt us no farther, than he hath a permission given him by that God, who hath promised, that we shall not be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, or that he will make a way for us to escape. We see what manacles are upon him, when he must first petition God before he could stretch forth his hand against Job, or touch any thing that he had. And, therefore, O Christian, be confident, that, if he cannot touch thy body or estate, much less shall he touch thy soul and thy conscience by his horrid temptations and injections, without the special leave of God. And, in all his temptations, suppose them never so violent, if thou be but true to thyself, they shall all redound more to his shame and disappointment, than to thine.

If thou canst but resist them, and, with a holy scorn and disdain, cast back his fiery darts in his face, and keep close to thy duty and allegiance, all his temptations shall but fall upon himself, and be reckoned as his sins, and only thy troubles.

(2) His Accusing power is rebuked.

Thus, when Satan comes with a vehement accusation against Joshua, Zech. iii. 2. *The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord, that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.* Our Redeemer will be our advocate: and though, according to the terms of the first Covenant of Works, which requires perfect and spotless obedience, his accusations will most of them be found true against us; yet, according to the Covenant of Grace, which requires faith and sincerity, they will be found malicious and impertinent: and our Redeemer will fetch us off with the loud applause of saints and angels.

(3) His Tormenting power shall be wholly abolished.

The great end and design of the Devil is, only that he might train us into that dark region, where himself hath the sole jurisdiction, there to satiate his revenge upon us in our eternal torments. But Christ, our Redeemer, hath destroyed this power of the Devil: he hath ransacked this dark shop, and broken in pieces all his horrid racks and instruments of cruelty; so that, unless we ourselves will, not a soul of us shall ever fall into the hands of that merciless executioner.

3. We are redeemed *from the Power of Sin.*

And that, both from its reigning, and likewise from its condemning power.

(1) From its Reigning power.

It is true, that we cannot, in this life, be freed totally from its molestations. It is like the leprosy, that hath eaten so deep into the walls, that it can never be perfectly cleansed till the house itself be destroyed and demolished. But, yet, every true Christian is free from the dominion of it. It may tumultuate and rebel in the best; for we find *a law in* our *members, warring against the law* in our minds; many uproars, bandyings, and intestine dissentions: but, yet, it hath lost the sovereignty over them; and is now, not a commander, but a rebel.

(2) We are redeemed, likewise, from the Condemning power of sin.

The other freedom from sin is, by the Spirit of Christ, working mightily in us; but this is by the merits of Christ, effectually applied unto us: Rom. viii. 1. *There is now no condemnation to*

them which are in Christ Jesus. For, certainly, there is not so much malignity in our sins to destroy us, as there is in the blood of Christ to save us. And, he having interposed his infinite merits in our behalf, it would be a great disparagement to his all-sufficiency, if thou, who art but a poor vile creature, couldst have done that, which he, who is an Infinite God, could not expiate.

4. We are redeemed *from the Curse and Malediction of the Law.*

All our trials, crosses, and afflictions, that may befal us, are sanctified to us, and have nothing of the curse in them: for nothing is a curse, but what is inflicted in order to the satisfying of divine justice upon us. But, the justice of God being fully satisfied in the sufferings of our Lord Christ, all our own sufferings, how sharp soever they may be, are only for the exercise of our graces, the trial of our faith and patience, the conforming of us to the pattern of our Saviour, demonstrations of God's holiness, and means to make us partakers of it. We may rest confidently assured, that, if we believe, there is nothing of the venom and malignity of the curse in them; for *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,* saith the Apostle: Gal. iii. 13.

III. We have spoken hitherto of the two former parts of the Text; the Doctrine, and the Reason of it.

The next thing to be considered, is the INFERENCE or COROLLARY, which the Apostle draws from them: *Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit.*

Wherein we have Two parts:

An Exhortation: *Glorify God.*

A Direction how we ought to do it: *In* our *body, and in* our *spirit.*

It is only the former of these, that I intend to insit on. Possibly, I may briefly touch and glance upon the other, in my way. And, as a foundation of my following discourse, I shall lay down this plain Proposition.

THAT THE INFINITE MERCY OF GOD IN OUR REDEMPTION LAYS AN OBLIGATION UPON US TO GLORIFY HIM IN ALL THAT WE DO, HAVE, AND ARE.

This Proposition, I suppose, reacheth the full sense and meaning of the Apostle.

And, in prosecuting it, I shall observe this method:

Shew you what it is to glorify God.

How we are to glorify him.

What force and influence the consideration of our redemption hath to oblige us thus to glorify him.

i. WHAT IT IS, TO GLORIFY GOD.

And, here, we may take notice, that there are very many words used in Scripture, equipollent to this phrase of glorifying God. Such are, To *do all* things *to the glory of God:* 1 Cor. x. 31. To give glory to God: Ps. xxix. 2. *Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name.* To honour God: 1 Sam. ii. 30. *Them, that honour me, I will honour.* To make God's *name, and his praise glorious:* Ps. lxvi. 2. which is indeed the most proper signification of this word "glorify," though other expressions also speak the same sense.

So then, to glorify God, is to make him glorious.

"But, what! is it in the power of any creature to do this? is not God's glory infinite, eternal, and immutable? and would it not be an attempt, both fond and blasphemous, to go about to crown his Deity with any new rays, which shone not in his essence from all eternity? for, since the divine nature is infinitely simple and uncompounded, whatsoever is in God must be God himself; and, therefore, we may as well create a new godhead, as contribute any new accession of glory to that nature, which is altogether unchangeable. How then can we be said to glorify God, or to make him glorious?"

To this I answer, that glory is twofold: either a real glory, perfecting the subject in which it is; or else a relative glory, which doth not perfect the subject, but only declare those perfections which are already in it. The one we may well call a subjective, the other an objective glory.

Now,

1. As to *Real and Subjective Glory*, certain it is, that we cannot so glorify God, but God may and doth thus glorify us.

We cannot thus glorify God; since this would be utterly inconsistent with his eternal unchangeableness, and independency, and self-sufficiency: for, if we could add any real and absolute perfection to his nature, it would necessarily argue a preceding defect, a present change, and a perpetual obligation to his creatures; all which are infinitely incompatible with the divine essence.

But, yet, it is his prerogative so to glorify us; even by endow-
our natures with real and absolute perfections.

Which also he doth,

(1) In our Creation:

Bestowing upon us rational and intellectual faculties, a dis-
sive mind, and many other peculiar privileges both of soul
l body; and investing us with sovereignty and dominion over
erior creatures. Upon which account, the Psalmist tells us,
t God hath crowned man with honour and glory: Ps. viii. 5.

(2) In our Restitution from our lapsed estate:

Implanting in us the seminal inchoations and initials of glory,
our regeneration: for grace is glory in the seed, and glory is
t grace in the flower. Thus the Apostle, 2 Cor. iii. 18. We
e *changed into the same image from glory to glory*: that is, the
age of God is still perfecting in us by his Spirit, carrying on
s work from one measure and degree of grace unto another.
r the whole life of a Christian here on earth, is but as it were
e continued sitting under the hand and pencil of the Holy
host; till those first lines and obscurer shadows, which were
d in his New Birth, receive more life, sweetness, and beauty
m his progressive sanctification. And this is a being *changed*
m glory to glory. And when this is come to that perfection
to need only the last hand, and the completing touch, then,

(3) God glorifies us by the full Consummation of our Holiness
d Happiness in Heaven.

Thus Christ prays, John xvii. 1. *The hour is come: glorify*
y Son: and so, v. 5. *Glorify thou me with thine own self, with*
e glory which I had with thee before the world was. And so,
en our hour is likewise come, when we have attained to the
ll measure of our stature in Christ Jesus, God will then glorify
with himself; in that glory, which he hath prepared for us
fore the world was.

Thus, then, God doth confer real glory upon us; which if we
uld again think to do towards him, it were no less than an
pious and blasphemous arrogance: for it would imply, that
were a defective, mutable, and dependent God. And, there-
e, in this sense, Eliphaz speaks excellently, Job xxii. 2, 3.
n a man be profitable unto God?....Is it any pleasure to the
mighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou
kest thy ways perfect? certainly, we can neither add any real
d to him by our righteousness, nor detract it from him by

our wickedness: for he is as far above the reach of our good works, to benefit him; as he is above the reach of our sins, to wrong and injure him. Therefore we cannot thus glorify God.

But,

2. There is *a Relative Glory of God*, which he is then said to have; when his real and absolute perfections are declared, and made manifest and conspicuous to the world.

And this glory perfects not him, to whom it is ascribed; but us, who ascribe it to him. And, thus, God may and ought to be glorified by us. The former may be called his essential glory; this latter, his declarative glory. God's Essential Glory is nothing else but the infinite perfection of his own nature: it is a constellation and concentering of all his inconceivable attributes of wisdom, power, holiness, justice, mercy, truth, and the rest, into one ever-blessed essence: this glory is capable neither of addition, diminution, nor change. But his Declarative Glory is nothing else, but the gloss and shine, the visible splendour and lustre, which reflects from his essential glory, upon the notice and admiration of his creatures: and this glory may be both increased and lessened. As to his attributes themselves: so, God is glorious: as to the manifestation of them; so, he is said to be glorified.

And that, either by himself or others.

(1) God is said to glorify Himself.

And that, when he is pleased to dart down a ray, either of his wisdom, or power, or justice, or mercy, or any other of his attributes, so as to make it conspicuous in the administration of affairs here below. And, therefore, John xii. 28. we find our Blessed Saviour, sadly reflecting upon the sorrows and agonies of his death, at last composeth and resigneth up himself with this prayer: *Father, glorify thy name:* and it follows, *There came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* Indeed, never was there any thing that God did in the world, that so illustriously conduced to his glory, as the adored design of saving it by his Son: this brought in a large share and revenue of glory to most of his attributes: he had already glorified himself in his wisdom and mercy, by the birth of his Son; and, in his power, by the miracles he wrought; and he would glorify himself again, that is, he would now glorify his dread justice and severity, by the death he was to suffer.

(2) Creatures also may be said to glorify God.

Brute and inanimate creatures do it only passively and objectively; as they exhibit the tracks and impresses of the divine attributes upon them: but rational and intelligent creatures ought to do it actively; by observing and ascribing to him those perfections, which he visibly manifests in the ways of his grace or providence. When they see some eminent effects and footsteps of his wisdom, of his power, of his goodness, or the like, in the management of things here below; and are thereby moved piously and seriously to acknowledge that God is wise, powerful, and gracious, as he expresseth himself to be: this ascribing unto God his attributes from what appears in his actions, is our glorifying of him. And so, on the contrary, when sordid, earthy, and bestial men take no notice of the emanations and beamings-forth of God's attributes, neither so as to have their hearts affected with them nor their lives conformed to them, they are said to dishonour God. Not that any, the most boisterous sinners that are, can invade his essence, or rend away any of his infinite perfections from him: this glory they cannot eclipse, but it shines eternally in the same lustre; but they do really eclipse his declarative glory. Which yet is a greater wrong done to themselves, than to him: for, as the sun is still full of light in itself, when yet we see it under an eclipse by the moon's interposing between us and it, which indeed is not properly so much an eclipse of the sun as of the earth; so the glory of God is obscured and eclipsed by the wickedness of men: not that his essential glory is at all prejudiced, for this retains the same tenor of light and lustre for ever; but that they observe not, they admire not, the bright discoveries of his glorious attributes: and so they dishonour him, not by depriving God of any perfection; but themselves, whose highest perfection and the end of whose being it is, to adore God, and to be made conformable unto him.

And thus you see what it is to glorify God. It is to make him glorious: and that, not by the addition of any new glory to him; but only by declaring that glory, which eternally and unchangeably is in him.

ii. The Second thing to be enquired into, is, HOW WE OUGHT TO GLORIFY GOD.

The disquisition of this will both receive light from, and a light unto, what went before.

Now, here, that we may have right and clear apprehensio of a duty, that is so vastly comprehensive, and indeed the whc of man, we must remember that all our glorifying of God only in relation to his essential attributes, which are proper and really his glory.

And, therefore, Two things are here to be done.

To shew you what these Essential Attributes are. An
How they may be glorified by us.

1. For the *first*, these attributes of God are many; whi though they differ according to our manner of conception a expression, yet are all really the same nature and essence God.

I shall mention only those, which are most conspicuous, a which we have most frequent occasion in the course of our liv to glorify. And such are these Seven following: Purity a Holiness, Power and Sovereignty, Mercy and Goodness, Equi and Justice, Wisdom and Omniscience, Immensity and Omn presence, Truth and Veracity. There are, indeed, many mor as Eternity, Unchangeableness, Simplicity, and Oneness, & but these, because they are not so conversant about huma affairs, I shall not now particularly speak of.

2. These attributes may be glorified, in the general, Tw ways; either by *adoration*, or else by *declaration*.

(1) We ought to glorify God by a most humble and devo Adoration of his infinite attributes and perfections.

Seriously to ponder them in our hearts, to consider the beauty and excellency, to admire those expressions of the which God is pleased to vouchsafe us; and, when we see an notable instance, either of the divine power, or wisdom, goodness, or justice in the dispensations of his providence, the to prostrate ourselves in the most humble veneration of our soul and ascribe it unto God, acknowledging that his perfections a gloriously discovered in those effects, and with ravished a inflamed hearts singing unto him the song of Moses and t Lamb, Rev. xv. 3. *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lo God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou King of Sain Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for th only art holy:* this is to glorify God. And, not only thus observe and to acknowledge the appearance of God's attribute

but to have our affections likewise suited and proportioned to them; as, when God displays his dread justice and severity, either against ourselves or others, then to fear and tremble before him; when he magnifies the riches of his mercy and goodness, to rejoice and praise his holy name; and so, in the like instances, which I intend more particularly to prosecute hereafter: this reverend observing of the manifestations of God's attributes and conforming our affections proportionably unto them, is one chief spiritual method of glorifying God, whereby we do secretly, yet effectually, advance his honour in the inmost retirements and recesses of a devout soul.

But,

(2) There is another way of glorifying God; and that is, by Declaration of his infinite perfections.

And this is Twofold; either by our Words, or by our Works.

[1] We ought to glorify God, by declaring his attributes in our Words and Discourses; setting forth his holiness, wisdom, power, justice, in the most serious and affecting manner that we are able, so as to beget a high and honourable esteem of them in those that hear us.

And, therefore, 1 Pet. iv. 11. the Apostle exhorts us, but especially ministers, *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God....that God, in all things, may be glorified.* Hence, David often calls his tongue his *glory:* Ps. lvii. 8. *Awake up, my glory: awake, psaltery and harp:* and, Ps. cviii. 1. *I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.* And why is this member especially called our glory, but because it is the fittest instrument for our glorifying of God? *Therewith bless we God, even the Father,* saith the Apostle: James iii. 9.

And this, indeed, is the glory of our glory, and the crown of our excellency, when we employ so noble a part in so noble a work; still to be celebrating his name, and setting forth his praise. And, indeed, what more excellent theme can there be for our discourse, than God? a theme, that will more adorn and beautify our language, than that can adorn and extol him: a theme, that can never be exhausted; but, the more we speak of God, still the more we may, new discoveries still emerging and rising up to our admiring view. And, whilst we affectionately endeavour to exalt the majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness of God in our discourses, if we speak not more elegantly, yet certainly we shall speak more pertinently and to the purpose, than the most florid trifler that abuseth a great deal of wit and

rhetoric about toys and nothings. This kind of holy and serious speech will advance us as much above the common rank and pitch of other men, as speech itself doth advance men above the condition of brute beasts.

And yet, alas! how many are there, that turn this their glory into shame; whose tongues are rather spunges to wipe out and deface the glory of God, than pencils to delineate and express it! who scarce ever speak of God, but in an oath; nor make mention of his name, but when they curse and ban by it! Their black mouths are full of the soot of hell, and their tongues set on fire of those infernal flames. They seem to have already learnt the language of hell; and are well fitted, for ever to converse with those damned wretches, who have no other use of God, but only to blaspheme and curse him. And, to their own shall they go: and, for ever blaspheme, out of the exquisite anguish of their torments; as here they did, out of mere gallantry and humour.

Others, again, though they neither whet nor draw their tongues against God, yet are they very shy of speaking either of him or for him; and would rather make any thing the subject of their discourse, than that God, who hath endowed them with so excellent a faculty. Hence, how much time, how much converse is lost among men; whilst idle tales and raillery, and such like unconcerning vanities, busy their minds and tongues and no man thinks or speaks of that God, who is intimately present with them, and one of the company! So that we may very justly take up that complaint of the Psalmist, Ps. xii. 2 *They speak vanity, every one with his neighbour.*

There is, indeed, a great deal of Christian prudence and discretion requisite in this particular. For, as the amiableness of all duties consists in the right timing and placing of them, so especially of this holy and spiritual discourse. And, therefore the Wise Man tells us, Prov. xxv. 11. that *a word, fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver:* and, there is a time when the prudent should keep silence: Amos v. 13. Indeed the mention of the Great God ought not to be trivially ingested nor, by an imprudent zeal, importunely and abruptly crowded in, when we may rationally conclude it will be so far from glorifying of God, as only to create a contempt and nauseating in the hearers.

But yet a man, that is spiritually skilful in this affair, will watch his opportunities: and, if he hath been exercised in this

holy art, it is very seldom, that, in a long converse, he should fail of a fit cue pertinently to wind in and insinuate heavenly discourse; and make that which began, perhaps, about poor earthly affairs, yet to end in God, and the contemplations and praises of his eternal attributes: for somewhat of God is considerable in every thing that we can speak of, either his power, or wisdom, or goodness. It should be our care, not to lodge, but only to bait our thoughts and our discoures at creatures, and so quickly pass through them unto God: only let the hints be taken wisely and seasonably. Indeed our discourses should be like Jacob's ladder: though the bottom of them stand upon the earth, yet the top of them should reach into heaven. We find our Saviour very frequent in this practice, still taking occasion from the things of this world to waft over his discourse to things of another world: what a most excellent spiritual discourse doth he draw out of Jacob's well, John iv! and, now again, by a miracle of his wisdom, as once before by a miracle of his power, he turns water into wine: so, from common and ordinary bread, he takes occasion to set before them, and to break unto them *the bread of life:* John vi. And herein every true Christian should be piously ingenious; to take his advantage from earthly occurrences, to transfer his thoughts and discourse to those attributes of God, which appear most conspicuous and illustrious in them. Thus, if any discourse happen concerning any wonderful revolutions in the affairs of the world, how easy and how natural is it to slide off from this, into the serious consideration of the infinite wisdom and sovereignty of God, in guiding and governing all things here below, according to his eternal and immutable counsels! If it be concerning any remarkable and exemplary plague brought upon a wicked person or people, doth not this naturally prompt us to speak of the divine justice and the strict severity of God, who will certainly cause men's sins to find them out? If it be of any prosperous success or blessing bestowed upon his Church, or any particular person who is a sincere and upright servant of God, doth not this administer to us a fair and pertinent occasion to magnify the infinite mercy of God, who will not suffer virtue and piety to lie always unregarded, but sometimes will as conspicuously own it in this world, as he will gloriously crown it in the world to come? So, I say, there is scarce any thing we can discourse of, but the divine attributes are so interwoven and appear so

plainly in it, that we may thence take very obvious hints to raise our meditations and discourses unto heavenly objects.

That is the First way of glorifying God, by declaring his glory in our Words and Discourses.

[2] There is another way of glorifying him; and that is, by our Works and Actions.

And, indeed, this is the chief and principal way of glorifying God; and that, which is the most free from suspicion of guile and hypocrisy. We may flourish over the attributes of God with many excellent notions and expressions of them: yet all other expressions may prove deceitful; but those, which are made in men's lives. Hence it is, that our Saviour instructs us in the most effectual course to promote the glory of God: Mat. v. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven:* and John xv. 8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.* Many empty, talkative professors there may possibly be, who would fain pass for trees of righteousness and plants of renown; and yet bear nothing but leaves, an external show and a flourishing outside: these they wear for their own ostentation and glory; but are wholly deficient in that, which is most conducing to the glory of God, *the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, which* the Apostle tells us *are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God:* Phil. i. 11.

This, therefore, being the chief way of glorifying God, setting forth and declaring his attributes by our Works and Actions I shall the more largely insist on it.

Now there are Two ways, in the general, to glorify the Divine Attributes by our Actions.

First. By conforming ourselves to the likeness and similitude of them.

And this we ought to do, in respect of the communicable attributes of God's nature: such as his holiness, and mercy, and justice, and wisdom, and truth. These are called communicable attributes, because they may be, in some respect and measure, found also in the creatures. And, to endeavour a resemblance with God in these, is the tendency of grace in us, and the effect of the Spirit of God, making us in this sense partakers of the divine nature. And, the more perfectly we transcribe our original, the more lively these lineaments of God are pourtrayed upon the soul, the more do we thereby glorify him: for it is hi-

onour to be imitated, in what is imitable by us. Certainly, is a sign that we love and esteem whatsoever we strive and ndeavour to resemble; and count that excellent and perfect, which we would have found in ourselves: and, therefore, as it is pleasure to any man, to observe others how they eye and imiate his actions, because it is a testimony of honour and respect which they give him; so is it a delight to God, to observe the ndeavours of a holy soul in imitating his perfections, for this is sign and evidence that they do highly venerate them. And,

Secondly. We glorify God, by performing those duties which is attributes oblige us unto.

For there are many incommunicable attributes of God, which were impiety or folly for us to attempt the imitation of. Such re his absolute eternity, both before and after all time: his initeness and immensity, filling all places, yea infinitely exceedg all: the perfect simplicity and incomposition of his nature, his nmutability and unchangeableness, and his independency and elf-sufficiency. In none of these, can we be like unto God. ut yet these proper and incommunicable attributes enforce and y upon us many duties, by the conscientious performance of hich we ought to glorify God: for we are bound to glorify him, ot only in his holiness, and justice, and goodness; but in his ternity, unchangeableness, omnipotence, and omniscience, alough indeed in a different manner. The former we ought to lorify, by conforming ourselves to them: the latter we ought glorify, by performing the duties which they oblige us unto.

Let us therefore consider, in particular, how we ought to lorify God in several of his attributes.

1st. I shall begin with his Holiness and Purity.

This is an attribute, than which none is more frequently scribed unto God in Scripture: *The Holy God*, and *The Holy ne of Israel.* Yea it is spoken of, as if all the rays of God's lory were contracted into this one attribute: *glorious in holiess:* Exod. xv. 11. And, therefore, if God accounts his holiess his most shining and illustrious attribute, it is but reason hat we should glorify him in that, wherein he esteems himself nost glorious: for what is it to glorify God, but to express how lorious he is? and shall we not therefore especially glorify him n that, wherein he is most glorious?

If, then, you would glorify God in his holiness, you must o it by being conformable to it. This is no arrogance, nor

proud presumption; but your stated duty: for God hath prefixed his holiness, as the example and motive of yours. So we have it, Lev. xi. 44. *Ye shall be holy, for I am holy:* which is again repeated and pressed upon them, chap. xix. 2. and chap. xx. 7. *Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy:* which the Apostle likewise quotes and transcribes, 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. *As he, which hath called you, is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation:* As *it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.*

(1st) Now the true notion of Holiness, is, a Separation from all Sin and Impurity.

This is the holiness of God; in whose most pure essence there is not the least shadow of any thing that is culpable, nor can there be. And this holiness thou oughtest to glorify, by resembling it as perfectly as thy finite human nature can bear so bright an impress.

For, consider,

[1st] Other of God's attributes may be glorified, whether thou wilt or no.

He hath glorified his Almighty Power, in creating this great world out of a huge nothing. He hath glorified his Wisdom, in the beautiful order and harmonious government of the world; conducting all things sweetly and powerfully, by his own counsels, to his own ends. He hath glorified his Goodness, by spreading a bountiful table for all living things, and richly providing for all their necessities. These and other of his attributes he hath abundantly glorified: and he might have so done, although mankind had never been created; but the earth had been only filled with brute creatures, and heaven with angels to observe them. But, there is no method to glorify his Holiness here below, which he accounts the chiefest part of his glory, and the most precious jewel in his diadem; no method I say to glorify this, but only by our being holy and pure, in conformity to his holiness. And, what! wilt thou suffer God's chief glory to lie obscure and neglected? Shall he be glorified in every attribute and perfection of his nature, but only that wherein he is most transcendently glorious?

Consider, again,

[2dly] Thou ownest and acknowledgest thyself to be God's: at least I am sure thou wouldest willingly be found so at the Last and Great Day.

And, what! dost thou think that God will claim thee to be his, when thou wearest the Devil's mark and brand upon thee?

Whose image and superscription dost thou bear? God's image, by which he knows his own, is Holiness stamped upon them. God doth, as it were, strike a tally, when he sanctifies any soul: he communicates his holiness to it; and, in that, his image and similitude: nor will he own that person, at the Last Day, who cannot produce this tessera, this tally, and prove himself to be God's by his conformity unto him. Now, O Sinner, thou, that wallowest in the filth of all manner of pollutions, canst thou ever hope to be owned by God, as one of his, when thou retainest all the characters of the Devil deeply imprinted on thee? What badge, what cognizance hast thou, to make it known that thou art God's? a human nature, gospel ordinances and privileges? and so have thousands had, who are now in hell. Wherein is thy likeness and similitude unto God? possibly, thou resemblest him in thy knowledge and understanding; and hast a great measure of wisdom and prudence bestowed upon thee: possibly, thou resemblest him in power and authority; and he hath stamped that part of his image upon thee, exalting thee in dignity and honour above others: possibly, thou resemblest him likewise in thy beneficence; and art kind and charitable, and helpful to those who stand in need of thee. It is well. But, yet, this is not that image, that God will own thee by. He requires a nearer resemblance of himself, in thy holiness and purity; and, whatsoever else thou mayest think to produce will stand thee in no stead; for, *without holiness, no man shall see* God.

(2dly) Now, holiness and purity expresseth itself against sin Two ways: in the Hatred, and in the Flight of it.

[1st] Therefore glorify God in his holiness, abhorring and hating every sin. Hate it, wheresoever it is found; but, especially, in thyself. Hate it, in others: hate their vices, but yet love their persons; both which thou wilt best perform, if thou labourest by rebukes, exhortations, admonitions, and counsels, to destroy sin in them. But, especially, hate it in thyself: for, certainly, if thou hatest a toad or a serpent wherever it be, thou hast more reason to hate it crawling in thine own bosom. And,

[2dly] Eschew and avoid all sin for the future; yea, all the appearances, and all the occasions of it. Dread nothing so much as a polluted, defiled conscience.

And, whilst thou thus sincerely endeavourest to keep thy soul pure and spotless, thou mayest, with unspeakable joy, ex-

pect that God will glorify his mercy upon thee, who thus glorifiest his holiness in thyself.

2dly. Another attribute of God, which we ought especially to glorify, is his Mercy and Goodness.

Indeed, these two words, of Mercy and Goodness, are often promiscuously used, to signify one and the same gracious disposition of God towards his creatures. Yet, if we more accurately consider it, there seems to be this difference between them; that goodness is of a much larger extent and latitude than mercy. For mercy, properly, connotes misery in the object towards which it is expressed: but goodness may be as well expressed towards the happy, as towards the wretched and miserable. It was an effect of God's infinite goodness, to create the world; to continue the glorious angels in that blessed estate, in which they now stand; to preserve the frame of nature in its course, and every creature in its being: but this is not properly called mercy; because it doth not suppose any precedent misery, from which it frees and rescues them. Briefly, therefore, those free and gratuitous favours, which God bestows upon his creatures, if they were wretched before, are an expression of his mercy; if they were not wretched, are an expression of his goodness: and therefore our creation and preservation is properly an effect of the divine goodness, because these benefits do not suppose us lying under any misery, nor deliver us out of it; but our redemption and salvation are an effect of the divine mercy properly so called, because these are conferred upon us when we were lost, ruined, and undone, with a purpose to deliver us from that abyss of woe and misery into which we have plunged ourselves. But, because the acts, both of God's mercy and goodness, are one and the same, but are only modified according to the divers considerations of their objects, therefore we may well treat of them as one and the same attribute in the divine nature.

Now this merciful goodness of God is one of the most radiant and sparkling gems in his crown: and, when God would be seen by us in all his state and splendour, he arrays himself with this attribute. And, therefore, when Moses had attained such holy freedom with God, as to entreat him to shew him his glory, Exod. xxxiii. 18. it is remarkable that God condescends to his request, and tells him, v. 19. *I will make all my goodness pass*

fore thee: he grants his petition; but withal informs him, that e could not see his essential glory, for that is too dazzling an bject for frail and mortal eyes to bear: *Thou canst not see my ace: for there shall no man see me, and live:* v. 20. But, yet, when God would shew himself in the brightest and most illustrious glory that a mortal man can behold, he selects out and puts on this attribute of his goodness: and, accordingly, ch. xxxiv. 6. he passeth by in pomp, and magnificently proclaims his name, *The Lord, the Lord God:* what! The Lord God great and terrible, that formed all things by the word of his mouth, and can destroy all things by the breath of his nostrils? that rides upon the wings of the wind, and makes the clouds the dust of his feet? that rends the mountains in sunder, and makes the hills shrink from his presence? that overturneth kingdoms, and brings decreed destruction upon all the beauty and stability of mundane affairs? No: though God be very glorious in these expressions of his power and majesty; yet this is not that name, which he chiefly delights to honour: but, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; Keeping mercy for thousands; forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin.*

Thus you see God owns his mercy and goodness, as his earest attribute and his peculiar glory: he seems, as it were, o esteem and value himself upon it: and therefore, certainly, e ought to glorify him in that, wherein he accounts himself so lorious.

But how may we glorify God in his mercy and goodness?

I answer, these Four Ways.

(1st) By endeavouring to Assimilate Ourselves unto it; laouring after an universal goodness, in all our converse and deeanour.

Then is God's goodness glorified, when we endeavour to anscribe and copy it forth in ourselves. Every true Christian ught to be so deeply tinctured with the serious consideration f the mercy and goodness of God, till he is transformed into ie very image and likeness of it. This will render it visible id conspicuous unto men. How should we know that the sun so bright and glorious a creature, if the air were not all rewed and powdered with its light? our eyes discern the light f the sun, by the light of the air through which it diffuses and atters its rays, and turns all that vast body into light and plendour.

And so, truly, when thou thyself art turned into mercy and goodness, others will behold the mercy and goodness of God shining forth in thee, and be induced to give God the glory. And that, upon a double account:

First. Whilst thou art beneficent and good to others, they cannot but gratefully acknowledge the mercy of God, in so sweetly disposing and inclining thy heart to those actions of love and kindness towards them.

And, indeed, this thou oughtest to propound to thyself as thy utmost end, in all the offices of charity and humanity that thou dost unto others, that God may have the praise and glory of all. And, therefore, if thou relievest the poor, or rescuest the oppressed, or remittest thy due to those whom a rigorous exacting of it would ruin, and dost it with an intent that thou thyself mayest be praised and extolled for it, and not God; this is so far from being charity, that it is sacrilege: for all mercy and compassion in us, is but the mercy of God communicating itself to others through us; as all light in the air, is but the light of the sun shining through it. And, therefore, all the good thou dost or canst do, thou dost it upon God's stock: and, certainly, if thou employest his stock, it is but reason that he should have the interest; which if thou withholdest from him, and assumest to thyself, thou robbest God of his right; and, whilst thou art bountiful in communicating his goodness unto others, thou art likewise unjust in taking his praise and glory to thyself. It is a most commendable piety in those, who, when they have given alms to relieve the bodily necessities of the poor, have likewise given a better alms to their souls, in exhorting them not so much to thank them but God, who hath both enabled and inclined them to do it. And, indeed, though we are bound to acknowledge and respect those, who have been kind and munificent to us; yet we ought especially to bless and praise God, who hath inspired and moved them to those actions, and derived his universal and extended goodness through them unto us: this is the way to make their goodness glorify God's goodness, when we take notice how the mercy of God appears in their mercy to us: and therefore it is remarkable, when Jacob addresseth himself unto Esau, and had found favour in his sight, he tells him, Gen. xxxiii. 10. *I have seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me:* that is, in the courteous and reconciled countenance of his brother, he discerned the favour and gracious dealing of God with him.

should we say, when we partake of any benefit or goodness m men: "In such a one's goodness, I have seen the good-ss of God: in his bounty, I have seen the bounty of God." d thus, by assimilating ourselves unto God in this attribute, shall give occasion to grateful and considerative persons fre-ently to make such reflections, which will highly conduce to praise and glory.

Secondly. The shewing of mercy and doing of good unto hers will glorify God, as it may cause them to reflect, that, if ere be so much goodness in a creature, how infinitely more there then in the Creator.

This is a rational and easy inference, which those, who are y way ingenuous, cannot fail to make when they behold that nevolence, and bounty, and readiness to help and assist others, ich appears in you. And, therefore, saith our Saviour, Mat. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your od works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* We all thus glorify him, by giving others a happy occasion to nclude, that, if there be so much mercy and goodness in the eature, then certainly there is infinitely more in God himself: a river pours forth such abundance of waters to refresh the y and parched earth, how boundless must the treasury of the eat deep be, from whence, as Solomon tells us, they are supplied! Now think with thyself, O Christian! what a vast m and revenue of glory will come in to God, when, by thy neficence and liberality, thou shalt give a worthy occasion of tolling his; and, though thou canst resemble it but in part, cording to the stinted measures of thy finite nature and abi-y, yet shalt glorify it entirely, by causing others to adore the finite riches of it in the divine nature.

Now, that our mercy and goodness may be like unto God's, must have in it these Four qualifications.

[1st] It must be a General goodness, universally respecting

For God's is so. Ps. cxlv. 16. *Thou openest thy hand, and sa-fest the desire of every living thing.* He spreadeth his cherish-g wings over all the creation; and, with his rich bounty, re-ceth all the works of his hands. And, if thou wilt glorify n, thou must act proportionably within thy sphere; and do od unto all, according to the opportunities and abilities that d hath bestowed upon thee: thy mercy is not like God's, if u sufferest any, who make their applications to thee, and

whom thou canst relieve, to go away with the pressure of the wants and necessities upon them. And, as though this fie were not large enough for the exercise of our mercy, and ma kind were too few for us to do good unto, God hath require that we should shew mercy and goodness to the very beasts Prov. xii. 10. *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beas* And, so far doth he esteem of this sweet and compassionat temper in us, that he rather chooseth to dispense with his ow immediate service and worship, than to hinder us from any op portunities of doing good to any creature: still preferring merc before sacrifice; and accounting the life of one beast saved, a more acceptable service, than the death of many beasts sa crificed.

[2dly] It must be a Free, Undeserved goodness, to be lik unto God's.

For his is so. Yea, so undeserved, that he lays it forth upo those, who have deserved his wrath and vengeance: *He maket his sun to* shine *on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain o the just and on the unjust:* Mat. v. 45. And, if we would glorif God by our likeness to him in this attribute, our goodness mus proceed by the same measures. Possibly, some have abuse and affronted us; and now it is in our power to revenge ou selves upon them: but know, that the Divine Providence hat given thee an opportunity for revenge; yet the Divine Merc requires that thou shouldst not only forgive the injury, but re quite it with courtesies and kind offices: thou oughtest not t diminish the least part of that good, which thou canst do them upon consideration of wrongs and contumelies, which thou ha received from them. This, indeed, is a high and transcende pitch of goodness; yet this is but that, which our Saviour ver instantly presseth upon his disciples, as the very mark an badge by which they may be known to be the children of God Mat. v. from v. 44, to the end: *I say unto you, Love your enemies bless them, that curse you: do good to them, that hate you: an pray for them, that despitefully use you and persecute you: Th ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven:* an so, again, Luke vi. from v. 27 to 37. this important and difficu duty is most earnestly inculcated: *If ye do good to them whi do good to you, what thank have ye?.....But, love ye your enemie and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again.....and ye sha be,* that is, ye shall appear and be known to be, *the children the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.*

[3dly] Our goodness, that it may be like unto God's, must be wholly disinterested.

We must not carry on any selfish designs by it; nor seem to do others good, but really intend only our own advantage: this is but to make a benefit a bait, which whilst others take, they are themselves taken. God's goodness is more generous; expecting no recompence to be made: for how can we be profitable to him? or what can we return him, that is not his own? And, although his favours towards us be many and great, yet he is pleased to reckon that we acquit ourselves of our obligations, if we return him but acknowledgment and praise. And, if we would glorify God, such must our goodness be. Our Saviour hath taught us to scorn that sordid way of laying snares for other men's courtesies, by ours to them: Luke xiv. 12, 13. *When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not.....thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and* so *a recompence be made thee.* And, whosoever he be, that is good and bountiful to others upon such a mean design, he doth but barter and truck benefits, not bestow them.

[4thly] Our goodness must be Discreet, likewise; and, though it ought to be universal, it must be Discriminating too: for even God's is so.

He doth good unto all; yet not equally. Some there are, who pass only under the general influences of his common bounty; and, though he give a liberal allowance to these, yet he bestows the treasures of his grace and mercy and the inheritance of his glory on those, who are the excellent ones, and whom he hath made worthy: hence God is said to be *the saviour of all men, especially of those that believe:* 1 Tim. iv. 10. And, if we would glorify God, we must imitate him in this particular also. Though our goodness ought to be general; and, so far as we are able, we should tread where God hath passed on before us: yet we ought, likewise, to put a difference, as he hath done; and to make a deeper impression of our charity and goodness upon some, than upon others. Hence the Apostle exhorts us, Gal. vi. 10. *As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* All, that are in want, challenge relief from thee, according to thine ability: but, seest thou any, that are poor in outward respects, but yet rich in faith? thou art obliged, under a double bond, to supply and provide for them; both as they are partakers of

the same common human nature, and much more as they ar partakers of the divine and heavenly nature. And fear not, les such an enlarged bounty and goodness, as I have described t you, should inevitably ruin and beggar you; for Christian pru dence must here dictate to you the measures which you ability can extend unto: the only danger is, lest you shoul take them too short. Nor is it to imitate God, if, by som few profuse acts of charity, (for there may be lavishnes even in this) I say, it is not to imitate God, if, by some fe acts of charity, you render yourselves incapable of doing more for God is good unto us; yet so, as he still keeps the stock i his own hands, and doth not exhaust himself to replenish us but sit down, and impartially consider what is necessary f thyself and thine, in the rank and station in which the prov dence of God hath set thee; and, whatsoever abounds, tho oughtest not to look upon as thine, but as God's and the poor's thou only art a trustee for their use; and, if thou withholdes it from them, thou art no better than a thief and a robber, and stealest even that which the law of man calls thine. Indeed, it were very strange, if the most of us could not cut off some superfluous and unnecessary expences, and lay them up into a treasury for good works: we see how sparing and thrifty some men's covetousness is; who will pare away the very edges o decency and fitness, only that they may amass their sordid sum together, when all the use they can make of their wealth is bu to look upon it: and why should not piety and charity teach us as much thrift, as vice and covetousness? but only that men are grossly foolish in this particular; looking upon whatsoever i laid out this way, as lost, and no longer theirs; whereas, indeed, had they but faith, and half that religion which they may pretend unto, they would know, that, that only is lost which i unduly kept, and that safest laid up which is well laid out. And if thou canst but purchase the glory of God, though by the greatest expence, either by relieving or encouraging his servants, know it is the most gainful bargain that ever thou madest and faith will tell thee, that thou hast but remitted thy wealth to heaven, where it shall be punctually paid thee with abundan interest; and, in the meanwhile, God hath given thee as many bonds, as he hath made promises, to secure thee.

This, therefore, is the First way of glorifying God's mercy and Goodness, by our resemblance to it; cherishing in ourselves a generous, free, disinterested, and discreet goodness towards others

I have the longer insisted upon this, because I see it woefully neglected amongst Christians; who fall so infinitely short of imitating God in the mercifulness and goodness of his nature, that they look upon it as a piece of religion to be sour, morose, and supercilious, and too frequently proud despisers of others. Some are unjust in their dealings, and take all advantages to defraud and circumvent their brethren; and are so far from doing what love and charity require, that they answer not the rules of law and equity. Some, if they seek not the ruin of others, yet are ready to rejoice at it; and, with a devilish kind of delight, please themselves, either with the miscarriages or mishaps of their brethren. Others, again, love to sow discords, and to stir up strife between brethren; that, when they are all in a flame and combustion, they may sit by and warm themselves. What shall I say concerning these? is this to imitate God? is this to copy forth his universal goodness? or do they not rather give a sad occasion to others, to open their black mouths, and to blaspheme God; imputing all their cruelty, injustice, and unmercifulness, to their profession, and to their religion; than which there is no one thing that doth more contradict it? If, therefore, you have any respect, any tenderness for the glory of God, I beseech and charge you, O Christians, by your beneficence, charity, and prone goodness, to redeem the honour of God, which hath deeply suffered through your defaults; and to stop the mouths of those, to whom religion is odious enough by nature, but rendered despicable, as well as odious; and to whom the name of a saint and a professor is made a by-word, only to denote a covetous, niggardly, cruel, and oppressive person, by the lives of too many who walk quite contrary to their rule and to their great exemplar. For, in this, God hath set you no lower a pattern than himself: Luke vi. 36. *Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful.*

And, so much, for the First and great way of glorifying the Mercy and Goodness of God.

(2dly) We ought to glorify the mercy of God, by endeavouring to render ourselves Fit Objects for his mercy to be laid out upon.

Certainly, he little honours the mercy of a prince, who will not render himself capable of it. And, let me tell you, it is the greatest scorn and contempt you can cast upon the rich and free mercy of God, that, when he hath so gloriously proclaimed it

and told you upon what terms you may be made partakers you should refuse to come up to those terms, as if it were much worth, as the price at which God offers it. Wha that God expects from you? it is but repentance, and reforn of life; a sincere and universal obedience to his laws: up performance of this, his mercy, his Christ, himself, his h his all, are yours: Prov. xxviii. 13. He, that *confesset forsaketh* his sins, *shall have mercy*. And, what! wilt thou at this? If God had required some great thing of you, the ruin and impoverishing of your estates, the maceratin torturing of your bodies, the plucking out of your righ and cutting off your right hands, even in a literal would you not have done it, that you might obtain merc salvation at the last? See what terms those, who were con of their misery, and of their absolute need of mercy t them, do of themselves voluntarily offer unto God; far grievous and extreme than any which he hath required: vi. 6, 7. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow before the High God?....Will the Lord be pleased with tho of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I g first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the my soul?* certainly, these seem to value mercy, when th so high for it, though they were ignorant of the right obtaining it. And, now, when God shall inform us, that requires of us is but *to do justly, to love mercy, and to humbly with* him, it is a most heinous affront and disparag to his mercy, if we will not come up to these terms, whi so easy and equitable; yea, and have enough in themsel recommend them to us, although there were no farther b to be expected by the performance of them. Be persu therefore, O Christians, to glorify the mercy of God b pentance, obedience, and a holy life. Declare to all the that you have a high valuation and esteem of the infinite of God, by being willing to perform that for the obtaining which others detract and refuse. They must needs have slight and undervaluing thoughts of mercy, who will n prevailed with to mortify one sin, to deny themselves in their secular advantages and concerns, to suffer a scoff or for that holiness and piety which alone can bring them the reach and under the influences of mercy: but he, th with a bold and generous resolution break through all these

difficulties, that can suffer whatsoever God lays upon him, and do whatsoever God requires from him, he it is, that glorifies mercy; because by this he demonstrates, that he thinks it worth the having, at what price and rate soever it be set. Clemens Alexandrinus hath an excellent passage in his Protreptick: "The Lord," saith he, "shews us mercy and saves us, τουτο μονον απολαυων ἡμων ὁ σωζωμεθα, as though he could make no other use nor advantage of us, than as he doth save us:" now thou, who wilt not glorify the mercy of God, endeavouring by a holy and obedient life to promote thine own salvation, what dost thou but frustrate the great end for which he hath made thee, which is the glory of his mercy; and therefore dost, in a high measure, affront and dishonour him?

(3dly) When thou art thus fitted and prepared for mercy, then glorify it by a Confident and Hardy Reliance upon it.

To venture upon the mercy of God, whilst thou yet continuest impenitent in thy sins, is a most bold and desperate presumption: but, to venture thy soul and thy eternal salvation upon his mere goodness and mercy, whilst thou art careful to lead a holy, pious, and obedient life, is so far from being presumption, that it is the best and most effectual way to glorify it. And therefore thou, O Soul, who fearest the Lord, and desirest to approve thyself unto him in uprightness and sincerity, why walkest thou with such a drooping and dejected countenance? why sufferest thou thy conscience to be clouded with fears and racked with horrors? Is it not an infinite disparagement to the rich mercy of God, to fear that he will damn thee, whilst thou fearest to provoke him? Who would think that thou servest a merciful and gracious God, when they see thee solicitous to perform thy duty to him; and yet anxious and distrustful concerning the acceptance of it? These thy perplexities and despondencies do highly dishonour God, fright men from his service, and do little less than brand him with the black and odious note of cruelty and tyranny. Is this the way to allure men to the profession and practice of holiness, when they see that verified in thee, the suspicion of which hath so often scared them from it, viz. that they must for ever quit all their pleasant days, and be eaten up with dismal discontents and the rust of melancholy? Let those thus slavishly fear God and despair of his mercy, whose sins, and impenitence in them, fit them for nothing but wrath and destruction: but, for a holy, pious Christian, the desires of whose soul are towards God, and his endeavours correspondent

to his desires, for such an one to despond of mercy, is the greatest disgrace and dishonour that he can cast upon God: for if there be any such attribute belonging unto his nature as mercy, it is certainly thine; and, if there be not, think then what a God dost thou serve! Clear up, therefore, O Christian: scatter all thy dark and gloomy thoughts: smooth out thy wrinkled conscience: and, whilst thou perseverest in a careful and sincere obedience unto his commands, cast thyself boldly upon his mercy; and, believe it, it will never sink under thee, nor suffer thee to sink into that hell which thou now fearest. Doubt nothing: thou canst not perish, so long as the mercy of God endureth. And, whilst thou thus, with an humble confidence, layest the whole weight and stress of thy soul upon it, thou dost more glorify God, than those doubting and perplexed souls, who always serve him suspiciously, and dare scarce approach near him lest he should devour them: certainly, this is so contrary to the nature of God, who is love and goodness itself to those that serve him, that he cannot but take it ill, when they seem to account of him no otherwise than an ireful and ravenous deity. Fear not: this is no presumption, but a holy faith, a filial freedom of spirit, which is most acceptable unto God. He delights in the services of those, who address themselves unto him with an open heart and a cheerful soul: Ps. cxlvii. 11. *The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.*

(4thly) Another way by which we ought to glorify the mercy and goodness of God, is, by Praising him for all the Effects and Expressions of it.

Ps. l. 23. *Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.* Praise is God's tribute; the only impost, that he lays upon all his benefits: it is all the return, that he expects from us. Certainly, they are guilty of foul and black ingratitude, who would defraud God even of this small acknowledgment. Our whole lives are thick set with mercies: wheresoever we turn, we find ourselves encompassed and surrounded with blessings. Now what canst thou do less than lift up thy heart and thy voice to God, and give him thanks? this God is pleased to account a glorifying of him, because it owneth his free goodness to be the original of all: and, therefore, when the ten lepers were cleansed, and only one of them returned to return thanks for his cure, our Saviour, Luke xvii. 18. saith, *There are not found, that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.* Reflect now upon the

sum and stock of thy mercies. Hast thou riches, or health, or repute, or friends, or all of these? ascribe it to the mercy of God, which hath so plentifully furnished thee with all these mercies: say, "Lord, I have received them all from thy bounty, and I desire to return the thankful acknowledgment of all to thy glory. Accept of that share, which alone is worthy of thee; even my humble thanks and praise for them." Whilst thou thus praisest God for his goodness, thou payest him his tribute: all the rest is thine; which thou mayest enjoy and use with comfort.

And thus I have, at large, shewn you how you ought to glorify God in his Mercy and Goodness: viz. by your conformity unto it; preparing yourselves to be fit vessels of it; trusting and relying upon it; and blessing and praising him for it.

3dly. Another attribute, which we are to glorify, is the divine immensity and Omnipresence.

That this is an essential attribute and property of the divine nature, both Scripture and Reason do abundantly testify. He pervades all beings, is excluded out of none, neither included in any: 1 Kings viii. 27. *Behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee;* and, certainly, if God cannot be contained in them, but his essence dilates and expands itself infinitely beyond and above them, into that endless and unwearied space in which never any thing was created nor doth exist but God only, much less then can he be contained within the compass of any other finite and created being.

Now we ought to glorify this attribute of God's omnipresence,

(1st) By our Reliance and Dependance upon him, in all our fears and dangers.

Art thou surrounded with dangers on every side, and in the very jaws of death and destruction? yet then consider, that thy God, who is every where present, is likewise present with thee there; and there is no danger so great nor imminent, that can fright him from thee: he, who hath been a sun to thee in thy prosperity, will now be a shield to thee in thine adversity. Indeed, we ought not rashly to run headlong upon dangers, when we have no call to expose ourselves to them: this is not to trust God, but to tempt him: and therefore our Saviour well answered the Devil, when he impudently bid him cast himself down from the pinnacle of the temple, for that God would give his angels charge to bear him up in their hands that he should not dash his

foot against a stone, *It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;* for it is a tempting of God, when we rely upon his presence and protection to preserve us from those dangers, into which upon that presumption we voluntarily and needlessly precipitate ourselves. But yet, if, either in the way of thy ordinary employment or else in some special and extraordinary cases, thou art called to do that, which perhaps may be attended with danger and hazard, refuse it not; but glorify the omnipresence of God and his power, by depending upon him, who will always be nearer unto thee than dangers can be. We shew ourselves to be very irrational and childish, in being secure and confident in some places and at some times, but timorous and fearful at others: as if to be alone or in the dark were more justly dreadful, than to be in the company of our friends at noon-day: is not God every where present, at all times? God beholds us clearly in the most gloomy night: *Darkness and light are both alike to* him: neither can any evil have power over us one time more than another, without his permission; and why then should our fears? Isa. xli. 10. *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God....yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness:* and, again, v. 14. *Fear not, thou worm Jacob....I will help thee, saith the Lord,* and no foot of violence shall crush thee: so, again, Isa. xliii. 2. *When thou passest....through the fire....and through the waters, I will be with thee.* And, in the confidence of this omnipresence of God, the Psalmist resolves not to be terrified with the most dreadful shapes and apparitions of danger, Ps. xxiii. 4. *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,* though death and danger should meet me full in their most dismal shapes, yet *I will fear no evil: for thou art with me.* A great reason why we are so frequently overtaken with these low and unbecoming fears, is, because we do not sufficiently steep our thoughts in the consideration of this attribute of God's omnipresence; and so we sculk, and tremble, and bewray a great deal of base and degenerous fear: as though we lived without a God in the world, and there were no supreme mind present with us to help and relieve us; but we were left wholly to shift for ourselves. It is the observation of a heathen philosopher (and I think it is Plutarch) That if brute beasts be animated and encouraged by the presence of a man, because he is of a superior nature to them; how much more should man himself be encouraged by the presence of the Great God with

him! Glorify him, therefore, by a bold and courageous encountering of all dangers, that his Providence or his Law shall call thee to: and let it appear, that thou canst despise all those Mormos and hideous spectres of dangers, which affright others; because God is present with thee, and he is able to deliver thee.

(2dly) We ought to glorify this attribute of God's omnipresence, by our constant maintaining Communion and Fellowship with him.

Thou canst not say, "Alas! God is in heaven above, and I am here upon the earth; and what converse or intercourse can I maintain with his Divine Majesty?" no: believe it, God is present with thee wheresoever thou art, and as much within thee as thy soul is in thy body. He is not a God afar off; but he is near unto thee, even in thy heart, and in the very centre of thy being: and therefore thou mayest converse with him, by the silent whispers of thy thoughts. When the heart doth but breathe and pant towards God, when it conceives thoughts too big and quick to be uttered, thoughts which dart themselves like lightning out of our bosom into his; even this is, in the account of God, as truly solid and substantial communion with him, as the performance of the more solemn and conspicuous duties of religion. This is converse with God; a converse, which no place, no employment, no condition of life can possibly hinder. Be your affairs never so weighty and urgent, it is impossible that they should crowd so close together, as to leave no room for heavenly thoughts to come in between them. Be you in what company you will, if you cannot turn the discourse heavenward, yet you may well turn your thoughts thither. For ejaculations are winged messengers: or, if they were not, yet God is always present with us, and lays his ear to our very hearts; and hears the voice of our thoughts more distinctly, than we can hear the voice of one another's words.

(3dly) Glorify God's omnipresence, by demeaning yourselves with an humble and reverential Fear continually before him.

Wheresoever you are, imprint this consideration chiefly upon your hearts: "Now I am with God: he is present with me, in the city, in the field, in the room, in the congregation, in my closet, in all my ways and converse in the world. And, what! can I be vain, and frothy, and light, when I am before so great and glorious a majesty? If the presence of some earthly prince strike an awe and reverence into us when we come before him, how much more ought the consideration of God's presence,

in comparison with whom all the glory of the greatest monarchs upon earth is but a silly piece of pageantry!" Now those, who would express honour towards another, will not willingly do anything that is distasteful to him, or unworthy of his presence. And, let me tell you, that there is only one thing unworthy of the presence of God; and that is, sin: though thou art poor, or diseased, and the most despicable creature among the sons of men, so that they account it a kind of disparagement to them to be present with thee; yet God is present with thee, and thinks it no dishonour, for there is nothing in this unworthy of his glory: but, if thou art a sinful, lewd, debauched, and vicious wretch, thereby indeed thou dishonourest the presence of God, and dost that which is unworthy for him to behold; for God is *of purer eyes than to behold evil, and* cannot *look on iniquity*, as the Prophet speaks, Hab. i. 13. If, therefore, you would glorify this attribute of God, let your conversation be always as in his sight and under his eye, with all gravity and seriousness, with all reverence and submission, with all purity and holiness. And those, who so honour his common presence with them here on earth, he will honour with his glorious presence in heaven.

4thly. Another attribute, that we are to glorify, is the Wisdom and Omniscience of God.

Indeed, his wisdom and omniscience do somewhat differ. For omniscience respects only the bare act of God's intention, whereby he knows and sees all things: but wisdom is a practical knowledge; and connotes counsel, in the government and guidance of all things to his own prefixed and fore-ordained ends. But, yet, because they are so near alike, I shall speak of them together.

Now God's wisdom and knowledge may be glorified by us, many ways.

(1st) By our endeavours to increase in wisdom and knowledge.

All wisdom is a bright ray of the deity darted down into the soul: it is the light of a rational creature, and doth mightily assimilate us unto God, for *God*, saith the Apostle, *is light*; and the more light we have beaming into our understandings, the more expressly we do bear the resemblance and image of God. Certainly, a dark and ignorant soul can never glorify God: for, as light is necessarily required to all reflections; so,

ere, there can be no representation of the glory of God made n that soul, that is clouded over and smutted with ignorance and rror. Yea, indeed, knowledge is necessary, not only to our glorifying God in this attribute, but in all the rest: for, as an ignorant man cannot extol the wisdom of God, because he is not capable of perceiving the glorious discoveries thereof, either in the methods of his grace or providence, (and, therefore, when the Psalmist had spoken with admiration of the works and counsels of God, he tells us, Ps. xcii. 6. *A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this;*) so neither can we adore the goodness, power, or mercy of God, because he observes not those effects of them in which they are to be venerated and adored: a blind man may as aptly commend the brightness of the sun, the beauty and variety of colours, the orderly and regular motion of the stars and planets, as an ignorant man declare the glory of God's attributes which he could never observe; for what blindness is to the eye, the same is ignorance to the soul.

(2dly) Thou oughtest to glorify the wisdom of God, by relying upon it when thou art in straits and difficulties, and canst find no way to extricate thyself.

When thine affairs are so entangled, that thou canst get no end to unravel them by, then especially commit thyself to that sovereign wisdom before which all difficulties shall vanish, and whatsoever seemed most intricate and perplexed shall become most plain and open. And, therefore, when affairs seem to run quite contrary both to your hopes and to all probability of success, glorify then the wisdom of God by intrusting him with the conduct of all, and quietly and contentedly wait the issue. There are some links in the chain of providence, that seem not well to hang together; and yet even these are so ordered by the Great Artificer, that they most forcibly draw in one the other. And, as we see the wheels of a clock or watch move all with contrary motions to each other, and yet by these contrary motions they make it go right: so, likewise, all the contrary motions and revolutions, that we see in these inferior engines, are so wisely contrived by the first cause and mover of them all, that, however odd and perplexed they may appear, yet they are all subservient to each other and to the regular proceeding of God's design: the great machine of the world would not go right, if they should move any otherwise. What could seem more directly to thwart Joseph's advancement, and the fulfilling

of those prophetic dreams which presaged him so much honour, than to be sold for a slave, and imprisoned for a malefactor? but, yet, upon these strange occurrences was built the whole fabric of his advancement. Certainly, Providence hath secret methods of its own, which we cannot trace. And therefore let us glorify God, by relying on his wisdom in the worst of events, when our own cannot direct us; because we know not but that these things may tend to our good and advantage. And, when our hopes and designs seem dead; withered, and dried, past all semblance and human probability of reviving; yet if then our faith should be questioned, as the Prophet was, Ezek. xxxvii. 3. *Son of man, can these bones live?* we ought to return the same answer that he doth, *O Lord God, thou knowest.*

(3dly) We ought to glorify the omniscience of God, by the sincerity of all our ends and actions.

God inspects our very hearts, and distinctly sees the first fluttering and hovering of our thoughts and desires: if there be but the thinnest film or shadow of an imagination flitting there, his all-seeing eye seizeth on it: the divine knowledge pierceth into the darkest corners and most secret recesses of the soul; and looks through that obscure vault, where all our callow thoughts lie confusedly tumbling one upon another: he sees thy thoughts, that lie sleeping in the abyss and centre of thy soul, long before they begin to heave and emerge to the top and surface of it: *Thou understandest my thought*, saith the Psalmist, *afar off*, Ps. cxxxix. 2. Now if thou wouldst glorify this searching and comprehensive omniscience, be careful to approve all thy thoughts, and desires, and designs, in uprightness and integrity, unto God: then is it a sign that thou dost believe him to be an all-knowing God, when thou darest not to dally with thy lascivious fancy, nor suffer any impure, covetous, malicious thoughts and affections so much as once to breathe upon thy soul; when thou darest not commit any sin in secret, although the thickest curtains of night and darkness be drawn about thee; when thou darest not perform holy duties in a cold and heartless manner, and, with bended knees and elevated hands and all seemingly devout postures, solemnly mock the Great God, whilst thy mind all the while wanders after vanity, and nothing is less heeded by thee in thy duties than that God to whom thou wouldst be thought to perform them. In these three things, doth the sincerity of a true Christian most of all appear: viz. in not daring to allow himself in Sinful Thoughts; in not daring

allow himself in Secret Sins; in not daring to perform Holy ities slightly and superficially. Now what other reason can ere be, why he should so carefully abstain from these sins, ich if he did indulge he might yet carry a fair shew and be ell reputed of by men, but only that he knows God seeth not men see? they can but look upon the outward features of ligion, and, if they be comely and well complexioned, ought charity to judge the best: but God looks into the very vitals the soul; and discovers hypocritical professors to be like ectical persons, rotten and unsound within, when outwardly ey appear healthy and well coloured. Indeed, every hypocrite oth most heinously disparage this attribute: for, were he verily ersuaded that he hath to do with an all-seeing and an all-nowing God, would he dare any more to harbour unclean, ensual, and revengeful thoughts and affections, than to perpe-ate those sins in act to which these tend? would he dare suffer is heart to run over with gall and bitterness, and think all well, hilst his tongue dropped honey? would he dare sin in secret, hough he could lock himself up in the centre of the earth, and rap himself in impenetrable darkness, any more than in the ight of the sun, and the confluence of people? would he dare ffer unto God the husk and shell of a duty; and, in the mean ime, whilst perhaps he is praying, his heart and soul, which od chiefly regards, shall be engaged in deep discourse and ommunication with the Devil? did he believe, that he is always nder the eye of an all-knowing God; a God, who searcheth he heart and trieth the reins; a God, that looks through our ouls more clearly than we can through the air, and accurately iscerns and observes every mote and atom stirring there; could e be so grossly foolish as to think, that he would be put off vith such mimical and apish shows, instead of solid, real, and ubstantial piety, consisting chiefly in the conformity of the oul and affections unto the divine purity? But the truth is, very hypocrite is an atheist: and though, for some sordid ends, e may fawn upon God and flatter him, yet he disbelieves his lorious attributes, and none more than this of his omniscience; nd, in his heart, speaks the same blasphemy with those wretches, s. lxxiii. 11. *How doth God know? and is there knowledge in e Most High?* and therefore satisfies himself with plausible ows and fair pretences, and seeks to hide his nakedness under e fig-leaves of an external and counterfeit sanctity; and all s religion and devotion is indeed but putting tricks upon God,

whom he thinks it is as easy to delude, as to juggle with If, then, you would glorify the omniscience of God, let all thoughts, and affections, and desires, and ends, every n both of your outward and inward man, be ordered as : sight and under his observation. Say with thyself, " How I allow such vain and foolish surmises? How can I yield t temptation, though it offer me all the advantages of se and retirement? How can I content myself to make the s of God only a lip-labour, or a bodily exercise? No: my looks upon me, and ponders my heart and my ways: that whose eye is more effectual to deter me from any sinfu unworthy act, than if the eyes of all the angels in heaven men on earth were fixed upon me. My God and my consc are a theatre to me: they are more than if all the world b saw me; and, in comparison with these, to sin in the open of all the world is but to sin in secret." Such reflections as declare that thou dost highly adore and honour the omnisc of God, when thou art thus careful to approve thyself, in a cogitations and actions, to his all-seeing eye.

(4thly) Another way to glorify the omniscience of Go by a frequent and conscientious performance of duties in s

When there is no other witness to behold thee but Go thine own soul, then do thou pour out thy heart and unb all thy wants and desires before him. And indeed that Chri who hath deeply imprinted this attribute upon his thoughts find it a most powerful and effectual means, as to keep him sinning in secret, so to quicken him to pray in secret. H crites will often be very pompous and splendid in the perf ance of public duties, where they have a ring of peop admire and celebrate their gifts, and from whom they may to raise a reputation for their parts and piety: this will them to expatiate and pour forth such a torrent of raptures heavenly expressions, that they themselves may seem t ravished with spiritual joy and sweetness, and their auditors be really so: but all this may be only ostentation, not devo not because God observes them, but because men observe t and therefore our Saviour makes it the proper character pharisaical hypocrite, to pray only in the synagogues and i corners of the streets, (as the custom was in those days) they might *be seen of men:* Mat. vi. 5: they made a mere s play of religion; and then acted best, when they were crowded with spectators: but follow these men home to

houses, to their closets; and, if we had but a cranny to behold them in their retirements, how seldom or never addressing themselves to God, and praying unto him in secret, when they think no eye sees them but God's! for they pray, not so much that God may hear them, as men; and, whatsoever they seem with so much earnestness and importunity to beg of him, yet indeed the only thing they pray for is, that they may be admired and applauded. But, a truly pious and sincere Christian is not only zealous and affectionate in public duties in the congregation, and in private duties in his own family, where he hath witnesses of his devotion; but he considers that he prays to God and not to men: and, therefore, when he is withdrawn from the sight and notice of others, he applies himself unto God with the same zeal and fervency of spirit as before; well knowing, that, in duties performed unto God, the secresy or publicness of them ought to make no difference in our affections. And therefore observe, that, so much as thou dost abate of thy holy warmth and fervency in secret duties, which used to carry thee out with great enlargement and vigour when thou hast joined with others; so much of hypocrisy is mingled with thy serving of God. Our Saviour hath given us our rule: Mat. vi. 6. *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.* Let me, therefore, O Christians, persuade you to a more constant and zealous performance of secret duties; for this is certainly one of the most infallible marks of a sincere heart, that can be given. That Christian cannot be a hypocrite, that is but careful to keep up a lively and vigorous communion with God in secret: whereas, let thy duties else be what they will, never so many and never so gaudy, if they be only performed in the view and sight of others, and thou art not frequent in addressing thyself to God in secret, let me tell thee, it is very possible, yea and very suspicious too, that thou art but a painted hypocrite, a mere blistered professor; that outwardly lookest smooth and shining, but inwardly art full of nothing but corruption and purulency. Go home, therefore, O Christian: enter into thy closet; and, there, when none but thou and thy God are together, freely unlock thy heart, and pour out thy soul before him. What! hast thou no sins to confess, no wants to be supplied, no mercies to beg, no complaints to make, no tears to shed, but what it is fit others should be privy to? certainly, if thou hast not, it is a

sign, that thou art but too much a stranger at home, and very little conversant with thine own soul. However, do it that thou mayest glorify God: for he is *thy Father, which seeth in secret* and thou canst by no way more honour his omniscience, than by thus acknowledging that he sees and hears thee, when there is no one else that can see and hear thee.

(5thly) Thou glorifiest the omniscience of God, when, under lying slanders and false accusations, thou canst command and calm all the turbulencies of thy passions, by appealing to the all-seeing eye of God, who knoweth the innocence of thy soul

Indeed, this is the great support of a true Christian when he is wrongfully aspersed, that he can retire inwardly into the retreat of a clear conscience; that he can remit his cause to God, and leave his vindication to him, who knows how he is traduced and wronged. It will be a greater comfort to us, that God knows us innocent; than a trouble and vexation, that wicked men conspire together to report us guilty. Indeed, if they could persuade God to believe them too, it might be just cause of grief and disquiet: but what great matter is it, though a company of vain, giddy, and unreasonable men take up and spread abroad lying rumours concerning us? thou art not to stand or fall, according to their votes: and, though their slanderous tongues may blot out thy good name here on earth, yet they can never blot thy name out of the book of life. And, therefore, herein honour the omniscience of God, by bearing up cheerfully and boldly; and, if they will cast dirt upon thee, let it be their own, and not thine: this, though it may make thee look more unlovely in the eyes of men, yet it will not do so in the eyes of God. Shew, by thy generous despising of all their malicious censures and reproaches, that thou dost more respect and value the omniscience of God, who knows thee innocent; than all the slanders of men, who report thee guilty. Thus Jeremiah appeals unto God: Jer. xx. 10, 12. *I heard the defaming of many....Report, say they, and we will report it.... But, O Lord of Hosts,* thou *that triest the righteous, and sest the reins and the heart....unto thee have I opened my cause.*

And thus I have shewed you, in these Five particulars, how you ought to glorify the infinite Wisdom and Knowledge of God.

5thly. Another attribute of God, which we are to glorify, is his Truth and Veracity.

This is an essential property of the divine nature; and therefore he is stiled a *God of Truth:* Ps. xxxi. 5. and a *God, that cannot lie:* Tit. i. 2. and, Heb. vi. 18. it is said it is *impossible for God to lie.*

Truth, or veracity, is nothing else but the conformity of our speeches to the being of things: as, when we affirm that which is, or deny that which is not, then are our speeches true. And, therefore, it is impossible for God to lie; for he cannot speak things otherwise than they be, who speaks them into being.

Now the first and general way of glorifying the truth of God, is, by imitating him in this attribute, and speaking truth one to another. St. Peter hath given us a rule, which, though in a more restrained and appropriate sense, it may especially concern the ministers of the gospel, the dispensers of the word of truth; yet I see not but that it may properly appertain unto all men: 1 Pet. iv. 11. *If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God....that God, in all things, may be glorified, through Jesus Christ:* that is, let his speeches be as true and certain, as if they were divine oracles. Many indeed there are, who speak like the oracles of Apollo; ambiguously, equivocally, and falsely: but, to speak like the oracles of God, is to declare things as they are, simply and nakedly. And, if thou either knowest not the things in question, or upon some prudential considerations art unwilling to disclose them, either an acknowledgment thereof or a modest silence must be chosen by thee, without any crafty or guileful windings and ambages prejudicial to the truth. By this means, saith the Apostle, God will be glorified: as indeed he is, whensoever we endeavour to imitate him in his communicable attributes and perfections.

But, more particularly, God's truth is especially seen in Three things. In his

Predictions,
Promises, and
Threatenings.

All which we ought to glorify.

(1st) Glorify the truth and veracity of God in his Predictions, by adoring his faithfulness in the wonderful accomplishment of those many prophecies, which have already been exactly and punctually fulfilled.

And, indeed, when we consider those prophetical passages in the Old Testament concerning Christ; the whole history of

whose birth, the whole course of whose life, and the whole tragedy of whose death, were, so many ages before, clearly foretold, some declared by express prophecy, some signified by typical prefigurations; we cannot but admire the wonderful exactness of divine veracity, in so critically accomplishing every particular of what he had so long before declared should come to pass. And, truly, it is one, among many other excellencies of the Gospel of St. Matthew, that he doth so plainly accommodate the historical passages concerning our Saviour's birth, life, and death, to the prophetical predictions of them in the Old Testament: his birth, by a virgin: Isa. vii. 14. the place of it, Bethlehem: Micah v. 2. God's calling him back out of Egypt: Hos. xi. 1. the bloody massacre of the infants: Jer. xxxi. 15. the actions of his prodromus or fore-runner, John the Baptist: Isa. xl. 3. his dwelling in Capernaum: Isa. ix. 1, 2: and so, throughout the whole contexture of the history of Christ, the Evangelist compares the prophecies with the actual accomplishment of them, for the firmer establishing of our faith; and the clearer evidence that he was the true Messiah, whom that God, who cannot lie, had foretold should come in the fulness of time. As for those predictions concerning the state of the Church here on earth, which have not as yet received their accomplishment, and therefore are the more dark and obscure unto us, many of which are contained in the Revelations, we ought to glorify the truth and veracity of God, by an unwavering belief, that they also shall be punctually fulfilled in their due season, and that not a word which he hath spoken shall fall to the ground in vain.

(2dly) Glorify the truth and faithfulness of God in his Promises, by a confident expecting of those blessings, which he hath engaged himself to bestow upon us, if we be careful to perform the conditions upon which his promises are made.

If the condition be fulfilled on our part, the promise shall certainly be fulfilled on God's. Hath he promised eternal life to those who believe? assure thyself, that, if thou believest, thou shalt as certainly inherit it, as if thou wert even now glorified: for it is *eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, hath promised.* Or, hath he promised any temporal mercy and good things? that he will provide for thee, and protect thee? even these promises are conditional also, if so be they may be for thy good and his glory, which if he who is the all-wise God sees,

thou shalt infallibly obtain whatsoever thou desirest; if not, thou mayest very well be contented, for thou dost but desire a harm and damage to thyself. Here, then, glorify God, by resting thy soul and casting all thine affairs upon his promises. Thou hast his truth and veracity bound to make them good; and that, certainly, is such a precious pawn, as that he never hath nor ever will forfeit it.

(3dly) Glorify God's veracity in his Threatenings; trembling at the dreadful denunciations of his judgments, both temporal and eternal, against obstinate and impenitent sinners.

Which if thou dost in truth and sincerity of heart, this will fright thee from the commission of those sins, against which those heavy plagues and judgments are threatened: for, let him pretend what he will, that man doth not believe that God is true in all his threatenings, who yet will dare to continue one day or hour longer in his sins impenitently. If neither the mercies nor the terrors of the Lord can persuade us to a holy life, we do but virtually and interpretatively give God the lie; and do not believe, that he is either faithful to his promises, or just and true to his threatenings.

6thly. Another attribute in God, which we ought to glorify, is his Almighty Power and Sovereignty.

Indeed, there is a difference between these two. For,

First. Power connotes only a natural strength and ability to do a thing; but Sovereignty includes in it a legal right and authority. And,

Secondly. Power may be found separate from Authority. And so, indeed, it is in the greatest princes and potentates on earth; all whose might and strength above other men consists, not in their natural, but only in their civil and political power and jurisdiction. And so, likewise, in God, his Power and his Sovereignty bear not the same date, neither are they of equal duration: for God was infinite in Power eternally before the creation of the world; and, had he never exerted his power in any of those wonderful effects of it which we behold, yet he had been for ever the same Almighty God that now he is: but Sovereignty and Dominion are ascribed unto him, in time; and, in the very notion of them, do necessarily presuppose the being of some subjects, over which he is the Sovereign Lord. Again,

Thirdly. God's Power is of a much larger extent than his

Sovereignty. For his Power extends unto all things possible; since he is able to create many more worlds, and far more noble and excellent creatures in this, than he hath done: but his Sovereignty extends only to things actual. Whence our Saviour argues, Luke xx. 38. God *is not* the *God of the dead:* i. e. those who so die as utterly to perish and come to nothing, as the Sadducees thought the souls of men did, *but* he is the God *of the living*. Briefly,

The Power of God is an absolute essential attribute of the divine nature; for ever invariably appertaining to him, whether he express it in any acts of creation and providence or no: but Sovereignty is a relative denomination, resulting from God's temporal acts of disposing and governing his creatures, according to the counsels of his own will and the rule of his immutable justice. But, because these two are so near allied, his sovereignty being founded upon his power, and his power expressed in the acts of his sovereignty and dominion, I shall therefore consider them together.

That God is glorious in this attribute of his power, the Scripture doth every where abundantly attest; stiling him the Almighty God, and ascribing strength and power unto him. Yea, and that he accounts it a very considerable part of his glory, see Ps. lxii. 11. *God hath spoken once*, yea *twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God:* and Ps. xxix. 1. *Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength:* as if he had said, You, that are the great and mighty ones upon earth, who make whole nations obedient to your beck and tremble at your frown, yet boast not yourselves of the greatness of your power: there is a Supreme God above, who *if* you *speak of strength, lo, he is strong:* Job ix. 19: a God, whose hand and whose voice can shake both heaven and earth out of their place, and make the haughtiest potentates lick the dust before him. Ascribe, therefore, unto him praise and glory, by ascribing unto him might and power; not only that stinted and limited power which you, who are but his under officers, are invested with; but a strength and power infinitely surmounting yours, who conceit yourselves so mighty. For your power can come into no comparison with God's power; no, nor hold out against that which is accounted his very weakness: 1 Cor. i. 25. *The weakness of God is stronger than men.*

How then shall we glorify this Almighty Power of the Great God?

(1st) By an humble and awful adoration of it; in all those wonderful effects, whereby God hath expressed the infinite greatness of his power.

And, here, thou canst not want objects, if thou hast but an affection and piety to venerate God in them. The whole world, and every creature in it, is a most evident demonstration of the divine power: *His eternal power and godhead*, saith the Apostle, *are clearly seen.....by the things that are made:* Rom. i. 20. Cast but thine eyes to that vast expansion of the heavens, what a beautiful canopy dost thou there behold; all studded with gems: and almost every star in that general muster of the heavenly host, far greater than the whole earth! Consider this solid and massy globe on which we live, how it hangs immoveably in the midst of an ocean of soft and yielding air, through which all other bodies easily cut their passage: what foundations, what pillars hath it to rest upon; but only that almighty word, which first fixed it, and still preserves it in its place and station? Consider the various kinds of creatures, that God hath breathed forth upon the face of the earth in divers shapes and sizes; some voluminous, some contracted; in both which his power is equally seen, but his art and skill rather glorious in the latter. Whence is all this frame and compounded machine of the world, made up of so many different parts, and yet all set together in such an admirable order and harmony? if we run it up to its first original, we shall find all things to have been once a mere nothing. And was it not infinite power, that could constrain nothing to yield so many, and such beautiful beings? that the heavens should, out of nothing, spread abroad their liquid crystals? which Job * therefore most elegantly and naturally compares to *a molten looking-glass:* Job xxxvii. 18. that the earth should, out of nothing, gather all its thick parts together; and, as the sediment of the world, compact and settle itself in the centre of the universe? certainly these, and infinite others, are most stupendous demonstrations of his infinite power. Nay, not only these great things, but the smallest and most despised works of God, declare that he is almighty: *Magnus in magnis, nec minor in minimis:* there is not the least spire of grass, that sprouts out of the earth; not the least fly, that is animated by the sun; but it may be a sufficient conviction of the folly of atheism, and cause us to fall down and adore that God, who

* Not Job, but Elihu. EDITOR.

created and formed it. Glorify, therefore, the power of God, by a serious and pious contemplation of these his wonderful works. Wheresoever you go, and whatsoever you see and converse with, you have this book open before you, wherein you may read enough to admonish and instruct you in this attribute. It is time well spent, and thought well employed, when, from the works of creation and providence, from the frame of the world and the government of it, the various kinds of creatures which ye behold and the various revolutions of affairs which ye hear of abroad, you return into your own hearts, and season them with awful thoughts and reflections on the almighty power of the Great God.

(2dly) Glorify the power and sovereignty of God, by using that power and authority, which he hath given you, in subordination unto his.

Art thou a magistrate or a parent, or master of a family? exercise thine authority, as one, that is entrusted with it by the Great Sovereign of Heaven and Earth. Exercise it so as thou wouldest suppose God himself would do, were he immediately to govern those, whom he hath now committed to thy charge: for God hath given thee authority, that thou shouldest rule in his stead: thou art deputed, under him, in the place wherein he hath set thee. And, certainly, it is a great dishonour and disparagement to the sovereignty of God, if thou, who art entrusted with the management of it, shouldest use it to quite contrary purposes to what God himself would do. If thou either encouragest sin and wickedness, or connivest at it in those who are subject to thee; what is this, but, by a practical kind of blasphemy, to make God's authority patronize what it would punish?

(3dly) Glorify the power of God, by relying on him for safeguard, and deliverance out of all thy dangers.

When Nebuchadnezzar threatened those three heroes with his burning furnace, unless they would fall down and worship his golden image, see with what an undaunted courage the answer the menaces of the enraged king: Dan. iii. 16. *We a not careful to answer thee in this matter.* Whence this co dence, to despise the threats of so great a king, and the ter of so cruel a death; but only that they glorified the infi power of God, who could preserve them, either from the fl or in them? v. 17. *If it be so, our God, whom we serve, i to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace.* So, likewise,

the dangers to which you can be exposed for the sake of God and of a good conscience, glorify his almighty power, who is able to deliver in the greatest extremities, and will (if it be best) find a way for you to escape.

(4thly) Glorify the almighty power of God, by fearing to provoke his wrath against you.

For who knoweth the power of his wrath? as the Psalmist speaks, Ps. xc. 11. Indeed, a weak impotent anger, that can only vent itself in exclamations and railings, is justly ridiculous and contemptible: but who would not tremble to provoke that God, whose anger, as it is always just, so it is almighty, and able to wreak its revenge upon the stoutest sinners in their eternal ruin and destruction? It is a most desperate folly to incense that God, whom we cannot withstand: therefore the Apostle expostulates, 1 Cor. x. 21. *Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?* as if he should say, "Indeed, if thou canst try it out with the Almighty, if thou canst wrest the sword of his justice out of his hands, if thou canst dash thyself against the Rock of Ages and be not broken in pieces, then thou mayest go on boldly in thy sins, and prosper: but, alas! for thee, a weak, feeble creature, who art *crushed before the moth*, as Job speaks, whose life is *but a vapour*, a poor thing who art just not nothing only by the creating word of God; it is a most deplorable madness for thee to muster up thy forces, and set thyself in battle-array against that Great God, who can look thee dead and speak thee into hell. And, yet, such is our wretched stupidity, that we dare this great and mighty God to the combat, every day and hour: every sin we commit is a challenge and defiance sent to heaven: we defy his power and wrath, and dare the Almighty to do his worst. Certainly, did sinners but seriously consider the infinite power of God, would they not fear lest the very next sin they commit, some remarkable vengeance should be inflicted upon them? lest God should suddenly smite them through; cause the earth to open its mouth, and swallow them up quick into hell; and make them know, by their own woeful experience, that dread power and justice, which they now so vilify and despise? Be persuaded, therefore, O Christians, to glorify this power of the Great God, by your holy fear and caution not to provoke and arm it against yourselves. It is our Saviour's counsel, Mat. x. 28. *Fear him, which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell: yea, I say unto you, fear him.* Know, that, when thou makest light of sin, thou

dost but contemn the power and wrath of God: so often as thou swearest, or liest, or committest any other known wickedness so often thou openly declarest that thou accountest of the wrath of God, hell, and everlasting torments but as a trifle, not worth the regard of a generous and daring sinner. And thou, who perhaps art scared from the commission of many a sin, through fear of the magistrate's power to punish thee, but boldly committest others which cannot fall under his power or cognizance, what else dost thou, but openly testify that the power of God is not so tremendous and dreadful, as the power of a weak worm like thyself? and what a scorn and reproach dost thou hereby cast upon that glorious attribute! But, if thou wouldest glorify it, declare to all the world, that thou ownest his infinite power, which is able to destroy, to damn thee every moment, by thy holy fear to offend so great and so terrible a God.

(5thly) Glorify the power and sovereignty of God, by a constant and conscientious obedience to all his laws.

He, who is the great Sovereign of the World, must needs have prescribed us some rules to direct us in our obedience. And this he hath done in his word, which is the statute-book of his kingdom: in the Scriptures, is contained the whole body and system of those laws, which our Great King hath enacted. Now the best way for us to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, is, by yielding all ready and cheerful obedience to those laws, which he hath imposed on us. Then do we indeed declare that we own him for our sovereign, when we resign up ourselves in an universal obedience unto him, and are careful to perform whatsoever he hath enjoined us; as well those duties which immediately concern the service of our Lord and Master, as those which concern our fellow-subjects and servants: but, if we willingly fail in the observance of any of these, we shake his yoke from off our necks, and withdraw ourselves from under his jurisdiction and command. And thou, who thus disownest him from being thy Sovereign Lord, wilt at last find him to be thy Severe Judge; and, although thou now refusest to submit thyself to the power of his grace, thou shalt be forced to bow, and sink, and eternally perish under the power of his wrath.

7thly. Another (and it is the last that I shall speak of) attribute of the divine essence, which we ought to glorify, is his Justice and Equity.

Now, although there be no other attribute more conversant with mankind than this of the divine justice, yet neither is there any that is of a more abstruse speculation, or more entangled with perplexed doubts and difficulties, whensoever we attempt a scholastical disquisition of it. It is like the sun, nothing more seen than its light, nothing less seen than itself: the most apparent, and yet the most hidden; the most obvious, and yet the most abstruse perfection of the divine nature.

It is not pertinent to my present design, to engage in those many critical distinctions and disputes, which are by divers diversely given us concerning the justice of God: my work is more immediately practical.

(1st) Yet because we ought to have right apprehensions of that object, which we are to glorify; and we cannot glorify God as a just God, unless we have beforehand conceived some proper notions what this justice is; therefore take notice briefly, that the justice of God is Twofold.

[1st] His Essential Justice; which is nothing else but the infinite rectitude of his nature, according to his own eternal ideas of himself.

This is not that, which we are now taking into consideration. For as, among men, that, which Aristotle, Eth. l. v. c. 1. lit. F. calls the νομιμον δικαιοσυνην, an universal justice respecting the conformity of every action of our lives to law and reason, is not so much any one virtue, as all; so, likewise, this essential and absolute justice of God is not so much any one attribute of the divine nature, as a complexion of them all: for it is the due habitude and proportion of God's infinite perfections to the only rule of them, which is himself.

[2dly] There is a Moral, or Relative Justice in God, which respects his transactions and dealings with his creatures.

Now as, among men, justice is that virtue, which habitually sways them to render to every one his own; so, likewise, in God towards men, that disposition, which, if we may so speak, inclines him to render to every one his own, is that which we call the justice of God.

Here, Two things are to be observed.

That the Foundation of the divine Justice is the Divine Sapience and Will.

That the Rule of his Justice is his Word.

a. The Foundation of his Justice is his Sapience and Will.

For God lies under no obligation to his creatures, antecedent

to the free determinations of his own will. It is just with God, to punish some men with eternal torments: why? because they are sinners, and punishment is their due; and, therefore, in inflicting it, he doth but render unto them what is their own. But, if you ask farther, whence it proceeds that wrath and punishment should be their due, we can give no other answer to this, but only because the will of God hath so constituted and ordained it, as a congruous reward for such actions. So that whatsoever God wills is just and equal; not simply as he wills it only, but as his will is guided by his infinite wisdom, which dictates such proceedings to be fitting and condecent to the divine nature; and therefore God wills them as just. For, because the divine wisdom sees it congruous that obstinate and impenitent sinners should be eternally punished, therefore the divine will determines to punish them, and their punishment is an act of justice.

b. The Rule of Divine Justice is his Word.

For God proceeds according to this word, in all his dealings with us. His word contains in it both promises and threatenings; and, to the fulfilling of both, God hath obliged himself by his truth and veracity. And, consequently, either the mercy promised or the punishment threatened is our due, according as we either obey or transgress his word: and, these being our due, it is but justice in God to render them unto us according as our works have been. Indeed, the Schools have well determined, that there can be no commutative justice in God: *i. e.* such justice, as consists in an equal exchange of things between party and party, giving and taking a like value: for the Apostle hath told us, Rom. xi. 35. *Who hath first given to him? and it shall be recompensed unto him again. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.*

But there is a distributive justice in God, whereby, as a judge he recompenseth us proportionably to our actions; which justice is regulated by the promises and threatenings of his word.

And it is twofold:

Remunerative Justice, which assigns us a blessed reward, according to our faith and obedience. And

Punitive or Vindictive Justice, which inflicts upon us eternal and insupportable punishments, according to our impenitency and rebellions.

And both these the Apostle mentions together, 2 Thess. i. 6, *It is a righteous,* or a just *thing with God to recompense tribula-*

tion to them that trouble you: And to you, who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven.

And thus I have, as plainly as I could with so much brevity, shewn you what this attribute of the divine justice is.

(2dly) Let us next consider how it ought to be glorified by us.

[1st] The first and chiefest way, is, by our Conformity to it. For justice and equity is a communicable attribute of the divine nature: and the best way to glorify such, is not only to represent them to ourselves, by admiring and adoring them; but to represent them in ourselves, by transcribing and imitating them. Then dost thou glorify the justice of God, when thou endeavourest, within thy sphere and according to thy proportion, to be thyself just. God is just in rendering to every man his own; whether it be his own by merit, or by mercy, by desert, or by promise: He renders, saith the Apostle, *to every man according to his deeds:* Rom. ii. 6: according to the merit of their deeds: so, he renders *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,* to *every soul of man that doeth evil:* and, according to the mercy of his promise, he renders *glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good.* Imitate God, in rendering to every one their own: keep nothing from them which is their due, except it be the retribution of evil for evil; for this recompence God hath reserved to himself.

Now that is said to be another man's, to which he hath a title. And, if the title remain in him, but the possession in thee, so long thou art unjust, and dishonourest God, as well as wrongest thy brother; as thou detainest from him what is rightfully his, contrary to his will and desire.

There are two things, that give a man a title to any possession; law, and conscience.

First. Human Laws.

God's laws are the rule of his justice towards men, and men's laws are the rule of their justice one towards another. These set bounds to our property, and determine what is ours, and what not: and, whosoever he be, that breaks through this fence, and either violently or fraudulently seizes upon that, which the laws under which he lives hath assigned to his brother, he is an unjust person, and transgresseth not only the laws of men, but that sovereign law of God, *Thou shalt not steal.* God's law commands us not to take what is another's; but man's law shews us what is another's: man's law makes property, and God's law

secures it: else, why may not any enter into your houses, and take thence what best likes them? for what makes it yours, more than theirs? is it, that you have acquired it? by the same reason it will be as rightfully theirs, when they have gotten it: and so the whole earth would be filled with violence, and rapine, and confusion, did not laws determine what is yours, and what not; and parcel out the common goods of nature, assigning to every one his share, which for another to invade and take from him, is rapine or deceit. And, therefore, it is an unjust thing, to alienate any possession of another, upon pretence that it is superfluous, or may be employed to better uses, or that the owners are wicked and undeserving: for, be the persons never so wicked, their estates never so redundant or misemployed, what they hold is as much their own, as those few things which perhaps thou art owner of, and are barely necessary for the sustentation of thy life: and, if thou shouldest attempt to deprive them of any part thereof, it is as much injustice, as if any should attempt to take from thee the only piece of bread by which thou livest. Indeed, the laws, under which we live, may and often do alter the property: so that what was mine before, ceaseth to be so when the law hath assigned it to another; and I am unjust and guilty of theft, if I detain it from him: it is no longer mine, but his, when the same authority, that gave me title to it before, hath now transferred that title from me to him: hence we have that exhortation of the Apostle, an exhortation very needful to be pressed upon us in these unjust days, wherein men are utterly unwilling to be guided by any laws besides their self-will and self-interest, Rom. xiii. 7. *Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour.* You see here, that tribute and custom are called Dues: and what else makes them due, but only the law of man? and, certainly, if the law of man can make a tribute out of mine estate, or a custom out of my goods, to be due to another, suppose the prince or any other magistrate, am not I guilty of injustice and theft, if I detain it from him; yea, altogether as much as if I should steal from him, what already he hath in his possession? Thus you see how human laws confer right and title; and therefore, we are bound in justice, to render to every one according to their prescription.

Secondly. But, there may be several cases, which the law cannot particularly reach unto, wherein we may be unjust towards

others. For, not only the law, but Conscience may confer a title upon others: and this ought to oblige us, when, many times, the law cannot.

Thus, what thou hast promised to another, thou standest bound to perform, although possibly he cannot prove that promise by any other witnesses, than those thousand of thine own conscience. And many other such like instances may be made, wherein conscience and equity require thee to render that unto another, which, perhaps, law and judicial process cannot compel thee to do: but, yet, if thou art in thine own conscience persuaded, that thy brother hath a better right and title to what thou possessest than thyself, although possibly he knows not of it, or could never recover it by a legal course, yet justice binds thee to render it to him: it is his; and the proper office and effect of justice is, to render to every one his own.

Let us now proceed to consider the kinds of justice; which are two, commutative or distributive.

a. We ought to glorify God by a Commutative Justice; rendering to every one his due, in our bargains, sales, and commerce: wherein we ought to observe an exact equality, between what we give, and what we take; otherwise we cannot but be unjust, and wrong either ourselves or others.

This is a duty, which the very light of nature and the dictates of reason enforce upon us; that, upon which the frame of all correspondence and transactions in the world doth depend: and, whosoever he be, that openly transgresseth the rules of this justice, is looked upon as an infamous person; shunned and avoided by all, as one not fit for human conversation: neither, indeed, is he; for this kind of injustice, if it were grown into common practice, would soon turn the world into a wilderness, and men into savage beasts, ravening and preying one upon another; and nothing, that we possessed, could be secured from violence or fraud. Neither is this justice only a dictate of the law and light of nature, but God hath added many sanctions to it by his express commands; especially that serious and weighty one, 1 Thess. iv. 6. Let *no man go beyond* or *defraud his brother in any matter; because that the Lord is the avenger of all such.* And indeed there is scarce any one sin that is more injurious unto God, as well as unto men, than this of fraud and injustice: it wrongs him in many of his attributes: it heinously affronts his Sovereignty; when a little inconsiderable gain shall tempt us to violate his laws, and despise his authority, and

hearken to the imperious commands of our own base and sord covetousness, rather than to the commands of the Great Go it calls in question his Fidelity, nay rather, it plainly demo strates that we do utterly disbelieve it; for, did we think th there were any truth, either in his threatenings or his promise should we be so foolish, as, for a present petty gain, to forfeit th hopes of a future inheritance and inexhaustible treasures i heaven? or to incur the certain danger of eternal destruction i hell, where we shall woefully refund all that we have eithe gotten or kept unjustly? it directly contradicts the Mercy an Goodness of God, which teacheth and obligeth us to be so fa from wronging of others, as to be bountiful and beneficent t them: and, therefore, in all respects, injustice towards men i a high injury done against God himself. And, yet, how com mon a sin is this in the world! are not all places filled with sa complaints of wrong, violence, and oppression: each snatchin what they can from others; and taking all advantages, eithe from the weakness or inadvertency of their brethren, to over reach and defraud them? A sin, shall I say unworthy of Chris tians? yea, unworthy of men; contrary to the very constitutio of civil societies: but infinitely shameful and opprobrious i those that profess the Gospel, who, by this means, bring an in delible blot and reproach upon religion; and, by their extortion oppression, and injustice, open the mouths of too many t blaspheme the holy name of God, whilst they look upon a eminent and glorious profession only as a more cleanly art t cheat and cozen. Be persuaded, therefore, O Christians, t glorify the justice of God, by the justice and equity of you dealings with men. Let it appear by all your actions, that yo do acknowledge there is a just God in heaven; a God, wh critically observeth all that you do, and who will render unt you according to your works: and that, for the awe and reve rence of his impartial justice, you dare not do any thing that i unjust towards men. This is the way to glorify him, far more effectually than by all the encomiums and verbal representations, which thou canst make of his justice: for, how can others be persuaded that thou dost believe there is a just God, whilst thou thyself, notwithstanding all thy professions, art unjust, cruel, covetous, taking or detaining from others what is their due, as i the only reward thou expectedst were to live upon the spoil! are these proper actions to convince them, that there is a jus God, or that thou dost think him so? nay, rather, will it no

prove a strong temptation to them, to call the justice of God into question, when they see thee so long escape unpunished; and to conclude, as many upon the like account have done, that certainly the world is not guided by sovereign justice and equity, but only by mere chance and casualty? The only way to work a venerable esteem of the justice of God in the minds of men, is, to be as punctual in our dealings with them, as we would desire they should be with us; yea, to be as just to them, as we would desire God should be merciful to us: this will convince the world, that certainly there is a supreme justice that overawes us, that we dare not take those advantages, which the ignorance or oversight of others puts into our hands to defraud them; and that we do indeed believe, that there is a day coming, wherein a thousand witnesses shall be produced to testify what agreements and compacts we have made, where the false weights shall be themselves weighed, and the scanty measures themselves meted by a standard that is infallibly true, and all the controversies of right and equity shall be decided to the eternal shame and horror of those who have done the wrong.

That is one way of glorifying the justice of God.

b. We ought to glorify the justice of God by our Distributive Justice; rendering unto all men the rewards and punishments, that are due unto their actions.

This part of justice belongs not to private Christians, but only to the magistrate: for he is God's justicier; and rewards and punishments are consigned over unto him: Rom. xiii. 3, 4. If thou dost well, *he is the minister of God to thee for good: but, if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God; a revenger, to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.* Indeed a magistrate's office should be a clear type and representation of the justice of God, and human judicatories an emblem of the great and last assize; and the administration of justice here should bear an exact proportion to that strict justice which God will execute, when all the world shall appear before him to receive their doom. There should not an offender escape deserved punishment, especially those, who are presumptuous and peremptory upon their greatness and the eminency of their quality, who make it their sport to baffle the law and outface justice. God's justice is impartial; and spares neither the poor for pity, nor the rich for fear: but will eternally retribute to every one, according to what he has done. And if thou, to whom he hath committed the ad-

ministration of his justice, shalt dispense it with respect of persons; either moved with commiseration, or interest, or base fear, or any other by or sinister end; thou highly dishonourest him, distributing that for the justice of God, which is but the injustice and partiality of man. It hath been an old complaint, that laws were but like cobwebs; which served indeed, to hamper the smaller flies, whilst the greater and stronger securely break through them. Let it be your care and endeavour to remove this obloquy; and, by a severe animadversion, not only on poor trembling offenders, but on haughty and audacious criminals, who think to outbrave authority with their greatness, make it appear that you look upon yourselves as the dispensers of God's justice, which respects them no more than the most contemptible wretch that lives upon the face of the earth.

And thus I have shewn you how you ought to glorify the justice of God, by Imitation: in our Commutative Justice, by rendering to every one his own, which appertains to every private Christian to perform; and, in Distributive Justice, rendering to every one the due desert of his actions, which belongs not to private Christians, but to magistrates and those in authority.

[2dly] When the divine justice hath found thee out, then thou oughtest to glorify it, by a free and full Confession of thine offences.

Now there are Two ways, in which the justice of God doth find out sinners:

Sometimes, by Inflicting remarkable Plagues and Judgments upon them: plagues, that carry in them a great correspondence and alliance to the sins they have committed, so that they cannot but read their very crimes in their punishments. And,

Sometimes, by Detecting their Crimes which they thought were committed in secret, and bringing them to condign punishment for them. And, indeed, strange are the instances, that might be given, of God's marvellous providence in this particular; especially in bringing murder and bloodshed to light.

Now, one or other of these ways, men's sins and God's justice will usually find them out. *Be sure*, saith Moses, Numb. xxxii. 23. that *your sin will find you out.* And, therefore, in these cases, glorify the justice of God, by a free and full Confession of thy guilt.

a. If God lay any sore plague and judgment upon thee, go and humble thyself and confess thy sin unto him in secret; and

pray unto him, chiefly that he would take away thy sin, and then thy punishment.

Or, if this will not give sufficient ease to thine afflicted conscience, take unto thee some serious, prudent Christian: inform him how the case stands, between God and thy soul: beg the assistance of his advice and prayers. This is the Apostle's direction, James v. 16. *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed.* This is the way to give God the glory of his justice, when thou shalt fall down and acknowledge, that what he hath brought upon thee is just and righteous, and the due reward of thy sins. And, indeed, God doth many times inflict such peculiar punishments upon us, which do indigitate and point out our sins; as it were on purpose to extort his glory from us, in our confession of his justice. Sometimes, he punisheth us after the same manner, in which we have offended him: we have a famous instance for this in Adonibezek, Judges i. 7. *Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table;* and he, suffering the like from the Israelites, acknowledgeth the justice of God in thus repaying his cruelty; *as I have done, so God hath requited me:* thus God dealt with the Egyptians: they cruelly murder the male children of the Israelites; and, therefore, God slays all their first-born. And, sometimes again, judgments carry a likeness unto the sin, though not in the very same thing, yet in many circumstances of it: as when God smites men in the same subject, object, time, instruments, or members of sinning: thus David grows proud of the number of his subjects; and, therefore, God sweeps them away by a pestilence, and makes him substract threescore and ten thousand from the account: he dotes on Absalom, and God ordains Absalom to rebel against and endeavour to dethrone him: so, that very hand, which Jeroboam stretched forth to lay hold on the prophet, God withers and dries up. Now if any such judgment hath befallen you, that carries on it the very stamp and impression of the sin for which God inflicts it, adore and glorify his justice; fall down before him, and confess that he is righteous and holy in all that he hath brought upon you.

b. If the divine justice hath so found thee out, as to detect thee, and bring thee to temporal punishment for thy crimes, then glorify it, by a free and public confession of them to all the world.

Strive not to cover the sore, which God lays open; but take to thyself the shame of thine iniquities, and give God the glory of his justice, by acknowledging thy guilt, and admiring his most wise and righteous methods in discovering thee, when thou thoughtest thy wickedness had been hid in darkness and secrecy: so that others may hear; and fear to offend that God, who can, by such unknown ways of his providence, bring to light the hidden things of darkness. Thus, when Achan was miraculously discovered by lot, Joshua exhorts him, chap. vii. 19. *My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done: hide it not from me:* which accordingly we find he did, and we may therefore hope well of his pardon. It is a most desperate folly of many stupid wretches, to persist obstinately in denying those crimes of which they are evidently convicted; and, that their names may escape the infamy, bind the guilt of them fast upon their souls for ever.

That is, therefore, a Second way of glorifying the justice of God, by a free and full confession of our sins, when his vengeance hath found us out.

[3dly] If thou art unjustly wronged and oppressed by others, glorify the justice of God, in committing thy Vindication to him.

Seek not to revenge thyself; for, by so doing, thou dost but take thy cause out of God's hands, who is better able to plead it for thee. If thou studiest how to recompense evil for evil, thou disparagest the justice of God, and suspectest that it will not do thee right; and, therefore, thou wilt seek to carve out to thyself what amends thou canst. Certainly, he doth most of all honour the justice of God, who, when he hath suffered wrongfully, doth, without any farther care or solicitude, recommend his cause to God. Nor can I approve those, who, when they are injured, do indeed betake them to God; but it is with bitter curses and direful imprecations against those, who have injured them, praying for wrath and vengeance to fall upon them: what! think we that the wrath of God must take fire at ours; and that he must dart down his thunderbolts, according to the guidance and direction of our passions? this were to make the justice of God servile to our affections, and an instrument for our revenge. Indeed, we do often meet in Scripture with such dreadful imprecations, where the saints of God devote his and their implacable enemies to utter ruin and destruction: yet

this is no warrant for us to use them too. For, as our Saviour Christ rebuked his disciples who were vexed at the affront they received from a village that would not entertain them, and therefore entreated him to call for fire, as Elias did, to come down and consume them, (their zeal was all in a ferment, and presently boiled up to an intemperate feverish heat) but our Saviour checks them, and tells them, Luke ix. 55. *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of:* intimating that Elijah prayed for fire to come down upon those captains and their companies that were sent to take him, from some extraordinary spirit, and by the mighty guidance and impulse of the Holy Ghost; but they did it only from a private spirit of revenge: so I may say, that those examples, which we have in Scripture, especially in the Psalms, of saints and holy men of God devoting their enemies to ruin, were from the impulse and direction of an extraordinary spirit, which we cannot pretend unto; and, therefore, for us to imitate them, would not be zeal, but wildfire. Our Saviour Jesus Christ, who suffered infinitely greater indignities than any that we can, hath set us another example, when, amidst the rage and insultings of his most bitter enemies, he prays, Luke xxiii. 34. *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.* And his holy martyr St. Stephen, who was the first that followed our Saviour in the track of his blood, follows him likewise as closely in his example; and, when the stones flew thick about him from their malicious hands, it is said, Acts vii. 60. that *he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* Indeed, though it may seem a paradox, yet it is a stated and measured truth, that then thou dost most of all glorify the justice of God, when thou implorest mercy for those who have wronged and injured thee, that God would forgive them and turn their hearts: for, in so praying, what dost thou else, but pray that God's justice may be cleared in clearing thy innocence? if thou canst but pray down mercy upon them, thou wilt also pray down repentance into them; and then thou hast gained the most noble and Christian-like revenge that can be desired.

[4thly] Glorify the justice of God, by endeavouring to make thyself worthy to escape the direful and destructive effects of it.

Thou hast been told how severe and tremendous this justice is. All the astonishing judgments, that have ever befallen any of the sons of men in this life, are but small preludiums of it;

in comparison with those massy and solid plagues, that are laid up in store to be inflicted on impenitent sinners hereafter *in* hell: that is the proper region and sphere of justice, where wrath and woe for ever triumph, without mixture or abatement. Well now, O Soul, is there a way for thee to escape this terrible justice of the Great God; and wilt thou not, with the dearest affections of thy heart, close with it and embrace it? what is this, but to slight and disparage the wrath and justice of God? He hath but required faith and obedience from thee; and, upon these, hath promised, that thou shalt never fall a sacrifice to his justice, but be set up a trophy of his grace and mercy: and, certainly, if thou wilt not come up to these terms, it is too evident a sign, that thou despisest his justice, and thinkest it not worth the fearing.

And thus I have, at large, shewn you how you ought to glorify God in these seven attributes; his Holiness, his Mercy and Goodness, his Omnipresence, his Omniscience, his Veracity, his Power, and his Justice.

Indeed, there are several other attributes and perfections of the Divine Nature, which ought also to be glorified by us: but these, that I have already insisted upon, are the principal; and most frequently occur in the course of our lives, to be observed and imitated by us.

From what hath been said of our glorifying God, I shall deduce this short Inference and Corollary.

See here, then, what a Christian's life ought to be; only a representation of God.

The divine perfections should shine through all our actions; and whatsoever we do ought to be, either a resemblance of the divine nature, or a declaration of it. We have no other work nor business to do in the world, but to live according to the attributes of God, and to express his life in ours. For what is it to be godly, but to be like unto God? that, whilst the children of the Devil are like unto their father, and declare his hellish nature in their hellish lives; all, that are the children of God should be like unto their Heavenly Father, and express the virtues of him that *hath called* us *out of darkness into his marvellous light*; as the Apostle speaks, 1 Pet. ii. 9. And, to conclude

this, those Christians, who thus make it their constant employment to live on earth as God himself lives in heaven, may, with assured hope and unspeakable comfort, expect to live for ever with the Lord.

We have thus considered the Duty, to which we are here exhorted, even the great and most comprehensive duty of a Christian's whole life; and have shewn you what it is to glorify God. We have considered the Object of this duty; God, in all his attributes, both communicable and incommunicable: and have shewn you how they ought particularly to be glorified by us.

3. Let us now *consider what the Apostle adds farther in the text, Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit,* Εν τῳ σωματι και τῳ πνευματι: that is, in your body, and in your soul.

For, by the word *spirit* the soul of man is here to be understood; as, likewise, in many other places of Scripture: and this, to denote that it is of a refined, incorporeal substance. Sometimes, indeed, the spirit of a man is mentioned in contradistinction, as well to his soul as to his body: so, in that prayer of the Apostle, 1 Thess. v. 23. *I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless.* But, here, it must not be understood, as if it were a third essential part of man: but either, according to St. Austin, de Animâ: tom. 3. lib. iv. c. 22, 23. these words, Soul and Spirit, are but exegetical one of the other, and signify both the same thing; or, else, by Spirit is meant only the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, which St. Paul prays might be preserved entire and blameless in the Thessalonians, as Chrysostom interprets those words (Chrys. *in loc.)* or, else, according to others (Zanch. *in loc.)* by Spirit is meant the superior faculties of the mind, reason and understanding; and, by Soul, the inferior faculties, of will, affections, and desires. But, when the Scripture speaks of the *spirit* of a man in distinction only to his *body*, as it doth in my text, it means nothing else but the soul: as including in it, both the superior faculties of the mind, reason and understanding; and the inferior faculties of the will, appetite and affections. So that, to glorify God in our *spirit* and in our *body*, is, to glorify him in our whole man, and all the powers and faculties that we are endowed with. For we are a middle sort of creatures: neither pure intellectual spirits, as the angels are; nor mere

corporeal beings, as inanimate things: but God hath tacked these two extremes together, and made them meet in man; who, by his soul, holds hands with angels, and, by his body, with material creatures.

Hence we may observe, that the whole man, both soul and body, ought to be employed as the instruments of promoting God's honour and glory.

For the clearer prosecution of this, note,

First. That, when we speak of glorifying God in our whole man, both *soul* and *body*, this phrase comprehends under it all those accessary good things, which appertain to either.

Some things are reckoned the natural goods of the soul: such are prudence, sagacity, wit, learning, judgment, &c. Some things are reckoned the natural goods of the body: such are health, liberty, food, raiment, riches, &c. And some things belong neither properly to the soul, nor to the body; but to the whole *compositum*, or man, consisting of both united together: and such are credit and reputation, honour and dignity, dominion and authority, &c. Now, in all these things, God is to be glorified by us.

Secondly. When we say God is to be glorified by us in our whole man, we must know that there are Two ways of glorifying him: either actively, by fulfilling the Will of his Precepts; or passively, by suffering the Will of his Purpose.

(1) I shall first speak of glorifying God Actively in our body and in our spirit, by doing his will.

[1] First, then, every duty of God's immediate service and worship, wherein we draw nigh unto him, requires a joint Concurrence both of Soul and Body to glorify him in it.

Our Saviour Christ calls his service a *yoke*: Mat. xi. And, certainly, it is a yoke, wherein both soul and body must be coupled, and draw together: the soul, indispensably: the body, with a dispensation; but that dispensation granted only in case of mercy or necessity.

1st. In all the duties wherein we address ourselves to God, we ought to glorify him in our Souls and Spirits.

God is a spirit, yea *the God of the spirits of all flesh; and they, that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth*, as our Saviour speaks, John iv. 24. And this God hath, with the greatest instance, required of you, Prov. xxiii. 26. *My son, give me thy heart*: whatsoever else we tender unto God, if this

be wanting, it is but the carcase of a duty. And as, of old, all sacrifices were accounted direful and unacceptable, if the heart could not be found in the slain beast, or any of the inwards were wanting, or tainted, or misplaced: so all thy sacrifices, which thou offerest up to God, are monstrous and unacceptable to him, if the heart be not found in them, and the inwards sound and entire. Thou dealest with God, as he in the Apologue with Hercules; who, having vowed to him the one half of what he should find that day, himself eat the kernels, and offered up only the shells of the nuts he found to his deity: so thou dost indeed offer up one half of thyself in the service of God; but it is only thy body, the husk and shell, whilst vain thoughts, or worldly cares, or wicked lusts prey upon and devour thy heart and soul. Thinkest thou, that thy God is such an idol God to be contented with such a part, or that he will be put off with shews and outward appearances? If he knows not thy heart, and the intentions and desires of thy soul, to what purpose dost thou worship him? what do those humble and devout postures signify to him, who, if he sees not deeper and farther than these, sees nothing? Or, if he doth thoroughly discern and accurately scan every the least motion of thy thoughts and affections, woe unto thee, who shalt dare to make religion a piece of stage-play; and, by thy personating and counterfeiting of the saint, think to impose upon the omniscient God, and to pass for such an one indeed in his account. Indeed, hypocrisy is a mere mimical folly; and hypocrites are but like your Neurospasts, or little images, that move their eyes and bodies, not from any vital principle within them, but only as they are acted by wires and engines without: so the hypocrite twines his body into many flexible postures of seeming piety and devotion, not from any living principle of grace within, but only as he is moved by some outward wires of advantage or applause. Is this a serving and glorifying of God? or, rather, is it not a mocking and flouting of him to his very face? The Jews never more cruelly mocked our Saviour Jesus Christ, than when *they bowed the knee before him*, and bid him *Hail, king of the Jews:* so, believe it, God will interpret all thy officious gestures, when thou fallest on thy knees, and stylest him Lord and King; he will interpret all to be but a solemn mockery, if thy soul fall not as prostrate before him as thy body, and if thy affections be not elevated unto heaven as well as thy hands and eyes. And, as these hypocritical mimics, who thus pretend to glorify God, do yet

really scorn and vilify him more than any: so again, on the other hand, God doth most of all scorn and detest them, and looks upon them as the most loathsome and ridiculous wicked wretches that are: for, we may observe, that where imitation falls short, the partial defect is worse than a total privation: what beast more deformed in his shape, or more ridiculous in his actions, than a marmoset or ape! and yet none approacheth in a nearer resemblance in both unto man, who is the crown and glory of the visible creation: so, truly, a Hypocrite is but the ape of a true Christian, and all his devotion is but an apish imitation of the external acts of piety; which, because they proceed not from an inward participation of the divine nature, are most despicable and deformed in God's account: let them squeeze and writhe their faces into as many forms as they please, and when they fast or pray put on what countenance they will; yet, if their hearts and affections correspond not with their outward semblances, they do but play the antics, they do but grin and make mouths at God. But, yet, alas! who is there among us, that can wholly acquit himself of this? Some that they might not be thought hypocritical worshippers of God run into another extreme, and demean themselves rudely and irreverently in his presence: they will not shew any devotion, that it might be thought they have the more: but, yet, take them in their most careless and unseemly postures, and is it not hypocritical that they present their bodies and their outward man before the Lord, when their hearts and affections are with the eyes of the fools in the ends of the earth? what is the end of thy coming hither? is it not to serve and glorify God? if it be not, thy very coming is hypocritical: if it be, all thy wandering thoughts, thy vain and worldly imaginations, thy drowsiness, thy want of attention and affection, is all from the bitter root of thy natural hypocrisy: in prayer, thou ownest the duty by being present at it; and, if thou dost not cordially close with every petition, and, as soon as it comes from the minister's mouth, send it up to heaven from thy very heart, whatsoever thy posture be, thou playest the hypocrite: in hearing, if thou dost not diligently attend to the truths that are delivered, and submit thy will, prejudices, and interests unto the evidence of it, thou hearest hypocritically: and, whatsoever other duty thou performest by thyself, or joinest in with others, so long as thy mind hath been diverted unto other objects, and thy thoughts scattered by other cares, so long hast thou been a hypocrite in

that duty; for thou makest an outward shew of what is not in thy heart or affections. Well, then, if you would glorify God, fix and engage your spirits in all the duties you perform to him; in prayer, let zeal and affection warm your hearts, and offer up that spiritual sacrifice with that heavenly fire; think of nothing, but that God to whom you pray, and those blessings you pray for: hear the truth with as much attention and reverence, as if God were himself speaking to you with his own voice; and mind nothing but how you may understand it for the present, and practise it for the future. In all your duties, bend every power and faculty of your souls to the utmost tension: command them to regard nothing else, for that time: and, if the fowls of the air, thy flying and roving thoughts, will yet come down upon thy sacrifice, let it be thy care, as it was Abraham's, speedily to drive them away; for, by their touch they defile it, but by their stay they would devour it.

2dly. In all the duties of worship which we perform unto God, we ought to glorify him not in our spirits only, but in our Bodies.

As, on the one hand, it is gross hypocrisy and dissimulation, if we present our bodies only before the Lord, with all the shews of a real affection and devotion, whilst yet the heart is far estranged from him; so again, on the other hand, it is a saucy irreverence and profane rudeness, to pretend to worship God in the spirit, when we pay him no respect or observance with our bodies. Certainly, he hath created both soul and body; and he is the Sovereign Lord of both, and expects that tribute and homage should be rendered him from both. Some men have driven all their religion so far inward, that it is become altogether invisible; and, because God is a spirit, they serve him as if they were spirits too, and had nothing to do with the body: they have heard that *bodily exercise profiteth little;* nor indeed doth it, where the heart and soul do not both excite and accompany it: and, because it is an empty piece of formality and pageantry to worship God only with the body, they will not worship him with the body at all, but only with the spirit; and so unyoke these two, which God hath made to draw together. How many have we seen affect irreverence, as a part or sign of spiritualness; and choose the most unseemly postures they could, only that it might appear they did not flatter nor compliment with God! It is a weakness, hugely incident to human nature, and that I think with which the world was never more tainted than in these our days, to cure extremes by extremes: because hypocrites worship

God only with the outward man, and content themselves only with the pomp and ostentation of an external devotion, therefore do so many think it a demonstration of sincerity to discharge the body utterly from bearing any part in their worship: they despise reverence as a piece of formality, and make communion with God to consist in a familiar rudeness. Certainly, not your souls only, but your bodies also were made for the Lord, as the Apostle speaks, v. 6. He expects his tribute of glory from it, although it cannot pay it in so high and refined a manner as the soul: and, though its actions be but gross and inconsiderable, in comparison with the pure and sprightly operations of the mind; yet they are not so inconsiderable, but that God absolutely requires them from us: and if we be not careful to honour him with our bodies, we rob him, if not of part of his service, yet of his servant. I would not insist so pressingly on this, did I not observe that outward reverence is not only grown into disuse, but into contempt among us; and he is accounted God's best friend and intimate, that keeps the least distance: hence proceed those unwieldy gestures, that argue nothing but either a slighting or wearisomeness of the service you are engaged in. Believe it, God is a Great King; and, in his service, he expects as humble expressions of your reverence, as any you can think due to the greatest monarchs of the world. What saith the Lord, concerning those, who offered the lame and the maimed for sacrifice, Mal. i. 8? Offer it now unto your governor: see whether he would be pleased and contented with such a present: and, if an earthly prince would look upon it as an affront rather than a gift, think you that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords will account such a lame and imperfect offering worthy of his acceptance? certainly, that is not fit for God, which is not so much as fit and decent for man. And, though God looks especially at the soul, and the inward affections of the heart; yet he also expects that his offering should be entire, not lame and maimed of one half. He requires from you that outward reverence, that is necessary to testify a due sense of his glorious presence: he requires that you should sacrifice yourselves entirely to him, your bodies upon the altar of your hearts and affections; and both soul and body upon that altar, which alone can make both acceptable, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now in all the duties which we perform immediately unto God, we are to glorify him in our bodies Two ways:

By making them the Instruments of his service,

By making them the Witnesses and Testimonies of our respect and reverence.

(1st) Our bodies must be employed as the Instruments of God's service.

And, here, the tongue is the chief member; which, by the Psalmist, is oftentimes called his glory, because it is a principal organ of glorifying God. Herewith we bless God for mercies, already received; and herewith we pray unto God for mercies, which we yet need. And, though praise and prayer be chiefly the work and employment of the heart, and God can distinctly read what is printed there; yet this sufficeth not, if the voice too bear not its part, where it may be done with conveniency and decency.

(2dly) We ought to glorify God in our body, by testifying all lowly Respect and Reverence in those duties which we perform unto him.

Whatsoever liberty the wantonness of our late times hath indulged; yet certainly we ought, in all our addresses unto the Great God of Heaven, to compose ourselves in such an humble and reverential posture, as may testify that our souls are deeply affected with the awe and dread of that Great Majesty before whom we appear. Wherefore serve the gestures of the body, but to signify the respect of the mind? and, therefore, if we ought to demean ourselves lowlily in the presence of our superiors, only to testify the inward veneration and esteem which we bear towards them; should we not much more do so, in the presence of the Great God? And, if some have falsely and hypocritically made use of this sign, when they have pretended a great deal of zeal and affection in their outward comportment, though inwardly they have been full of all manner of wickedness; yet this should be no argument to us to neglect it: but, first, we should labour to have deep impressions of awe and reverence made upon our spirits; and, then, express that reverence in the most significant and humble deportment of our bodies. This is to glorify God in our spirit and in our body. And, therefore, doth the Scripture every where abound, both in giving us directions and examples of outward reverence in the worship of God.

In Prayer, we find the holy men of old frequently used Three several postures; all of them expressive of a deep humility.

Prostration, or a falling flat on the ground. Thus it is said of Job, that he *fell down upon the ground, and worshipped:* Job. i. 20.

Kneeling, which is most often mentioned: yea, and because it was the common gesture in this duty, it is of itself mentioned as a periphrasis of prayer by St. Paul, Eph. iii. 14. *For this cause I bow my knees:* i. e. for this cause I pray *unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Standing. So it is said, 2 Chron. vi. 12. that Solomon stood upon the brazen scaffold, and spread forth his hands and prayed: and, chap. xx. 5. that Jehoshaphat *stood in the congregation* and prayed.

Either of these is a fit posture for prayer; but, especially, kneeling: and they all express that reverence and humility, which our souls ought to be possessed with, when we appear in the presence of the great and glorious God. But, for other gestures, which either pride, contradiction, or laziness has introduced, they are altogether unfit for this duty; and, whatsoever inward affection and zeal men may pretend to, yet certainly they give but very little demonstrations of it outwardly.

Then, again, for Hearing the Word, we should do it with a composed gravity and seriousness; shewing the fixedness of our minds, by the fixedness of our bodies. Consider, that the great King of Heaven speaks to you: he speaks by his ambassador: and, the same attention and reverence, that you would shew to your prince, were he speaking unto you; the same, yea and much greater, ought you certainly to shew to your God. Concerning particulars, I leave it to your Christian prudence to judge what is most expressive of reverence towards men; which, though perhaps it be no part of the worship of God, yet he expects and requires as a befitting circumstance: yea, and a circumstance so considerable, that it is almost all that your bodies can do in his service. And judge, I pray, whether it be any less than a slighting of God, that you should declare more respect and reverence to your superiors, which are but mortal frail men like yourselves, than to him, who is the immortal and most high God, blessed for evermore.

The Apostle is somewhat large in giving directions to the Church of Corinth, concerning their outward demeanour in the public worship of God, 1 Cor. xi. 4. *Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.* That this is spoken, not only of the preacher, but of the hearers, appears plainly by the following verse: *Every woman, that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head.* Now, certain it is, that women were not to pray or to

prophesy in the Church, as teachers; for it was not permitted them to speak: they prayed, therefore, as joining in prayer; and prophesied, as attending upon prophesying, that is, upon preaching the word. And so, in like manner, the whole assembly of men are said to pray and prophesy; that is, to join in prayer, and to hear the word of God preached. But he, that doth this, saith the Apostle, with *his head covered, dishonoureth his head.* And so, again, v. 10. The woman ought *to have power* over *her head;* that is, a veil, or covering, so called, because it betokened her subjection to the power of her husband: she ought to wear this veil *because of the angels;* that is, that the angels, who are ministering spirits and present in the assemblies of the faithful, joying to behold the order, reverence, and affection of our worship, might see nothing indecent and uncomely.

Indeed, this outward reverence should be used, not only in respect of the attending angels; but in respect both of ourselves and others, as it may excite and help both our and their inward zeal and affection.

First. It will tend to quicken and stir up thine own devotion.

For, if thou prostratest thyself before God, will not this put thee in mind what thou art doing; and shame thee if thou findest thy thoughts and thy affections wandering, and wholly incongruous to thy bodily deportment? Whilst thou bowest thy knees, and spreadest forth thy hands towards heaven, canst thou, without blushing, suffer thy thoughts and thy affections to gad abroad, and stray from the work which thou so solemnly makest shew of? This will oblige thee, if thou hast any ingenuity, to call them home, and fix them upon what thou art doing. And,

Secondly. It will much tend to excite and quicken the affections of others, who shall behold thy grave and reverend demeanour.

For the expression of our affection is naturally apt to imprint the same, on those, that shall observe us. When we see them signify so much awe and humility, it will put us in mind to whom they do it, in whose presence both they and we are: and as, in water, face answereth to face, so doth the heart of man to man; and, therefore, it will be very rare, if those affections, which we see lively stirring in others, do not beget in us also some resemblance and similitude of them.

Indeed, there is no stated universal measure for outward reverence: for that, which is accounted a sign of reverence in these nations, as uncovering of the head, &c. in other places is

the greatest affront and scorn, that can be offered. But this, notwithstanding, we may take for a sure and infallible rule, That those actions, which are commonly used to express reverence to others, according to the custom of the countries where they are observed, ought much more to be used to express reverence to God in his worship and service. This I suppose is clear; and I am sure it is as necessary, as it is much neglected and slighted among us. I know nothing, that can dispense with us; but only mercy, or necessity: if thou canst not shew thy outward reverence without endangering thy health, or tormenting or paining thy body; in this case, he will have mercy, and not sacrifice: but, in all other cases, where it is left free for thee to do it, and thou mayest so provide that by doing it thou mayest suffer no injury nor considerable detriment to thy body, God doth absolutely require it of thee: for it is almost the only way how thou canst, in any part of his immediate worship, glorify him in thy body.

That therefore is the First Proposition, that we ought, in all the duties of God's immediate worship and service, to glorify him by a joint Concurrence both of our Body and our Spirit. To present the body only, without the soul, is but hypocrisy; and, to worship God, without a due reverence expressed by the body, is but a saucy rudeness.

[2] We ought to glorify God in our Spirit and in our Body, in those things which Peculiarly and Properly belong to Each of them.

And here, should I branch this out into all its particulars, the work would be altogether endless; and we might sooner expect to be glorified with God, than finish the particular consideration of all the actions both of our souls and bodies, whereby we ought to glorify God. I shall, therefore, only touch upon some of the most remarkable things, and so close up this head.

1st. Therefore, as for the Soul, we may consider it in its three great faculties of Understanding, Will, and Affections: in all which we ought to glorify God.

(1st) To glorify him in our Reason and Understanding.

This the Wise Man calls *the candle of the Lord:* Prov. xx. 27. And this candle we ought to light at God's *lamp;* for so David calls the word of God, Psal. cxix. 105.

[1st] Then we glorify God by our reason and understanding, when, we employ it in finding out the Truth; and, by a diligent perusal and comparing of Scripture with Scripture, rationally

search out, without prejudice or partiality, what the mind of the Spirit is.

This is the noblest work that the mind of man can be busied about. And, if their industry be commendable, who turn over the monuments of learned men, to inform their understandings only in natural and human knowledge; how much more excellent is it, to revolve that only book which God hath written, to instruct thee in much deeper mysteries than any that all the learning in the world besides can teach thee? Whilst thou art thus careful to inform thine understanding, in the doctrines of religion and duties of obedience, in what God hath propounded to thee to believe and to practise, thou dost more perfect and advance thy reason, than all those great masters of wit and reason have done, who rested in those glimmering discoveries.

[2dly] We glorify God by our reason, when we subjugate and bring it under the Obedience of Faith.

There are many sublime mysteries in our faith, which reason alone could never have revealed unto us; yea which, now that they are revealed, it cannot fathom: as, that Three Persons should be One God; two Natures in Christ, one Person; that he should be born of a virgin, who was before all time; that he should die, who hath life and immortality dwelling in himself; that, being truly dead, he should by his own power raise himself again: these things, and many more, unsanctified and untamed reason will still be quarrelling at. Now if thou wouldest glorify God, bring thy reason to submit to the authority of faith: urge it with a *scriptum est:* "It is thus written," and therefore I thus believe. And, indeed, by thus doing, you do not contradict, but only perfect your reason: for there is infinitely more reason to believe what God hath so plainly testified in his word, than to believe the truth of what we see with our very eyes; since our senses themselves cannot be so infallible a proof of verity, as God's testimony. And therefore St. Peter, speaking of the heavenly voice, which he himself heard in the Transfiguration of our Saviour Christ, yet tells us, 2 Pet. i. 19. *We have a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed:* intimating to us, that the testimony of Scripture is more certain than a voice from heaven. And, therefore, let the truths revealed seem never so repugnant to corrupt reason; yet we ought to acquiesce in the authority and revelation of that God, who is truth itself. In such mysterious depths, I much please myself with that odd saying of Tertullian, *Sepultus resurrexit: certum*

est, quia impossibile est: "Christ rose again from the dead: it is certain, because it is impossible." Now glorify God by resigning up your reason and apprehension of things wholly to his teaching and instruction. Say, "Lord, thy word hath taught me many mysteries, which my weak and short-sighted reason cannot comprehend: but I desire to sit at thy feet: thy word shall be my reason. This I understand, that thou, who art Truth itself, canst neither deceive, nor be deceived: and therefore I find infinitely more reason, to believe any thing upon thy testimony, than to disbelieve it upon its own seeming impossibility. Since thou hast spoken it, I fully assent; and deliver up all the petulancy of my reason, to be chastised and tutored by faith."

(2dly) Glorify God in your Wills, by bringing them into a perfect compliance with his holy and sovereign will.

This, indeed, is the hardest and most difficult task, which we have to do. The old contest between God and man, ever since the Fall, hath only been whose will shall stand, either his or ours.

And there is a twofold will of God, which our corrupt wills are still opposing; the Will of his Command, and the Will of his Providence; of his Precept, and of his Purpose.

We naturally reject his precepts, and murmur at his providences. Now glorify God by submitting thy will unto his in both.

[1st] Submit thy will unto the Authority of his Commands.

And, though the duties that are enjoined be many of them very difficult, and all contrary to the inclinations of flesh and blood, and it may be to thy secular interests and advantages; yet bridle the reluctances and rebellions of thy will, and set up thy fixed resolution, "This God hath commanded, and this I will do in his strength, whatsoever shame, or dangers, or sufferings I may meet with in the way of my obedience." This highly tends to glorify the authority and sovereignty that God hath over thee, when thou art ready to sacrifice thy corrupt muttering will, and all thy interests, to the commands of thy God.

[2dly] Submit thy will to the overruling Will of God's Purpose.

Whatsoever God doth to thee or brings upon thee, sit down; and, with a contented patience, say, *Not my will, but thine be done.*

But concerning this I shall speak more largely hereafter, when come to shew you how we ought to glorify God passively.

(3dly) Glorify God in thy Affections: and that must be done, y bringing them to a conformity with God's.

This conformity must be twofold; as to the object, and as to ie motive of them.

As to the object, see that thy affections be set upon those iings, on which God's are.

As to the motive, see that they be set on them, upon that very ccount.

As, for instance, thou oughtest to glorify God in thy love, y loving what he loves, himself, his ways, his people, and his rdinances; and that, because he loves them: in thy hatred, by ating what God hates, sin and wickedness; and that, because iod hates them: in thy joy and delight, by delighting in what iod delights, that is in himself and his own infinite perfections, nd his image; and that, because he rejoiceth in them. And o, of the rest.

And thus you see, in brief, how you ought to glorify God in he several faculties of your souls.

2dly. You ought also to glorify God in those things, which ppertain peculiarly to the Body.

And this is chiefly done, by keeping it pure and undefiled. There are two things, which defile the body, intemperance and incontinence. And the Apostle expressly commands us to glorify God in our body, by flying both these polluting sins. As for intemperance, we are commanded, 1 Cor. x. 31. that *whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever* we *do*, we should *do all to the glory of God:* that is, we ought to make use of the comforts of life with such moderation, as may best fit us for the service of God; and so, as no occasion may be given to blaspheme our holy profession by our riot and excess. And, concerning incontinence, the Apostle hath told us in this chapter, that our bodies are the members of Christ: *Shall* we *then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot? God forbid:* and, upon this, he infers the exhortation, *Glorify God in your body;* that is, glorify him by a chaste and modest conversation.

[3] I shall not farther expatiate, in giving you rules how you ould make use of other particular advantages for the glory of od. As of health and strength; by blessing God for it, and

employing it in the duties both of thy general and particular calling: of riches and estate; by laying it out in refreshing the bowels of the poor, and the maintenance and encouragement of God's worship and service: of thy credit and reputation; by making it subservient to repair the broken and sunk credit of true and real piety. Innumerable are the particulars, wherein God requires to be glorified by us: yea, there is not any one action of our whole lives, but it must be directed to this, as to its last and ultimate, end; for we are commanded, that, whatsoever we do, we should do it to the glory of God.

Therefore, in the general, I shall only add this, that there are Two things which make all we do, whether they be actions of greater or less importance, to be a glorifying of God.

When they are done from heavenly and spiritual Principles.

When they are done to heavenly and spiritual Ends.

1st. When they are done from Heavenly Principles.

Many are these heavenly principles, which ennoble the meanest actions we can perform, and make them a glorifying of God. I shall name only these Two.

(1st) The Love and Fear of God.

I name these two sister-graces together, because they are never found separate: and, indeed, a true filial fear is but an awful love; and, wherever there is a sincere love to God, there will be a fear to offend him. These two are necessary ingredients into every good action; and, wheresoever they are found, they ennoble what we do, and make the common and ordinary actions of our lives to be spiritual and divine. For what is done from the love and fear of God, is done for God's sake: and, certainly, we cannot more glorify God, than by concerning him in all our actions; for this dedicates all we do, and makes it holy and sacred.

(2dly) Obedience to the Commands of God:

Who hath enjoined us the works of our particular callings in our several stations, no less strictly and indispensibly, than the duties of his own immediate worship and service. And, whatsoever common, if lawful, action of our lives we do out of conscience to God, and that we may thereby obey his will and precept, it is of water made wine: it is as truly glorifying him, as the most pompous and solemn worship we can perform. By this holy artifice, we make the necessities or employments

of this life become subject and tributary to heaven: and, what we thus do upon God's account, he will certainly reward.

2dly. When we do any action unto Spiritual and Heavenly Ends, then we glorify God by it.

As when we act, not for vain-glory, or only secular advantages; but to give a good example to others, or to fit ourselves the more vigorously to serve God, or to be beneficial to others, &c.

We have thus seen how we ought to glorify God Actively, both in our bodies and in our spirits, by doing the Will of his Precept.

(2) The next thing in order, is to shew you how we ought to glorify him Passively in both, by suffering the Will of his Purpose.

Indeed, the best and perhaps the greatest part of a Christian's life is spent in sufferings. When we lie long fallow in a continued prosperity, not ploughed up by any afflictions, our hearts are apt, like rank soil, to spend themselves in unprofitable weeds: our corruptions and vanities will overtop and eat out the very heart of our graces; so that God sees it necessary sometimes to plough us up, and make long furrows upon our backs. And, as husbandmen use to lop off the superfluous excrescences of their trees, to make them the more fruitful: so, that we may become the more fruitful to his praise and glory, the methods of his wisdom and goodness engage him to use the discipline of his pruning-knife; to cut off from us those luxuriances, which, although they may seem to add to our flourishing, yet hinder our fruitfulness.

Now all our sufferings do either respect our bodies, or our spirits; either the outward state of this present life, or else the inward and spiritual state of the soul.

The former may well be divided into Two kinds: for they are either,

First. Simply, Afflictions; brought upon us by the hand and providence of God, without respecting any other cause but only God's good pleasure and our own evil demerits. Or, else,

Secondly. They are Persecutions; brought upon us by the wicked rage of men, for righteousness' sake, and the testimony of a good conscience.

Those sufferings, which concern the spirit and the inward state

of the soul, may likewise be well reduced unto Two heads: for, usually, they are either temptations or desertions. In the one, we suffer from Satan; in the other, from God.

In all these various kinds of sufferings, some of which fall to the lot of every true Christian, and all of them lie very hard upon some, God ought to be glorified by us.

Indeed our way to heaven is set all along with thorns: troubles and sorrows are thick strewed in it. He is a fool, that sits not down and computes what his religion will cost him. It may be, troubles without, and terrors within; poverty, reproach, bonds; yea, and it may be death itself: besides many sharp agonies and conflicts of the soul; many dark and gloomy seasons, wherein neither sun nor stars may appear to him for divers days: his outward comforts may be to him all sequestered by the rage of men, and his inward by the wrath of God: on which side soever he looks, he may behold nothing but sorrow and anguish; heaven covered with clouds, and the earth with storms. This hath been the portion of many of God's dearest children; and we must make our account that it shall certainly, more or less, be ours. The Apostle hath forewarned us, Heb. xii. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth:* this is the proof of our legitimation, v. 8. *If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not* the genuine *sons* of God. We know not what particular trials shall befal us, saving that God hath every where testified that afflictions and tribulations abide us. This is the highway to the heavenly city: the cross is our mark; and, if we frequently meet not with this, we may certainly conclude that we have mistaken our road, and shall fall short of our journey's end. And, therefore, St. Paul speaks of it as a case of necessity, Acts xiv. 22. *We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.* Indeed, as we are men, we are born to trouble as naturally as the sparks fly upwards: and, therefore, although we may well conclude negatively, that certainly we are not travelling towards heaven if we meet with no rubs nor difficulties in our way; yet we cannot conclude in the affirmative, that, if we now suffer, we shall hereafter be glorified, unless we be careful to glorify God by our present sufferings.

Our sufferings, then, being so great and considerable a part of our lives, let us see how we may glorify God in this fire.

[1] I shall begin with those, which concern the Body, and the outward state of this present life.

And here I shall give you several rules, some of which shall e Cautionary, and some Directive.

1st. For Cautionary Rules,

(1st) The first shall be this: If thou wouldst glorify God by ıy sufferings, beware that thou dost not rashly and unwarrant-ɔly precipitate thyself into them.

By those sufferings, wherein thou thyself canst have no com-ırt, God can have no glory. Now consider what small ground ır comfort thou canst have, when thou thou needlessly bringest flictions upon thyself; and entanglest thyself in those troubles, hich either piety or prudence would have taught thee to ·oid. These sparks will fly about thee fast enough of them-elves: thou needest not blow the coals: but, if thou dost, and rt burnt by them, thou hast nothing to complain of, but thine wn folly; nor to comfort thee, but that it was thine own hoice and resoluteness.

There be Two things, that make sufferings rash and unwar-ıntable.

When thou sufferest, what thou hast deserved.

When thou sufferest, what thou mightest have avoided.

[1st] Thou rashly and unwarrantably plungest thyself into roubles, when thou sufferest what thy vices have deserved.

How many such wretched creatures are there, who have no other hope nor plea for future happiness, but that they are extremely miserable here! and yet all their sufferings are nothing else, but the just revenge that their own lusts and vices take upon them. It is an old maxim, *Non pœna, sed causa facit martyrem:* "Not the punishment, but the cause makes a martyr." It is not so much what we suffer, as wherefore, by which God is glorified. What saith the Apostle, 1 Pet. iv. 14, 15? *If ye be reproached for the name Christ, happy are ye.....on their part, he is evil spoken of; but, on your part, he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busy-body in other men's matters:* for, thus to suffer, is a dishonour to the name of God, and to the profession of the Christian Religion. Hast thou, by an idle and dissolute life, brought thyself to want and poverty? or, by intemperance and luxury, exhausted thy body, and dishonoured it with diseases as noisome as they are painful? or, by enormous and flagitious crimes, exposed thyself to the censure and penalty of the law? what comfort canst thou take in this suffering, the shame and infamy of which will be a sad accruement to the affliction? Never think

that such sufferings can bring any honour to God, when the cause of them was the dishonouring of him. In these, thou art not his, but only the Devil's, confessor and martyr.

[2dly] Thou rashly and unwarrantably castest thyself into trouble, when thou sufferest what thou mightest lawfully have avoided.

Be the cause never so good and glorious, yet if we suffer for it needlessly, we can have but little comfort, and God but little glory by such sufferings. It was a strange frenzy in the Circumcellions, a sect of heretical Christians in St. Austin's time, who ambitiously affected martyrdom when there was no persecution: and would forcibly compel others to lay violent hands on them; or, if they failed of that, would lay violent hands upon themselves; glorying in this, as martyrdom and suffering for the sake and testimony of Jesus. And, before these, the Montanists also were very fond and eager of suffering: who, though they did not invite and court it, yet thought it a base and carnal cowardice to use any means to escape it; yea, even that, which our Saviour Christ hath prescribed, Mat. x. 23. *When they persecute you in* one *city, flee ye into another:* and therefore Tertullian, misled by that erroneous spirit, hath written a whole treatise against flight in persecution. This is a strong kind of supererogation, when men shall undergo more for Christ's sake, than he himself is willing to have them. These are not his martyrs, but martyrs to their own vain-glory, and sacrifice themselves to their own fancies and self-will. And so, again, whosoever he be, that chooseth the greater suffering, rather than the less; as death before imprisonment, or imprisonment before a small mulct; let his cause be what it will, though really as glorious and excellent as he himself conceits it; yet he suffers rashly for it; and, when he comes to present himself before God, all scourged, and maimed, and famished, and bloody, expecting to receive the crown of glory, he may possibly receive no other guerdon, but that cutting reproof, *Who hath required* these things *at your hands?* As it is not true courage and fortitude to rush headlong into dangers, when we have no call nor warrant to engage us; so neither is it any true Christian valour to affect dangers and sufferings: we ought not to seek them out, and challenge the combat: it is enough, if we cannot escape them without sordid and sinful courses, bravely to bear their shock, and sustain their onset. That Christian doth sufficiently discharge his duty, who is first careful to avoid dangers; but, if

; cannot do this, without making use of unlawful shifts, deny-
g the faith and betraying his own conscience, suffers them
thout shrinking: but those, who wilfully expose themselves
sufferings, either by doing what they need not, or by not
oiding what they may, let them not think that they glorify
od by such sufferings; for they suffer not according to his will,
it their own: and we may take up the same lamentation con-
rning them, that David did concerning Abner; *Died Abner as
fool dieth?* so suffer these, die these, as a fool suffers and
es, when it was in their own power to prevent those troubles
d afflictions, into which they fall, nay into which they pre-
pitate themselves.

But you will say, "How is it then, that the Apostle so highly
ctols the heroic fortitude of those martyrs of which he tells us,
eb. xi. 35. who, when they were tortured, would not accept
deliverance, *that they might obtain a better resurrection?* It
ems, by their example, that God may be glorified by a vo-
ntary and arbitrary suffering."

To this I answer, That, if they had refused deliverance of-
red to them upon conditions that had been righteous and law-
l, their refusal of it had been utterly sinful and unlawful, and
e Apostle would never have strewed flowers upon their hearses;
r they had not been martyrs, but self-murderers: but, if we
nsult the story to which this passage relates, as it is at large
scribed, 2 Mac. vii. which, though it be not Canonical Scrip-
re, yet gives us a good account of the Jewish affairs under
e Grecian Empire; we shall find that the Apostle commends
eir faith and patience, because they would not accept of de-
erance upon unworthy and sinful terms: they were indeed
ered freedom and safety, yea honour and rewards by Antio-
us, if so be they would eat swine's flesh, and things offered
idols, contrary to the commands of the Law: but, upon such
nditions as these, they refused to accept of deliveranee; ex-
cting, as they professed and the Apostle testifies, a better re-
rrection; and esteeming it infinitely more eligible, to sacrifice
eir lives for the glory of the true God, than to save their lives
sacrificing to false and idol gods. This instance, therefore,
akes nothing in favour of those, who rashly thrust themselves
to dangers, when they have neither call nor necessity to en-
unter them; and, then, either complain, or glory, that they
e persecuted. This is not to glorify God: for he would have
ne of his champions come forth to combat, till he himself

gives the signal; which he never doth, until his providence brings us into such circumstances, that we must necessarily either sin or suffer, and no way is left open for us to avoid this dilemma. Then, indeed, when we are thus necessitated, if we choose affliction rather than sin, if we take up the cross rather than stumble and fall at it, if we are willing to undergo the sorest temporal evils that can befal us rather than dishonour God and pollute our own consciences, we do sufficiently declare that we are faithful and courageous soldiers of Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation; and, if we thus *suffer with him*, we shall also *be glorified* with him; as the Apostle speaks, Rom. viii. 17.

This is the First Cautionary Rule: If thou wouldest glorify God by thy sufferings, beware that thou dost not rashly and unwarrantably precipitate thyself into them.

(2dly) Another Rule is this: If thou wouldest glorify God under sufferings, beware that thou attempt not to free thyself from them by any unlawful means.

Consider, that God hath thee now in his hands; and, if thou seekest violently to wrest thyself out of them, thou wilt certainly fall into worse. And yet, alas! what is more ordinary in the world than this? some renounce the faith, which they formerly owned; yea, and after they have endured many hardships and tribulations for it, fall away only for fear of worse to come: others betake themselves to wicked arts; and, because they are weary of the discipline of God, seek to the Devil to deliver them from it: thus Saul consults a witch, and Ahaziah, Beelzebub the god of Ekron: and, indeed, the whole world is full of such practices; and, by stealing and lying and forswearing, men seek to deliver themselves from the troubles lying upon them; and, so they can but get free from the chastisements of God, they care not though they fall into the torments of the Devil. Beware, therefore, whenever God brings any affliction upon thee, that thou use no indirect and unlawful means to escape it. It is better to keep thy trouble with thy God, than to lose thy God with thy trouble. And, know this, that, if thou violatest thy conscience to preserve thy body or thy estate, the wound, which thou makest there, will be far more insupportable than any temporal affliction that can befal thee: he, that buys off punishment with sin, makes a most sad and miserable exchange of a temporal for an eternal torment. Beware, therefore, how you thus traffic with the Devil: say unto him, when he presents thee with any such unlawful means to rid thee of thy sorrows and

sufferings, "No: I am now under the hand of God, and his corrections are infinitely better than thy relief. I will never destroy my soul, to deliver my body; nor run into hell, to get out of prison; nor wound my soul, to cure my body; nor renounce my God and faith, to keep my estate and goods; nor burn in eternal flames, to escape a stake and faggot. Far be such a thought for ever from me. My God is able to deliver me; and he also will deliver me: but, if not, I will not, to save a poor vile wretched carcase, ruin my precious and immortal soul." Certainly, whosoever thinks to save himself from troubles and afflictions by any sinful means, is as foolish as that mariner, who, to lighten his vessel in a storm and save it from shipwreck, should tear up the very planks of it, and cast them into the sea.

(3dly) Beware that your sufferings and afflictions do not exasperate your spirits, and embitter your hearts against God; that the more he smites you, the more you should revolt from him.

By so doing, possibly the plague may be removed; but, certainly, the curse will be redoubled: and God may take away a judgment in more wrath and displeasure, than ever he first inflicted it: Isa. i. 5. *Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more.* It oftentimes so falls out, that they, who are incorrigible under punishments, sin themselves into impunity. But, believe it, this is the most desperate course ye can take: for, if temporal judgments harden us in sin, God may remove them as ineffectual; but then, assuredly, he will break us with eternal. It was a most cursed speech of that impious king, 2 Kings vi. 33. *This evil is of the Lord:* why *should I wait* upon *the Lord any longer?* If God command not deliverance at our prefixed time, we are apt to grow enraged at our sufferings, and to revenge ourselves upon the Almighty by our sins: we read of Ahaz, 2 Chron. xxviii. 22. that, *in the time of his distress, he did trespass yet more against the Lord;* and God sets a brand upon him for it, and makes him a notorious emphatical sinner for it: *This is that king Ahaz.* Beware, therefore, when God afflicts you, that you suffer not your hearts to rise in any mutinous thoughts or passions against him. How much gall and wormwood soever be mingled in the cup which your Father gives you to drink, let it not embitter your hearts: and, though he may mark you out, for afflictions; yet beware that you give no provocation to set his black mark upon you, for obstinacy and rebellion. Certainly, such sufferings as leave

a rancour and spleen in the heart against God, are but the preludiums of hell torments: for, there, the damned for ever fret under the acrimony of their punishments; and foam out blasphemies and curses against that God, whose dread justice and infinite power eternally triumph over them in their ruin and destruction. And, if thy sufferings do thus exasperate thee against God, know, that thou makest that a kind of damnation to thyself, which he made but an affliction; and fear, lest that, which doth so near resemble the torments of hell, do at last end in them.

And thus I have given you these Three Cautionary Rules: If you would glorify God, do not unwarrantably rush into sufferings; use no unlawful means to free thyself from them; and, lastly, be not exasperated and embittered by them.

2dly. The next thing is to give you some Directive Rules how you ought to glorify God in an afflicted and suffering condition.

(1st) You ought to glorify God, by a meek patience, and humble submission unto his good will and pleasure.

Those, who murmur and tumultuate under afflictions, accuse God of injustice, and carry themselves as if he had done them wrong, and they suffered undeservedly. And therefore the Prophet Jeremiah expostulates with us the unreasonableness of this sin of repining, upon the consideration of God's justice: Lam. iii. 39. *Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?*

And there be Three considerations exhibited to us in this Scripture, that tend mightily to confirm our patience under the sharpest afflictions which we can suffer in this life.

[1st] That there is no affliction, but it is mingled and sweetened with a great deal of mercy.

Why *doth a living man complain?* Possibly, thou art racked with torturing pains, or consumest away in lingering diseases, reduced to extreme necessity and pinching want: yet, still, thou art a living man; and life itself is such a vast blessing, that all miseries and afflictions compared to it, are but drops to the ocean.

[2dly] Consider, that thou art but a man: Why *doth a living man complain, a man, &c.?* a frail, feeble creature; naturally subject to many miseries and sorrows?

Thou hast received thy being *sub hoc onere*, with this burden affixed to it, quietly to bear all the various accidents and

troubles, which the wisdom of God shall see good to bring upon thee.

[3dly] Consider what thou hast deserved; and this will be a most effectual means to teach thee patience under what thou feelest. *A man for the punishment of his sins.*

If God should mix together all the bitter ingredients, all the stings and venom in the world, and compound of them all one unexampled affliction, and lay that upon thee all the days of thy life; yet this were nothing, to what thou hast deserved: this were nothing, to one gripe of hell torments; how much less is it nothing, to an eternity of them! This, thy sins have demerited: and why then should a living man complain for the punishment of his iniquities? When thou liest under any pain or sickness, or whatsoever thy affliction be, think with thyself "How happy is it for me, that I am not now in hell! God hath cast me here, indeed, upon my bed; but it is mercy, that he hath not cast me into eternal flames. If I now find so much pain, when I am but lightly touched by his hand; oh, what intolerable anguish should I feel, were I now under the unrebated strokes of his almighty arm! and shall I howl, and fret, and be impatient; when I have infinitely more reason to bless God, that it is not worse with me, than to complain that it is thus? Whatsoever is short of hell, is mercy to such a wretch as I am; who have ten thousand times deserved to be scourged with scorpions, whereas my gracious Father only chastiseth me with rods."

Thus, I say, under all your sufferings glorify God, by a patient submission to his good will and providence: and let it appear, by the meek and calm resignation of yourselves to him in the saddest circumstances of your lives, that you think him neither unjust nor cruel.

(2dly) Glorify God in your sufferings, by a patient expectation of a happy deliverance out of them.

Wait upon God, in the way of his judgments: firmly rely upon his power and his goodness to release you. And, although he may not presently answer your expectations, nor fulfil your desires, yet still continue waiting: for *the Lord knoweth how to deliver the righteous out of temptation,* and he will do it in the fittest and best season. And therefore we have that expression, Isa. xxiv. 15. *Glorify ye the Lord in the fires:* i. e. in the most scorching afflictions that happen, depend upon him for deliverance, either from or by them.

(3dly) Glorify God in your sufferings, by putting good constructions and interpretations upon them.

Be not witty to torment yourselves beyond what God intends, by the afflictions which you endure. Do not conclude that he is casting you off, or become your enemy, or that they are only the pledges and foretastes of eternal sufferings and torments in hell: but reckon that all the afflictions, which he brings upon you, are only for your good; that they are corrections, not curses; and that the issue of them shall be joy and peace. Judge so justly and kindly of God, that he takes no pleasure in the woes and tortures of his creatures; that he chastiseth us only if need be, and corrects us here that he may not punish us hereafter. When we can thus look upon God, and bless him that he is pleased to take so much notice of us as to discipline us, this will be a most effectual means to glorify his mercy and goodness; and to make even a chastising God the object, not only of our fear, but of our love.

(4thly) Glorify God in thy sufferings, by bearing them not only with patience; but, if they be for righteousness' sake, with joy and triumph.

Be not ashamed of the cross of Christ, but glory in it as the greatest honour and ornament of thy profession. So saith the Apostle, 1 Pet. iv. 16. *If any man suffer as a Christian*, i.e. suffer upon the account of his being a Christian, *let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.* Indeed the sufferings and martyrdom of the saints reflect a great deal of honour upon God, in that it shews they prize him above all the world; and account no torments, no sufferings so considerable, as the loss of his love and favour. And therefore it is said, John xxi. 19. when Jesus had foretold to St. Peter somewhat obscurely what should befal him, that he spake this, *signifying by what death he should glorify God.*

Thus I have shewn you how you ought to glorify God under outward sufferings, whether they be afflictions from God, or persecutions from men.

[2] Let us, in the next place, consider how we ought to glorify him under inward sufferings, which concern the soul.

And these are reducible to Two heads: for they are either
Temptations, which we suffer from Satan; or
Desertions, which we suffer from God.

1st. As for Temptations.

That they are great spiritual afflictions, ask but those, who ave stood exposed to these fiery darts; and they will readily onfess, that, next to the unspeakable regret they feel for ometimes yielding to temptations, the greatest burden and ouble of their lives is the continual labour and difficulty of sisting them. For what can be imagined more irksome to an genuous Christian, than to be restlessly importuned to do that, hich he is assured will be to his own wound and ruin, and to e dishonour of that God whose glory he prefers above his ief joy? and when they are haunted with direful injections, d blasphemous thoughts cast into their minds by the Devil; oughts, contrary to the fundamentals of religion, and the ommon sentiments of natural reason; how could they even rink from themselves, and abandon their own beings, rather an be forced to hear those horrid suggestions, which their reat enemy, the Devil, is still impudently whispering unto them!

It is, therefore, of concern to enquire how we may, when we re thus grievously pestered with these hellish injections, glorify od under so great an affliction.

To this I answer, in the general, If thou wouldst glorify God nder temptations, be sure still to maintain a most vigorous and solved resistance against their assaults: for, by this means, thou ilt glorify God, especially in two of his attributes, his Power nd his Truth.

(1st) By resisting temptations, thou glorifiest the Almighty ower of God.

Thou fightest his battles, not only against thine, but his great nemy, the Devil. And, as the honour of a prince is engaged n the valour and resolution of his soldiers; so God hath, as it ere, pawned his honour upon thy courage: thou art his champion, chosen and selected out by him purposely for the combat. ow if thou basely yield, thou leavest not only thine own soul, ut God's honour bleeding upon the place: thy conscience comes a spoil to the Devil, and thy name a reproach to religion. ertainly, God intended to make the almighty power of his grace xceeding glorious, by making use of such inconsiderable instruments as you are; instruments, like Gideon's pitchers, frail earthen essels, but yet such as have the lamp of divine grace burning n them, to rout and put to flight all the legions and black usters of hell. See how God exults in the victorious constancy f his servant Job; and upbraids the Devil, that, though he had ith his utmost malice assaulted him, yet he still persisted in his

integrity, and defeated all the attempts of his impotent malice: Job ii. 3. *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in* all *the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity;* yea, *although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause:* God speaks of him with delight, and glories in him as a heroic champion. And, if you set yourselves vigorously to oppose the temptations of the Devil, God will likewise glory in you; and triumph over Satan to his utter shame, that such weak and feeble creatures should, through the assistance of his grace, be able to subdue all the power, that hell can arm against them. And this will, to his infinite regret, make that proud and cursed spirit know how utterly in vain all his raging attempts are against their Almighty Lord and Master; since he cannot turn away the face of one of the least of his servants. And, therefore, when St. Paul had prayed thrice, i. e. often, that God would remove that temptation and messenger of Satan which buffeted him, he receives this answer, 2 Cor. xii. 9. *My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness:* not that God's strength, which is infinite, can receive any addition of perfection from our weakness; but only it is declared and demonstrated to be infinitely perfect and infinitely powerful, when, by such contemptible instruments, it can overthrow all the powers of hell.

(2dly) By resisting temptations, thou glorifiest the Truth and Veracity of God.

For both God and Satan deal with the soul in somewhat a like way, though to different ends. They both urge promises and threatenings, as motives to induce us to their obedience. Satan's are all for the present; present gain and present pleasure, if we consent to his solicitations: but God's promises and threatenings are chiefly for the future. Indeed, we shall here enjoy so much peace of conscience, such a sweet calm and tranquillity of mind, such inward satisfaction in our self-reflections, that, were there nothing else propounded to us, yet even this alone were enough with rational and considerate men to out-bid all that Satan can offer: but yet God chiefly insists upon the consideration of those things, which shall be accomplished hereafter; and represents unto us eternal rewards and eternal punishments, the one to allure us to duty, the other to deter us from sin; and both to deliver us from the snare of the Devil, and that ruin into which we should else precipitate ourselves.

Now consider when you are tempted, whose promises or whose threatenings prevail most with you, God's or Satan's. If you yield to the temptation, it is plain that you prefer Satan's before God's. And this reflects a mighty dishonour upon him, either,

That what he promiseth is not valuable. Or,

That it is not so certain as what the Devil promiseth.

But, the common sense and first notions of all mankind must needs agree in this, that what God promiseth is infinitely more valuable, and what he threatens is infinitely more dreadful, than what can be promised or threatened in a temptation; inasmuch as eternal joys do vastly transcend momentary and impure pleasures, which die in their very birth, and leave nothing but a sting and torment in the conscience: and those light afflictions, which the Devil tempts us to avoid by sinning, are poor inconsiderable nothings, in comparison with that eternal anguish and horror, which God threatens to inflict on us for sinning.

What is it then, that makes the temptations of the Devil so prevalent and effectual with most men in the world? Is it not because they do not believe him, who is truth itself, in what he promises and threatens; but assent to the false promises of him, who is a liar from the beginning? There is no man, that yields unto a temptation, but it is because he believes Satan rather than God. Infidelity is the root of all sin: and, by this, they cast a high disparagement and dishonour upon his truth and veracity. Did we but believe that heaven is so inconceivably glorious, a place where joy and bliss keep their eternal residence, and where we shall for ever live in the smiles and love of God, if now for a few short years we endeavour to our utmost to live holy and obedient lives; did we but believe that the crown of glory is so massy, and all the gems of it so bright and orient; that we shall there bathe in rivers of pleasure, and for ever feel and enjoy more satisfaction than we can now conceive: did we but believe these things as the Scripture hath revealed them to us, without diffidence or hesitation; nay, did we but believe them as probable and likely enough to come to pass, should we so cheaply forfeit the hopes of these things, for the impure and vanishing delights of sin? We find that the promise of some temporal reward from men, is of force enough to allure us to very hard tasks and difficult enterprises: how far will many venture, and how much pains and labour will they take to obtain it! and yet the promises, that God himself hath made of eternal glory, in

comparison with which to promise sceptres and kingdoms is but to promise trifles and gewgaws, have so little effect upon the generality of mankind to win them to a holy and obedient life! Whence is this, but that there is a great deal of atheism and infidelity secretly lurking in men's souls, which never more discovers itself, than when we suffer ourselves to be hurried away by temptations, against all those considerations, which the Scripture hath propounded to us of eternal rewards and punishments. Did we but believe that there is a day of reckoning to come, when we must stand before a righteous and impartial judge, to give a strict and narrow account of all our actions, and receive our doom from his mouth according to what we have done; did we but believe the intolerable wrath of God, the fire and darkness, woe and anguish, and all those racks and engines of torture that are prepared for the damned; who of us would ever again hearken unto a temptation, which only bids us plunge ourselves headlong into such an abyss of miseries? we should no more dare to commit the least sin against God, than to be damned, and run into the flames of hell with our eyes open, and seeing our destruction evidently before us. But the truth is, we are credulous towards the Devil, and infidels towards God; and most gross and deplored fools, in both. Satan labours most to weaken our faith; for he knows, if he can but once beat us from that guard, all his temptations will certainly prove effectual and do execution upon us. And, therefore, our Saviour tells Peter, Luke xxii. 31, 32. *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:* teaching us, that there is no such sure defence against the temptations of the Devil, as the strong and vigorous actings of faith: while we believe what God hath spoken, we shall never be allured by whatsoever the Devil can suggest. And, therefore, also the Apostle, when he gives us the panoply and complete armour of a Christian, exhorts us, Eph. vi. 16. *Above all,* to take *the shield of faith, wherewith* we *shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Above all:* i. e. either chiefly look that your faith be strong: or, else, as the shield was used to be a defence not only unto the body, but to the rest of the armour likewise; so, *above all,* or over all the other pieces of your spiritual armour, take *the shield of faith,* for this will be a defence not only to your souls, but to your other graces, to keep them from being bruised and battered by the temptations of the Wicked One.

And thus you have seen how we ought to glorify God under this first spiritual suffering, which is by Temptations, by a strong and vigorous resistance made against them; for, in so doing, we glorify both the power of divine grace, in preserving us from the commission of those sins unto which we are tempted; and likewise the truth and veracity of God, in his promises and threatenings.

2dly. The second spiritual suffering is Desertion, wherein we suffer from God.

And this is a very heavy affliction to that soul, who ever knew what the presence, and favour, and the comfortable and reviving influences of the love of God mean. When a pious Christian hath once fixed God as his chief and only good, and taken the measures of all his joy and content from his union to and communion with that sovereign good, how infinitely cutting must it needs be for God to absent and withdraw himself, and leave him under dark and gloomy apprehensions that he is rejected and cast out of favour, and disinherited by his Heavenly Father!

Now, in this doleful condition, when God hath eclipsed the light of his countenance, and withdrawn from us the comforts of his *free Spirit*, how shall we demean ourselves, so as to glorify him?

To this I answer: In this case, which is confessedly very sad and disconsolate, observe these following directions.

(1st) If you would glorify God under desertions, still stay yourselves upon him, though you cannot see him.

Though you cannot see his face, yet lay hold on his arm. See that most comfortable place, Isa. l. 10. *Who is* there *among you, that feareth the Lord*, and *obeyeth the voice of his* prophet, *that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?* here is a holy soul described in its worst estate; enveloped in thick darkness, as dark as the confused heap and rubbish of the first chaos; not having the least gleam of light breaking in upon it, either from the face of God, or the reflection of its own graces. Now what must this dark soul do, in this dark condition? *Let him*, saith the Prophet, *trust in the name of the Lord, and stay* himself *upon his God.* Now this staying upon God, in a time of darkness and desertion, implies, that, although we have no evidence, no light, nor knowledge that we are his, and that he is our God in covenant with us; yet, that we have fixed our firm and settled resolutions, to devolve and roll the eternal concernments of our

precious souls upon his mere mercy and free grace through the merits of Jesus Christ. Now what a vast revenue of glory will this bring in to God, when we thus lay ourselves at his feet; when we thus hang and clasp about him; and resolve, with holy Job, chap. xiii. 15. *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!* So when, after the various tossings and tumults of our unquiet thoughts, we can rest upon this, "Possibly, God will destroy me; but I am not certain: yet I will cleave unto him: I will venture my everlasting state and my immortal soul, merely upon his mercy, in the ways of duty and obedience. If God will shake off such a viper as I am into hell-fire; yet he shall shake me off his arm: on that, I will depend: by that, I will hold: if I perish, I perish. Sure I am, that, by continuing in my sins, I shall unavoidably perish; but, if I yield myself to him, and humbly crave his mercy and grace, I can but perish, but, possibly, may live." Thus to resolve, and thus to act, doth exceedingly glorify the rich and sovereign mercy of God; when, in all the storms and fluctuations of a troubled spirit, we cast out this as our sheet anchor; and commit the eternal interests of our souls only to this security.

(2dly) If you would glorify God under desertion, encourage yourselves that he will again return unto you, and clear up his loving-kindness and favour unto your souls.

Think not thyself past hope, because, for the present, thou art without comfort. Never judge so hardly of God, that, every time he hides his face, he intends likewise to take away his mercy from thee. Though the clouds be never so thick gathered, yet he is able to shine through them all: he is able to scatter and dissipate them; and to make a day arise upon thy soul, by so much the more glorious, by how much the night and darkness hath been more obscure and dismal. Be assured that God can, and hope that he will, lead you through this valley of the shadow of death; and bring you into an estate made glorious and full of beauty, by the light and smiles of his loving countenance.

(3dly) Call then to remembrance thy former experiences of the mercy and goodness of God to thy soul.

And though now, for the present, God seems to write only bitter things against thee: yet, as absent friends use to read over former letters, and solace themselves with the review of those expressions of kindness which they had formerly received; so, now that the commerce between heaven and thy soul seems

to be interrupted, and thou canst receive nothing from thence to comfort and revive thee, yet read over thy former evidences, review the former letters and tokens of his love to thee: for, though he hath withdrawn the fresh supplies of comfort, yet he hath still left thee a stock in thy hands, enough, at least, to keep thee alive, and to support thee from sinking into utter despair. See Asaph's case, Ps. lxxvii. where we have a most doleful complaint of a poor deserted soul: verses 7, 8, 9. *Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?* you see that he all along seems to lay the very accent of damnation upon his desertion; *for ever! for ever!* but consider, then, how he supports himself, v. 10. *And I said, This is my infirmity: but I will remember the years of the right-hand of the Most High. The years of the right-hand of the Most High:* i. e. I will recal to mind former times, wherein God bestowed upon me the blessings of his right-hand; and, in this present dearth, live upon what I laid up in the years of plenty and abundance. So, in your desertions, do you glorify God; by recalling to mind former mercies, and former discoveries of his special grace and love to your souls. Can none of you remember, when you would have ventured your souls upon the truth of those joys and comforts which you have felt? when you were willing to depart out of this world, and to be found of God in no other estate than you knew yourselves to be then in? And, what! can you so suddenly be at a loss for comfort enough to keep you alive, who, but a while since, had so much as to make you hope and wish for death? whence proceeds this unhappy change? is God unfaithful? is his love fickle? are his promise and covenant reversible; that you are so soon cast down from assurance to doubtings, and from doubtings to despondency? If not, but that there is the same merit in the blood of Christ, the same efficacy in his intercession, the same stability in the purpose of God, and the same fidelity in his promises now as there was in your highest joys, what reason have you to dishonour him by those distracting fears, doubts, and jealousies which torment you? Be persuaded, therefore, to glorify the truth and faithfulness of all these, by encouraging yourselves in the same hopes, though it may be they flourish not into such rich assurance as formerly.

(4thly) The last direction shall be this: If you would glorify God under desertions, be sure that want of comfort cause you not to forsake duty.

Though thou mayest come sad to duty, and depart sad from it; though the ordinances may be to thee but empty dry breasts, and thou canst find no refreshment, no sweetness in them: yet this is the greatest commendation of a true Christian, a certain sign of the sincerity of his obedience, and a high credit and honour unto God, that he will be constant in his service and attendance, though he hath no present wages given him. Yea, and in this course thou art most likely to regain thy lost comforts. Thou wilt at last receive thy dole, if thou keep constantly attending at Wisdom's gates. Howsoever, God and his ordinances are hereby highly honoured, when the consolations, which thou hast formerly found in them, have left such a deep impression on thee, as to make thee resolve to attend on them as long as thou livest.

Thus have we dispatched the Two former Heads of the General Proposition: and shewed you what it is to glorify God; and, likewise, how we ought to glorify him.

iii. The Third still remains: and that is, to shew you WHAT FORCE AND INFLUENCE THE CONSIDERATION OF OUR REDEMPTION OUGHT TO HAVE UPON US, TO OBLIGE US THUS TO GLORIFY GOD.

The truth is, as I have at the entrance of this subject opened it at large to you, God hath many ties and obligations upon us; as he is our almighty Creator, our merciful Preserver, our all-wise Governor, our bountiful Benefactor, &c. upon all which accounts, we ought entirely to devote ourselves unto his service. But, yet, the strongest bond of all, which nothing can violate but the foulest disingenuity and the blackest ingratitude in the world, is that soft and easy one of being our Saviour and Redeemer. This is a relation overflowing with love and sweetness: but yet such a sweetness, as hath an efficacious strength in it: such a love, as lays a holy violence upon the ravished soul; and, by a free constraint and a willing force, makes it surrender up itself wholly and unreservedly unto its gracious God, who hath not only required it as a gift, but bought it as a purchase. To which purpose the Apostle speaks most fully, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. *The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if*

one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

For the prosecution of this, we may observe that there are, in the general, Three strong obligations, which our redemption lays upon us to glorify God.

In point of Justice and Equity.
In point of Gratitude and Ingenuity.
In point of Interest and Advantage.

1. We *are bought with a price*, and therefore it is but *Justice and Equity* to serve and glorify that God, who hath purchased us to himself.

For, in these words, the Apostle alludes to the custom, that was common in his days, of selling and buying slaves for money; who generally were such as were taken captives in their wars, and all the posterity of such captives. These were absolutely under the power of their masters that had bought them, and to be disposed and employed as they thought fit; called, therefore, by Aristotle, εμψυχα οργανα, "living instruments" or "animate utensils" to serve their pleasure. Such we ought to be towards God: for, man rebelling against his Maker, God declares war against him, and makes him captive to his dread justice; but, not willing utterly to destroy him, sells him to his own Son, who pays down a full price for us, and vindicates us to himself, that we might become his servants, subject unto his will, and employed in his work: which if we refuse or detract, we are guilty of injustice in depriving him of his right; and may well fear, lest he should, according to his compact with his Father, turn us back upon the hands of justice as unprofitable servants, to be punished and destroyed by him.

(1) Consider, the price, that he paid down, doth infinitely outbid the purchase, and exceed the value of all that thou art and hast.

Thy Saviour hath told down the inestimable treasures of his own merits: he hath taken upon him our nature, and with it our griefs and sorrows; suffered all the indignities, that insulting rage and spite could put upon him; waded first through his own tears, and then through his blood, and every drop of both is infinitely more worth than thou and all the world. He stood not to beat down the price, but readily gave for thee whatsoever was demanded: yea, his very life and soul; a price, so exceedingly precious, that, were we far more considerable crea-

tures than we are, yea more excellent than the highest order of angels, it must needs leave us under the confusion of shame and blushing, to think that ever we should be so much over-valued. And wherefore was this, but that we might be solely and entirely his? that none might have any claim to us but himself? And, what! Shall the Great God give his Only Begotten Son in exchange for a servant; and yet wretched thou refuse his service? shall the Son so highly esteem of the glory, that such poor vile nothings as we are can bring him, as to divest himself of that glory, which he had with the Father before the world began; and yet fall short of this too? wilt thou defeat him of his bargain, when he and justice are fully agreed; and all the right and title, that the wrath of God had to thee formerly, is now made over to the Son of his Love?

(2) Consider, that all the use, which thy Saviour can make of thee, is only that thou shouldest glorify him; and, by obedience and a holy life and conversation, shouldest serve to the setting forth of his praise.

This is the very end, for which he hath redeemed thee. What saith the Apostle, Tit. ii. 14? He *gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.* This is the end why he died for thee; and this is all the service he expects from thee, though he hath bought thee at so dear a rate. And, what! shall so rich a price then be cast away in vain? shall it be in vain, that thy Saviour hath lived, that he hath died, that he hath risen again, and is now interceding at the right-hand of the majesty on high? as he hath lost his life for thee, shall he also lose his very death too? lay out so much to purchase thee, and all be lost? shall his blood run waste; and so rich a stock be spent upon so poor and wretched a thing as thou art, and not obtain that neither?

(3) Consider: If thou livest not to thy Saviour, who hath died for thee, and by his death bought and purchased thee to himself, thou art guilty of robbery; of sacrilege, which is the worst robbery and most branded injustice in the world.

For thou robbest thy God; and stealest away a servant, even thyself, from him: for thou art his, by the right of purchase and redemption; and, so much of thyself, of thy time, of thy strength, of thy parts, of thy soul and affections, as is not employed in his work and service, so much is purloined from him. And, if God justly complains of the Jews, Mal. iii. 8. as

guilty of heinous robbery and sacrilege, because they defrauded his servants the priests of their tithes and offerings, of brute or inanimate creatures; how much more heinous is it to defraud him of his servant, who ought to be a priest unto him, and continually to offer up the sacrifices of praise and obedience, which he more values than whole hecatombs of slain beasts?

(4) Consider, again: If, instead of glorifying him by thy obedience, thou dishonourest him by thy rebellions and impieties, thou not only defraudest him of his servant, but, what is infinitely worse, of the very price that he paid.

Thou defraudest him of his sufferings, of his death, of his most precious blood. Yea, thou dost, in a sense, most sacrilegiously rob him of himself: Christ had never abased himself from the glory of heaven, but to be glorified here upon earth: he never had taken upon him the form of a servant, but that he might here have a seed to serve him: and, so far forth as we refuse this, so far do we make frustrate and to no purpose all that he hath either done, or suffered, or been, for our sakes. And, therefore, if thou wouldst not be unjust to thy Saviour, who hath been so merciful to thee; if thou wouldst not rob him of what he hath so dearly bought, and so highly values; look upon thyself as obliged, by all the bonds of equity and honesty, to live to his glory, who hath redeemed thee to this very end and purpose, that thou shouldst glorify him.

But then, again,

2. We are bound, not only in justice and equity, but, in *Ingenuity and Gratitude*, to glorify God, upon the account of our redemption.

Ye are bought with a price; and, therefore, if there be but any the least remainders of modesty and bashfulness left in you, you cannot but look upon yourselves as obliged to serve and honour that gracious God, who hath been pleased freely to bestow so great and inconceivable a mercy upon you.

For, consider,

(1) What it is you are redeemed from.

And that is all the woe and misery, that the heart of man can conceive, or the nature of man endure; all the rankest poison, that ever was wrapped up in the bowels of the most direful and comprehensive curse. To speak out a few syllables of it, it is the wrath of God, the torments of hell, everlasting burnings; a state so infinitely miserable, that the very malice of the Devil himself will be satisfied upon us when he hath brought us into it.

Indeed, it is utterly impossible to declare the wretchedness of that estate to the full; unless we could speak flames, and put a whole eternal damnation into words and phrases. But from this wrath, which is both unutterable and intolerable, hath the mercy of our Gracious Saviour redeemed us.

And consider,

(2) With what price he hath bought us.

A price of infinite value and worth. He hath given himself for us, laid down his life, and shed his most precious blood as the price of our redemption. Yea, so earnestly did his love engage him to free us from that woeful condition into which we had brought ourselves, that he voluntarily puts himself into it, to rescue us; and is made a curse, that he might redeem us from the curse: he interposes between the wrath of God and our souls; and receives into his own body all those envenomed arrows, that were shot at us. And, as if the mercy of our redemption alone were not considerable enough to recommend his love to us, he abases himself, that he might exalt us; takes upon him our sins, that he might bear our punishment; and lays himself under all the load and burden of his Father's wrath, which pressed him so hard as to wring from him clots of blood in the garden, and rivers of blood on the cross, and to force him in the dolefullest passion of an afflicted soul to cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* whilst we, in the mean time, whose proper portion and desert all this was, who should ourselves have been dragged forth to execution, and made the subjects and trophies of God's wrath and vengeance, we are the darlings and favourites of heaven, courted and caressed by his choicest love: we live in the smiles of God: every day is a festival with us. And how seldom is it, that we so much as look out to consider what our Blessed Redeemer hath done and suffered for us! Or, if we do, do we not behold him the most perfect map of sorrow and misery, that ever was represented to the world? did ever grief and sorrow so perfectly triumph over any, as over our Blessed Saviour? all our private and personal sorrows are but partial: still there is some remnant of us that escapes: but, here, both the wrath of God, and the rage of men, and, as it was in the great and universal deluge, the windows of heaven above and the fountains and bars of the deep beneath, are all opened, and pour out their store of floods upon him. He was afflicted, and he was oppressed; a man *acquainted with grief*, intimate and familiar with sufferings.

And, now, what doth thy Dear Redeemer require at thy hands, in lieu of all that he hath done and suffered for thee, but only that thou shouldst live to him, who hath both lived and died for thee? that thou shouldst yield up thy life in obedience to him, who hath been obedient for thee to the very death? an expectation infinitely rational; and which thou canst not have the face to deny, unless all modesty and ingenuity are perished from thee.

For, consider,

[1] If God had put the terms of thy redemption into thy own hands, couldst thou have offered less for the ransom of thy soul?

Thou art forfeited to justice, and standest liable to everlasting death and damnation. Suppose that the adored design of saving sinners by Jesus Christ had never entered into the eternal counsel of God, but he had resolved to transact the whole affair with thyself; and, on the one hand, had evidently set before thy face all the horrors and torments of hell, if thou hadst seen whole seas of burning brimstone come rolling towards thee, and some waves of them had broke and dashed upon thee; and, on the other hand, had propounded the most rigid observances and macerating penances, all that is here grievous and irksome, not only to thy corrupt will and humour, but also to human nature itself to undergo, as the only price and condition of escaping this so evident and so imminent a destruction: which wouldst thou have chosen? wouldst not thou, upon thy bended knees, have accepted of the hardest terms that could be offered thee, to spend all thy days in sighs and tears, and at last to offer up thyself a burnt-sacrifice to God, rather than to fall into that abyss of woes and torments, in comparison with which, all that we can suffer in this life is but pleasure? This, certainly, would be thy choice. And, what! when thy Saviour hath already taken all the hard terms upon himself, and left nothing for thee to do, but only to shew a testimony of thy grateful acceptance of it; when he hath compounded for thee, satisfied all the demands of justice, left nothing for thee to pay, besides a small acknowledgment of his infinite mercy: with what face canst thou deny him this? he only requires that thou shouldst serve and glorify him, by living according to the rules of true reason and religion: he expects no torments, no sufferings from thee, nothing expiatory for thy sins; but only that thou sin no more: and, if thou refuse him this, pity it is that ever so great love

IV. I shall be very brief in the APPLICATORY, having already treated of very many things at large, which are wholly practical.

And, therefore, the only Use that I shall make of it, and so close up this whole subject, shall be to exhort you to a constant care and endeavour to glorify God.

Consider,

i. It is THE GREAT END OF OUR BEINGS; and, indeed, the noblest and highest end that we could be created for.

Indeed, all things were made, as by God, so for God: he is the first cause, and the last end of all. But, yet, there is a difference according to the order of beings. For irrational creatures were made to glorify God, only objectively; as they represent unto us many evident footsteps of God's most glorious attributes and perfections: thus the heavens are said to declare the glory of God, only because their amplitude, beauty, and order do set forth, to all considerate beholders, the infinite power, wisdom, and goodness of the Great Artificer; who, by his word, framed such vast orbs, and imprinted on them such an impetus of various and yet regular motions. But man was created to glorify God, actively and intentionally; by the choice of his deliberate judgment, to fix God as the end of all his actions: and, if he falls short of this, he falls short of his very reason and nature, and is created in vain. Thinkest thou, O Man, that God hath created thee only to shew what an excellent piece of work his power and wisdom can achieve? this he hath sufficiently done, in breathing forth upon the face of the earth so many other creatures, which are all fearfully and wonderfully made as well as thyself: he need not to have framed thee, if he had intended only a specimen and essay of what his Almighty power could do: no; but, whereas the innumerable kinds of other creatures serve to glorify God after this manner, reflecting back all their perfections obliquely upon God, thou wert formed to glorify him more directly and immediately: that is the ultimate end, to which they are all overruled; but this is the end, which thou oughtest to propound unto thyself.

And, if thou dost otherwise,

1. Thou *degradest thyself* from the rank and dignity of thine own being, and herdest thyself among brute beasts.

It is not so much reason and discourse, that make a difference between beasts and men, as religion. We see many strange

and wonderful operations of those, which we call irrational creatures; of which we can give no account, unless they do in their sphere partake some glimmerings of reason, which we usually ascribe wholly to ourselves: but none at all of any religion, or notion, or adoration of a deity. This is the crown and perfection of thy nature: it is that incommunicable property, that separates us from beasts. And, therefore, if thou servest, if thou glorifiest not thy God, thou dost but debase and disparage thyself, and art made a man in vain. Thou, who abandonest thyself over to any way of wickedness, whose intemperance burdens thy nature with surfeits as much as thy conscience with sin and guilt; thou, who wallowest in impure lusts, and makest thy body a brothel, and thy soul a prostitute; thou, who, by lying, and swearing, and stealing, declarest evidently that thou fearest neither God nor man; wherefore wert thou made a man? hadst thou been a brute or an inanimate creature, thou wouldst as much have glorified the attributes of God as now thou dost, and much less dishonoured him: yea, thou now dishonourest him, which they do not; inasmuch as thou sinkest below the rank of thine own nature, and turnest recreant to the principles of thine own being.

2. Thou not only degradest thyself, but *degradest God* too, and exaltest something above him.

For every wicked person dethrones the true, and sets up a false god in his stead. It is the nature of man, to seek and serve something, as its ultimate and highest end. And whatsoever we propound to ourselves as our utmost end, that we make our god. Now thou, who refusest to glorify God, whom is it that thou glorifiest? Is it not thyself? Thou settest up thyself as thy idol, and art thine own idolater. Either thou makest thy profit, or thy pleasure, or thy humour thy god: this thou seekest, and this thou servest, to this all thy actions tend and are directed. That is every man's god, which he most seeks to please and to serve. And what a horrible affront is this to the most high and only true God, that thou, whom he made for his servant, shouldst become his rival; and what he intended for himself, should be set up for a deity against him!

That is the First Motive: the glorifying of God is the great and only end of our beings.

ii. Consider, that GOD WILL CERTAINLY HAVE HIS GLORY OUT OF THEE.

If thou wilt not glorify his holiness by thy obedience, thou shalt glorify his justice by thy perdition. He will not lose by thee: but thou, who hast extravagantly lived without and beside the order of thy reason as a man, and of thy religion as a Christian, shalt be compelled and brought into the order of his subjects as a damned wretch and rebel. But this will be sadly to thy cost: and when thou liest stretched out and racked with the extremity of thy torments, thou wilt then too late reflect on thy gross and desperate folly; that ever thou shouldst refuse to glorify that God voluntarily by thy obedience and submission, who now forceth thee to glorify him, whether thou wilt or no, by thy intolerable and eternal tortures.

iii. Consider, that, BY GLORIFYING GOD, WE DO INDEED BUT GLORIFY OURSELVES.

For he hath been pleased so graciously to intwist his glory and ours together, that, whilst we endeavour to promote the one we do but indeed promote the other. *Them, that honour me* saith God, *I will honour:* 1 Sam. ii. 30. And what a vast encouragement is this to the cheerful performance of all the duties that God requires at our hands, how hard and difficult soever they may seem, to consider that this, that God commands of me, is no barren piece of service! Possibly, I may lose my reputation, I may lose my estate, or I may lose my life by it; but, yet, if it bring glory to God, it will certainly bring abundant reward to me. And, though I see nothing spring up of it here on earth, but thorns and briars to rend and pierce me through with many sorrows: yet, doubtless, my reward is with my God; and heaven shall repay with interest all that glory which I have brought unto him, by crowning me with glory, immortality, and eternal life. Oh, how happy and blessed a thing is it, when we come to breathe out our souls into the arms of God, then to be able to reflect back upon a well-spent life: and to recommend our flying souls to our gracious God, as our Saviour did, John xvii. 4, 5. *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with* that *glory which* thou hast prepared for me *before the world was.* Unto the which glory, God of his infinite mercy bring us, through the merits of Jesus Christ: to whom, &c.

THE

ALMOST-CHRISTIAN

DISCOVERED

THE

ALMOST-CHRISTIAN DISCOVERED.

ACTS xxvi. 28.

AGRIPPA SAID UNTO PAUL, ALMOST THOU PERSUADEST ME TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

ıis chapter we have St. Paul, in his fetters, pleading before Honourable Sessions of Festus and Agrippa. His plea we largely set down, from the 1st to the 24th verse; in which pens his commission, that he had received in an extraordi- manner from heaven, for preaching that doctrine which every where spoken against, and for worshipping God in way which was called heresy.

ıhall not at all enter into the consideration of the apology: et us look only at the different effects, that it wrought upon hearers. Festus and Agrippa were both of them unbe- rs: the one, an unbelieving heathen; the other, an unbe- ıg Jew: and thus they both continue.

:t St. Paul's speech works very differently upon them. In 24th verse you have Festus raving. He *said with a loud* "*Paul, thou art beside thyself, much learning* hath made *mad:* thy thoughts of a vision and an apparition, of a man and buried, lying safe under ground, that he should rise ı and appear from heaven to thee, being the Saviour of the ld, is a meer fancy, proceeding from a strong frenzy:" he scoffs and raves. But this very sermon, which seemed ıess and an idle tale to unbelieving Festus, carries a strong ction in it to Agrippa, who was an unbeliever too: *Almost persuadest me to be a Christian.*

:nce observe, That the word of God hath a far different t, even upon those, upon whom it hath no saving effect. raves and rages against it, and is seared and stupified by it:

another is convinced and terrified by it. Festus scoffs and mocks, and goes away laughing at the doctrine and reviling the preacher: but Agrippa is convinced, and half persuaded to believe and practise that very doctrine, and highly to esteem the preacher of it.

And is it not so even among us? are there not many, who may come to the ordinances in a natural and sinful estate and condition? the same word of God is cast among them all: yea, but what is the success? When the sword of the Spirit is brandished amongst a great crowd of consciences, it is not likely, that it should miss all, and strike none of them: one, perhaps, goes away slighting and contemning; another goes away scoffing and railing against it; and another half-persuaded by it to become a Christian, to be almost a Christian. If every man's breast had a casement in it, by which we might see the inward estuations and boilings of their hearts, how they work after a powerful and terrifying sermon; should we not behold and see some, shifting and shuffling their sins out of the way? some, holding up the bucklers of prejudicate opinions, to ward and fence off the stroke of the Spirit? some, fretting and storming at the lancing of their consciences? some, scorning and scoffing, with Festus, that it is no better than folly and madness? some, trembling, with Felix? some, convinced and wrought upon, as Agrippa, to faint resolutions and half-purposes? and, yet, all these remain under the power of unbelief and unregeneracy. It is, indeed, a wonder, that, among such diversity of operations which the word hath upon the souls and consciences of men, it could be possible that such a multitude should go away without any saving operation by it; some, blinded and hardened; some, terrified; some, stupified; some, exasperated and enraged; some, convinced and half-persuaded, and such are those that we now speak of: such as are, as it were, half of one complexion and half of another, that stick in the new birth, whose hearts have been warmed with good motions, who have entertained approving and admiring thoughts concerning the ways of holiness, who have taken up some resolutions of doing better and of being better; and, yet, do not come off roundly and speedily from their sins, nor close fully with Christ. These are the Half-Christians which the text speaks of.

The words are plain in themselves; and, therefore, do not require much explication. Only the word translated ALMOST *thou persuadest me &c.* if accurately rendered, according to the

riginal, is A LITTLE *thou persuadest me &c.* So, in the reply, hich St. Paul makes, with a holy kind of gallantry, in the suing verse, you find it is opposed to *much*, which we nder *altogether*; but the grammatical construction is, *Would God they were both* ALL, AND IN MUCH, *such as I am, except se bonds!* So, then, IN A LITTLE, *thou persuadest me*; that is, I could, methinks, be contented to be a Christian *in a little*, some few things: some part of the way I could willingly go," ith Agrippa: but St. Paul concludes, it must not be only *in little*, but *in much, in all.*

If we follow this sense and interpretation of the words; then serve,

Doct. 1. THERE GOES MUCH TO THE MAKING OF A TRUE CHRISTIAN; A LITTLE WILL NOT SERVE.

It is not a little will serve: for many precious ingredients go the making of a true Christian; and much of each ingredient oes to the making of a strong Christian. There must be profession, faith, obedience, self-denial, patience, humility, outward reparation and inward graces, outward embellishments and inward ornaments; and a little of it is but little worth. There e many, that are persuaded to be Christians in name and profession, to be Christians in outward participation of ordinances d communion with saints, and the like: yea, but this is to be Christian but only in a little. Are you persuaded to obey rist in all, to take up his cross and deny yourselves, to oppose d mortify your lusts, and to perform the harshest and severest rt of religion? this is indeed to be a Christian, not only in ittle, but in much; yea, in all, to be such as St. Paul himf was.

But, then, if you take the words according to our translation, ich the original also will very well bear; so it is, Within a le or ALMOST *thou persuadest me:* for King Agrippa was fully vinced of the truth of those things, which Paul related; as u may see, v. 26. He knew these things, and was ignorant none of them: they were not hidden from him; for these ngs were not done in a corner. He could not be ignorant of miraculous conversion of him, who had been so furious and torious a persecutor of Christians. He, who was expert in the customs that were among the Jews, v. 3. could not be

ignorant of what the Apostle affirms, vv. 22, 23. This, that Moses and the Prophets foretold, that Christ should suffer and be raised from the dead, and should give life to the Gentiles, of all this King Agrippa was fully convinced: and, yet, when Paul so insinuatingly presseth upon him, *Believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest*, the result of all is this, that he was but almost persuaded, not fully persuaded of the truth of what St. Paul speaks concerning Christ, concerning himself, and concerning Christians; yet, for all that, he was but almost persuaded to be a Christian.

Hence, likewise, observe,

Doct. 2. THAT PERSONS, WHO ARE FULLY AND TRULY CONVINCED, ARE MANY TIMES BUT ALMOST AND HALF-PERSUADED.

There may be a powerful persuasion in the judgment and the conscience concerning Christ and his ways, when there is but half a persuasion in the will and affections to close with them.

These observations I gather up, as they lie strewed in my passage. I shall not insist upon them, but only as they are subservient to the fuller prosecution of the General Doctrine, which you may take thus:

Doct. 3. THAT THOSE, WHO NEVER WERE IN CHRIST, YET MAY BE ALMOST CHRISTIANS.

I need not here stand to tell you, that Christianity may be taken either,

First. For an outward profession of Christ, as it is opposed to all other religions in the world, whether Heathenish idolatry, Mahometan stupidity, or Jewish ceremony: or,

Secondly. For an inward and cordial embracing of Jesus Christ, thus professed, as it stands opposed, either to the profaneness or hypocrisy of carnal gospellers.

Evident it is, that the Christianity, that Agrippa was almost persuaded into, was of the first sort; not excluding the second.

Nay, it was seldom seen, that, in those primitive times, wherein no carnal respect or outward advantage could commend the Gospel to the interests of men, when the reward of professing Christ was persecution and martyrdom; then, I say, it

was seldom seen, that any would take Christ by profession, who would not also take him by faith and adherence: few there were, that would take up religion, even upon this condition, to lay down their lives for Christ; who yet, through their own profaneness or hypocrisy, were to receive no benefit from the death of Christ: so that, to persuade men then to be Christians in profession, was the same with persuading them to be Christians in reality. But now, when the name of Christ is so much courted, when the denying of Christ would be repaid with the same punishment that formerly the owning of Christ underwent, you need not so much persuasion to take upon you the outward profession of Christianity: for you are not only *almost*, but *altogether* Christians, in the external garb; but our persuasion to you must be, that, as you own Christ in an outward profession of him, so you would cleave to him by a true faith in him and obedience to him.

We are not, then, to speak to Pagans, to convert them to a new religion; but, if I may so say, we are to speak to Christian Infidels, to convert them to a new life and conversation. Nor yet, among these, doth my subject lead me to the profane and looser sort; whose being called Christians doth not more honour them, than they disgrace and reproach that holy name: but to those, who are more elevated and more refined; who go far in Christianity, so as to be near the kingdom of God; in a word, such as are *almost* Christian; and yet are strangers to Christ, and remain in their sinful state and unregenerate condition.

In the prosecution of this point, I shall inquire into these following particulars, in this method:

What progress men may make towards Christianity, and yet fall short of it.

Whence they are enabled to proceed so far; and what it is, that carries them out to all their attainments.

What it is, that hinders them from proceeding further; and, when they are *almost* Christians, what keeps them from being such *altogether*.

To shew you the folly and misery of those, who proceed thus far only, as to be almost Christians, and no farther.

I. Let us see WHAT PROGRESS A NATURAL MAN MAY MAKE TOWARDS GRACE AND CHRISTIANITY, AND YET REMAIN IN A SINFUL STATE.

i. Before I can come, in particular, to determine this, I must PREMISE these Three particulars.

1. That when we inquire what progress an unregenerate man may make towards grace, this *supposes, that there is a tendency in what such a man doth or may do, towards the obtaining of grace:* or how else can he make any progress towards it, if that, which he doth, hath no tendency to it?

Let us, therefore, enquire what kind of tendency this is.

There may be a Twofold tendency supposed in the actions of an unregenerate man, towards the acquisition of grace,

Effective:

Subjective.

(1) Actions may be said to have an Effective Tendency, when they do, by their own efficiency and causality, produce that, which they tend to.

And, in this sense, it must be denied that the actions of an unregenerate man have any tendency towards grace: be their progress what it will, thereby he cannot efficiently produce or cause grace in himself: and, therefore, grace is called the new creature, as being the effect only of creating power, which is the sole prerogative of God; and it is as utterly impossible, for a man to create grace in the soul, as to create the soul itself.

Take but this one demonstration to evince it. If an unregenerate man, by his own power and efficiency, can produce grace in himself, then one of these two gross absurdities must needs follow, either,

That there are still left holy habits and principles in the will, which were never lost by the fall of man: or,

That a man may make himself truly holy, by a will that is totally corrupt and sinful.

But either of these is very gross.

[1] There are no holy nor divine habits left in the will of a carnal man, whereby he should be able to regenerate and convert himself.

For what holy habit can there be in the will of one, that is wholly corrupted? If any such be supposed, it may also be supposed that it is true grace: and, to affirm that a man, in a state of nature, hath true grace inherent in him, whereby he is able to convert and regenerate himself, is double nonsense and a flat contradiction; for it is to affirm, that he hath grace before he hath it.

[2] A will, totally corrupted, cannot make a holy man, can-
t produce grace, nor make a man holy.
Grace is beyond and above its sphere. The motions of the
ll in its fallen estate, what through defect of a right prin-
ple from whence they flow and a right end to which they tend,
e all evil and sinful: and it is very strange to affirm, that a
acious habit may be wrought in us by sinful actions. And,
sides, the will of man, by the fall, is a fleshly will; but, in
generation, it is made spiritual: now it were a strange kind of
oduction, if fleshly could beget spiritual; nor would it any
nger hold true, that our Saviour saith in John iii. 6. *That, which
born of the flesh, is flesh.* So that I think it is very evident,
t all that a man can do by the power of nature cannot tend
iciently to produce grace in him.
(2) There is a Subjective Tendency towards grace.
And this lies in those moral preparations, and those disposi-
ns of the heart, which fit it for the receiving of grace, though
e wrought there only by the Holy Ghost. And thus we af-
m, that, while men are in an unregenerate state, they may
e and do somewhat that hath a tendency in it to grace: that
one unregenerate man may have more of these previous dis-
itions, and of these preparations for the receiving of grace,
n another hath: for, though it be not in itself singly neces-
y that such previous dispositions should be wrought in the
l before the implantation of divine grace; since such a sub-
t, as the soul is in respect of grace, doth not, as the school-
n determine, require its previous dispositions for the pro-
ction of its form; yet this is the usual common way of the
irit's work, first to prepare the heart by some common works
conviction, legal terrors and remorse of conscience, before
works any saving and real work of grace in it. And, there-
re, when any unregenerate man hath much of these previous
eparations, we say that he goes very far towards grace, and
may be said to be almost a Christian. And this is all that
endency, that an unregenerate man hath, or can possibly do
owards it: viz. a preparatory, and not an effective operative
endency unto saving grace and regeneration.

2. Another thing premised is this: That, *what through wilful
loth and wretched negligence, no unregenerate man doth make so
reat a progress towards grace as he is able and can possibly do.*

None go so far as they can do, in those previous preparations
nd dispositions towards it. When they find difficulty in op-

posing temptation, in crucifying their lusts, in performing duties, in denying their sinful delights and pleasures, having nothing supernatural within them to naturalize and facilitate these things and carry them on resolutely through all, they never keep up to the utmost of that power which they have: but, as they yield to those temptations that they might resist, and commit those sins that they might reject, and neglect those duties which for matter and substance of them they might perform; so, none of them go so far as they have a natural power to do. No man goes so far in the work of grace as he might, if he would improve that power which he hath by nature.

3. *Did they make as great a progress towards grace as they might, they would not fall so far short of grace as they do.*

I say, if wicked unregenerate men did but as much as they are able by the power of nature to do, without the special assistance of the Holy Ghost, they would not fall so far short of grace as they do. I would not enter into that dispute, whether God be engaged to bestow grace upon the right improvement of their natural power; yet, it is certain, and agreed on by all, that he doth certainly do so. God usually bestows true and saving grace upon those, who do rightly and to their utmost improve their natural power and ability for the acquiring of it. If God be not obliged, by promise, to assist them; yet, through his goodness and mercy, he is not wont to desert them. Let them but labour to improve their natural ability to the utmost strain and pitch, that their own capacity can elevate, God will, according to his usual method and wonted goodness, come in by supernatural grace; and enable them to do that, which by nature they are not able to do: for no instance can be given to the contrary.

So, then, we may conclude, that wicked men never go so far as they can; and did they, yet they could not efficiently work grace in themselves: but, nevertheless, they would be disposed and prepared for the receipt of grace; which God, upon such preparations, would undoubtedly bestow upon them. For, although he be not obliged to give it them; yet, usually, he is wont to work it in them merely through his own natural goodness, free grace and mercy to them, pitying the weakness of their lapsed and fallen nature.

ii. I shall proceed to the answer of the first question, IN THE GENERAL.

Unregenerate men may make a great progress, and may go ery far towards grace, and yet fall short of it: that, in general, to be almost a Christian. This I laid down in the method opounded to you. Although I say not that they go so far as ey can by the power of nature, and yet fall short of grace; r that can never be instanced in any: yet the sad and wretched postacy of those, who have been eminent professors, shining ea and glaring lights, exceeding and also despising common ttainments of others, hath too evidently confirmed it to us, that nen may go very far towards grace, and yet fall short of it. See hat Christ saith, Mark. xii. 34. of that young man, that forward oung man, *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God:* that is, hou art not far from grace; for so the kingdom of God is oftenimes taken in Scripture for the kingdom of grace: so that we ay say of such men, they were not far from the kingdom of od, not far from grace, not far from heaven; climbing up lmost thither, within view and ken of it, having one foot, as it ere, upon the threshold of the heavenly gate; and, yet, even ese tumble headlong, and never rest until they have plunged hemselves to the bottom of hell. It is with such men, as it is ith the vapours, that are drawn up into the air: they shine with he same light, with the same apparent magnitude as the fixed tars themselves do; and we may think them moving in the very ame sphere with them: but, when we see them dart down to he earth, and spill all that light and glory which they glistered ith by the way, and fall into a filthy jelly, a thicker and more oathsome substance than when they were first exhaled, we then onclude that all that elevation of those false and blazing lights vas vastly short of that heaven, in which they seemed sometime o be fixed. So is it with many unregenerate men: you cannot ell with what they are fraught, till you see them shipwrecked: hen it is a sign, that, though they were never right and true reasure, yet they are something very like it: when we see them umbling down off a glorious profession through fatal precipices of great, gross, and desperate sins, we may sadly conclude that that man was not far from the kingdom of God, though he was never yet there.

Indeed, every unregenerate man, when he winds up himself to the highest pitch and strain, may be said to be far from the kingdom of God, in respect of his total deprivation of grace: though his actions be never so fair and specious, yet they are very far from being gracious; as far as darkness is from light.

Yet he may be said not to be far from the kingdom of God, likewise, in a Fourfold respect.

1. In that *he is far from that, which is furthest from grace:* and that is gross, flagitious, and notorious sins, which are farthest off from grace of all others; and these a natural man may be very far and free from, and therefore not far from grace.

2. *He may have that, which very much resembles and counterfeits grace:* so that, as to outward appearance, there is but very little dissimilitude discernible between them: now that, which is like another, may be said not to be far from that, which it is like.

3. He may be said not to be far from grace, because, as I told you before, in the ordinary works of the Spirit upon his soul, *he may have those preparations and dispositions* laid in them, *which usually are previous and antecedent to grace,* because these are wrought usually before grace; and therefore the person, that hath these wrought upon him, may be said not to be far from grace.

4. He may be said not to be far from grace, because, *if he did proceed but a little farther, he would possibly attain to true grace.* Had such but improved their natural power to such a degree farther, God would have come in with power supernatural; and have wrought that true and saving principle in their lives, which would have been sure to have brought them to eternal life. Grace, indeed, hath such a kind of dependance upon that which is natural: and that dependance is not so much of causality, as of order and consequence; which, though it be not necessary, yet is commonly granted on all hands.

Thus then, in the general, I have shewn you that unregenerate men may go far, yea very far towards grace. A man may be almost a Christian, and yet be out of Christ; be near the kingdom of heaven, and yet not in it; and, possibly, be for ever excluded and shut out of it.

iii. I shall proceed to the next thing propounded. As we have seen, in the general; so now let us consider, IN PARTICULAR, what progress a natural man may make towards grace.

And that I shall do, by considering the several steps and degrees by which they may arise up to a great height and glory of outward profession.

And this we cannot better do, than by shewing,

What grace is.

What resemblance that, which is wrought by a mere carnal man, may carry in it like true grace.

By comparing these together, we may see how near an ungenerate, carnal man may come to true and saving grace.

1. What *Grace* is.

I need not tell you, that I speak not now of an Objective race, inherent in God; but terminated on us, whereby a ange is wrought in our relation to him: and this Objective race is nothing else, but the divine love, favour, and good ll of God expressed in us. But I speak of a Subjective Grace, nerent in us; whereby a real change is made in our lives and tures. And, in brief, you may take this description of subtive or inherent grace: It is a supernatural habit, immediately fused into the soul by the Holy Ghost, residing in every power d faculty of the soul as a principle of holy and spiritual operan. And there is a Fivefold change wrought by it:

Upon the Judgment, or the Direct Understanding, by informing and enlightening it.

Upon the Conscience, in the Reflex Understanding, by awakening and pacifying it.

Upon the Affections, by spiritualizing them.

Upon the Will, by converting it.

Upon the Life and Conversation, by reforming it.

This Fivefold change is wrought upon the whole soul by the ue and sanctifying grace.

2. Now, in the next place, I shall shew *how far a natural man ay attain to these, so as to be almost a Christian.*

(1) As for his Mind or Understanding, he may be irradiated th a clear and sparkling knowledge of divine and spiritual jects, when yet the soul is not truly converted to God.

It is true, as, in the creation of the world, the light is numbered d reckoned amongst the first of God's works; so likewise, in s new creation, the first work of the Spirit of God is to shed road his heavenly light in the understanding: and, therefore, e have this first in order, in that commission, which our Saviour sus Christ gives to St. Paul, Acts xxvi. 18. He sent him to e Gentiles, *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness light; and,* then it follows, *from the power of Satan unto God.* t, yet, notwithstanding, there is an illumination about spiritual ngs, which may gild and beautify the understanding of a tural man; who, like a toad, may be full of poison, though hath a precious stone in his head. The Apostle lays down

this as one of those attainments that an unregenerate man may have, and yet be an apostate: Heb. vi. 4. He may not only have a deep knowledge of gospel mysteries, so as to see the whole compages and concatenation of the doctrine of Christ, and to unfold them to others; but may have also particular discoveries of the glory and beauty that there is in these things. We may see it clearly by Balaam's ecstasy, Numb. xxiv. 5. Such discoveries carnal hearts may have made to them, and see their lustre and beauty. Nay, further, a carnal man may be convinced, that there is no other way of recovery but by the grace of God through the merits of Christ, of the suitableness of Christ to his soul, of the freeness of God's love, of the riches of his grace, of the readiness of his heart to receive him, of the desirableness of happiness, and of the beauty of holiness; and yet, for all this, remain in a natural state.

But now, not to leave you under doubts and perplexities, such an illumination of a carnal man falls far short of true grace in these Two particulars.

[1] In that it is but *lumen sterile*, a barren light.

Illumination, that is saving, is not only light, but influence too. As the light of the sun doth not serve only to paint the world, and varnish over the beauty and variety of the several creatures that are in it; but carries in it a grateful heat and cherishing influence, which operates into them and refreshes them; and, as the light discovers their beauty, so these influences increase it: so, saving illumination not only illustrates the soul by its light; but, likewise, by the congenialness of its influences, nourishes the soul, draws sap into it and fruit from it. Such is not the illumination of an unregenerate man: it is but a barren light, and only serves to paint his understanding; and hath no influence on it, to make the soul grow in grace, and bring forth the fruits of holiness, to the praise of God.

[2] It is an ineffectual, idle light.

That illumination, that is saving, is transforming: 2 Cor. iii. 18. *We all.....as in a glass*, behold *the glory of the Lord*, and *are changed into the same image, &c.* If a beam of the sun fall upon a looking-glass, it not only makes it glitter with a glorious light, but it represents the very image of the sun in the glass; but, let it beat never so clearly and strongly upon a mud-wall, though it enlighten it, yet it doth not thereby leave its image upon it: so, truly, illumination, that is saving, doth not only irradiate, but transform. If you look upon the sun when shining in its strength,

the light thereof will imprint the very shape and image of the sun upon your eye; and, look where you will, still you retain the appearance of the sun before you: so, every sight, that a true Christian hath of the Sun of Righteousness, will make as it were another sun in his soul. But the illumination of wicked men doth only enlighten, not change them: their understandings may be irradiated with glorious discoveries of God, and of Christ, and the things of heaven; but this doth not transform them into the image and likeness of those things. The illumination of godly men and true Christians is like the light, which breaks through the air, and turns every vast body throughout the world all into light. It is with wicked, unregenerate men, as with those that lie long in the sun-shine; which, though it enlightens them, yet doth but afterwards make them more black and swarthy: so, thou mayest have as much notional knowledge of God, and Christ, and the mysteries of the gospel, as any child of God hath, and possibly much more: yet this is no true sign of grace; for this knowledge is not therefore saving because it is clear and comprehensive, but because it is influential and transforming. And, usually, we perceive, that where the light of knowledge shines into a wicked heart, it doth but tan and make the person more black and swarthy; more sinful, than before.

Thus, as to the Direct Understanding of the Judgment, a natural man may have a bright, clear, and glittering light concerning heavenly and spiritual objects.

(2) As for the Reflex Understanding of the Conscience: neither yet the peace nor the trouble of conscience, is such an attainment as a natural man cannot reach.

[1] A natural man may have a Quiet and Peaceable Conscience.

Indeed, when this peace is true, it is always an effect of grace; and therefore we thus find them coupled together, Rom. i. 7. 1 Cor. i. 3: yet there is that, which looks very like peace of conscience, though it be not such; and that is a supine presumption and a carnal stupidity and ossitancy: their consciences are never troubled at the sight of sin or the sense of wrath; but they are like those presumptuous sinners spoken of Deut. xxix. 19. *And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, &c.* Now this peace is founded only upon bold and confident persuasions of

God's infinite mercy and gracious disposition: and, because God will exalt his mercy above all his name, therefore they conclude, that, as God hath exalted his power in creating and sustaining them, so he will much more exalt his mercy in saving them. Thus, as madmen often fancy themselves kings or some great personages, when indeed they are but wretched and miserable spectacles; so do these spiritual madmen: and, as the Devil appropriates to himself all the glory of the earth, so these look upon heaven, and all the glory of it, and boldly call it all their own; yea, and, through their wretched security, are bold to cry out with Thomas, *My Lord, and my God.* To such I may say, with our Saviour in another case, God *is not the God of the dead, but* the God *of the living:* God is not the God of such, as love and live in their sins and lusts; and that call him Father, whom yet they dishonour by a lewd and dissolute life. This is but to father one of the Devil's offspring upon the Holy God. Indeed men, by enormous and flagitious crimes, have so wounded and wasted their consciences, that now they retain not strength enough to accuse, molest, and trouble them; and this they call peace of conscience: such a peace, as Gallicus (in Tacitus) exprobrates the Romans with: when they have laid all waste, this they call peace: but this peace is rather deadness of conscience; and is far from that, which ariseth from the true grace of God. The Holy Ghost, in conviction, destroys this ill-grounded peace; and works in the soul horrors and terrors, and affrights the secure soul, when it shews it how it slept upon the top of the mast, and lay on the very brink of the infernal pit. As, therefore, we must not discourage a broken spirit, but embolden it to appropriate Christ and all the promises of the gospel to itself in particular: so we must let wicked men know, that, when they presume to call God, their God and their Father, and yet continue in their sins and wickedness, they will find, that, instead of being their Father, he will only be their Judge. Now it will appear that this peace of a carnal man is only from deep security, and the spirit of slumber that hath seized upon them: because, when we come to examine the grounds of it, they plead only the goodness of their hearts, and there is nothing more familiar and frequent than this they boast of; and, though they live in a constant neglect of holy duties, and wallow in the filth of customary sins, yet still they boast of this, that they have very good hearts, upright intentions. This is a mere delusion;

for it is as utterly impossible, that the heart should be good when the life is wicked and profane, as for a good root to bring forth evil and corrupt fruit.

[2] As peace of conscience may be attained by natural men; so, many times, such may lie under the Regrets and Troubles of Conscience.

It is not trouble of conscience, that is the attainment wherein true grace doth consist. A dull and lethargic conscience, that hath long lain under the customary commission of gross sins, may at length by strong convictions be startled and awakened to a sense of sin, and be afraid at the sight of it; but yet may remain an impure and defiled conscience. God may, even in this life, kindle in their breasts some sparks of the unquenchable fire, and may give them some foretastes of that cup of trembling that they must for ever drink of: as he hath made himself a devil incarnate by his sin, so God may make his conscience a hell incarnate. By his conscience, you hear Cain, that primitive reprobate, crying out, *My punishment is greater than I can bear:* nor could Judas find any other way to check his conscience, but with a halter. These regrets of conscience may proceed from a preparatory work of conviction, which, because of men's wilful deserting them, often vanish away without any saving effect; and fall as far short of true grace, as the region of the air, where storms, tempests, thunderings, and lightnings are engendered, falls short of the heaven of the blessed, and that eternal calmness and serenity. And, as worms usually are the offspring of corruption and putrefaction; so this never dying worm, that must ever sting them, oftentimes in this life, is bred out of a rotten and corrupted conscience. The conscience, therefore, may be defiled, when it is not seared: it may be awakened, when it is not sanctified: a filthy puddle may be stirred, as well as a clear running stream: the conscience may work terrors and horrors, where the Spirit of God never wrought true saving grace.

(3) As to the Affections: there may be affections and sweet motions of the heart, which are oftentimes relied on as certain evidences of true grace, yet also may be in a carnal and natural man.

Mat. xiii. 20. Some received *the word with joy, &c.* so, John v. 35. Christ tells the Jews, that they did for a season rejoice in the doctrine and preaching of John the Baptist: thus Herod is said to hear John gladly. So that you see the affections in holy

duties and ordinances may be with joy, even in those, that have no true grace at all in them. As there may be these affections of joy and delight, so likewise of sorrow for sin: so we have it, Mat. xxvii. 3. it is said of Judas, he *repented himself*; and Ahab's humiliation was so great, that God took special notice of him, 1 Kings xxi. 29. Behold, *how Ahab humbleth himself, &c.*

Now all these affections are but temporary and vanishing; and may be excited, even in carnal men, from several advantages, that things have to commend themselves, to their judgments and to their hearts.

[1] Sometimes, the very novelty and strangeness of them may affect us.

Novelty usually breeds delight, which longer custom and acquaintance doth abate. And this may be given as a reason, why, soon after conversion, the new converts' affections are drawn forth more strongly in the ways of God, than, afterwards, when they grow settled and stable Christians: the reason is, because of the very novelty of that course and way into which they have now entered, which affects them with delight: besides the real desirableness, which is in those ways themselves, the very novelty doth affect them. And this too may satisfy us, that, though many are turned aside from the truth as it is in Jesus Christ and from the way of worship which God hath appointed us, who have boasted, that they have found more comfort and more sweet affections than ever, in those new ways after which they have gone; yet it is not because those ways have any thing in them that might yield them more comfort and delight, but only because they are new ways, and all new things will for the present stir up the affections: but, after some continuance in those ways, they find their joy and delight to flag: then they seek out other new ways, and commend them as much: and no wonder; for new ways will stir up new affections. That may be one reason, why affections may be stirred up, even in unregenerate and mere carnal men, as to the things of God, even from the mere novelty of them.

[2] Good affections may be stirred up in men, from the very affecting nature of spiritual objects themselves.

For spiritual objects may affect us in this natural way. Who can read the history of Christ's Passion, without being affected with sorrow for all the sorrow that he underwent? He hath a heart harder than rocks, that can hear of the agonies, and scourges, and cruel indignities offered to so innocent and ex-

cellent a person as Christ was, that suffered even for sinners, and not be moved thereby to grief and compassion. And yet, possibly, these affections may be no other than such as would be excited from us, at the reading of some tragedy in a romance or feigned story.

[3] Affections may be moved by the artificial rhetoric of others; by the great abilities of the ministers, whom we hear.

God tells the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxiii. 32. *Thou art unto them as a very lovely song.* They may sometimes have their judgments pleased with the learning shewn in a sermon; and their affections excited by the oratory, and powerful utterance of it: but these, though they are very good helps to excite our affections, yet are not true tests of spiritual affections in us.

[4] Pride and self-seeking may, in the performance of duties, excite our affections.

Men may be much deceived in this particular. For instance, in prayer, they may think they are affected with the things they pray for: when, possibly, their affections may be moved only with the words themselves spoken; with the copious, free, and admirable inventive way that they pray in: whereas the contrite broken spirit, who is only moved with truly spiritual affections, may not be so large and so copious in his expressions of them: a true Christian may groan out a prayer, who cannot compose and make a prayer, that hath a sententious coherence one part with another. As the ground, that is fullest of precious mines, hath least grass growing upon it; so, sometimes, in holy duties, when the heart is most full of grace, there may be least flourishing of expressions.

You cannot gather the truth of saving grace from strong workings of the affections; which may, sometimes, upon these accounts, be deceitful. And wicked and unregenerate men may have affections stirred up in them, upon these grounds: but, then, they are always vanishing and fleeting; and are only permanent, while the violence of some external cause doth excite them. And they are always unfruitful: though their affections may stir within them, yet they are not efficacious to put them upon a holy life and conversation.

(4) Every change, that is wrought upon the Will, is no certain evidence of the truth of grace.

A man may fall short of true saving grace, when there is yet a great change wrought upon the will. It is true, it is the thorough

change of the will, wherein grace doth principally consist. This is the first principal act from the Spirit of Life; without which whatsoever other change is wrought upon us, is no more than to set the hand of the watch to the right hour when the spring is broken. The philosophers call the will, the commanding, swaying faculty of the soul; that controls all the inferior faculties, and makes them obey its inclinations: so that, such as the will is, such is the whole man. And, therefore, the Scripture, in setting forth the twofold state of men, doth it by shewing the temper of their wills. Unregenerate men are described by their wilfulness: *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life:* John v. 40. The people of God are described by their willingness: Ps. cx. 3. They *shall be* a *willing* people *in the day of thy power.*

And here I shall endeavour Two things.

To shew you after what manner the Spirit of God doth work this renewing change upon the will.

To shew you what other change is wrought upon it, which falls short of true grace, though oftentimes it is taken for it.

[1] For the first, we must know that there are two ways, whereby God doth effectually change the heart and will of a sinner: and these are moral suasions; and physical determinations, which are nothing else but God's all-powerful grace, whereby he doth immediately turn the bent and inclination of the will towards himself.

And both these do always concur and agree to this great change. He doth first convince a sinner and persuade him of the rationality of the ways of God; and of the vileness and emptiness of those vain things, which his desires so eagerly pursue: and, on the other hand, he clearly represents the glory and excellency of himself and his ways; that he is the greatest good that we can enjoy; and yet there is no other way to enjoy him, but by loving and serving him. To do this, he makes use of moral suasions; and works upon our reason, by cogent and prevailing arguments; which, at last, diffuseth such heavenly sweetness through the heart of a Christian, as makes him disrelish those fulsome delights of sin, that separate from that Infinite Good, with which it holds comparison: so that he finds more true delight in God and his ways, and more alluring and charming joy in them, than ever he did before in sensual pleasure: we

are thereby carried forth unto them by an infallible, yet altogether free, voluntary, and amorous motion. And this is done by the real efficiency likewise of the Spirit of God upon the will: and this efficiency is so sweetly attempered to the native liberty of the will, that it would be a pain and torment to the soul to be separated from that God, whom now his understanding doth apprehend, and whom his will doth clasp about, as the real and chief good. Here, you see, are both moral suasions and physical determinations of the will to the work of grace. God doth really determine it, by the efficacious touch of his grace; whereby he powerfully turns the bent and inclination of it to himself, which before stood towards sin and vanity. And, that this might not infringe the will's prerogative of acting freely, he doth at the same time morally persuade it, by representing himself as the best and most satisfying object of it. Notwithstanding, then, the irresistibleness of God's working upon the will; yet, still, man's will is free in God's working of grace, which some have thought to be an irreconcilable difference. For the freedom of the will doth not consist in redoubled pure acts; for, otherwise, the saints and angels themselves, who are under that blessed necessity that they cannot but love and serve God, would not love him and serve him freely. The liberty of the will consists in an acting upon rational grounds and motives; which, by how much stronger they are, by so much more they turn the necessity of the will to him, and yet by so much the more the will is free in acting: so that here, that the liberty of the will may not violate the causality of God's purpose, he changeth it by the power of his irresistible grace; and, yet, that this irresistible grace may not violate the liberty of the will, which is its natural privilege, he persuades it by such natural arguments that it could not act freely if it should dissent from them. Though God useth infinite power, yet he useth no violence: he subdues the will, but doth not compel it. This is that victorious grace, that doth not more overcome a sinner's resistance, than it doth his prejudice: it overcomes all oppositions, by its own irresistible power; and it overcomes all prejudices, by its attractive sweetness: and, whenever it brings him to submit to God, it makes him to apprehend that his chief happiness and joy is to do so. And it is the same, that doth afterwards preserve Christians from total apostacy: for, though there be such a constant supply of grace, to keep them that

they shall never draw back to perdition; yet, withal, their own freedom is such, that they may if they will: but, when the will ceaseth its freedom, it never inclines but to that, which is most pleasing; and nothing is pleasing to a renewed and sanctified will, so much as that Sovereign Good, which comprehends in it all other good.

Thus you see how God disposeth of the will of man; changing it, without constraining it; turning it, not forcibly, but infallibly to himself; when he draws it by the sweet and efficacious operation of his grace.

Thus I have dispatched the first thing, and shewed how God works the renewing change upon the will of a sinner.

[2] The second particular is to shew you, What other change may be wrought upon the will: which yet falls short of true grace; and may bring a man almost to Christianity, and yet leave him in a natural state and condition.

1st. An unregenerate man may have many faint velleities, and wishings, and wouldings after grace.

When he hears so much spoken of the beauty and excellency of holiness, he is convinced, in his judgment, that those things are true: that without holiness no man shall see the Lord: that though, while he is carnal, spiritual duties are tedious and a burden to him; yet, were he spiritual, they would become more delightful to him, than those very pleasures of sin, which keep him from closing with grace: and that, were he renewed, those very pleasures of sin would become unsavoury to him; and that, which now he is afraid to lose if he would turn to conscience, he would not value the loss of. When an unregenerate man, I say, is thus convinced of this, it will make him to break out into pangs of affectionate wishing for grace. "Oh, that I were holy and gracious! I wish my heart were changed and renewed. I wish I were better, and could do better." I appeal to every man's conscience, when he hath been convinced of the excellency and desirableness of holiness, whether he hath not breathed forth such wishes as these. When you have seen a Christian, that is eminent and exemplary for piety, have not you wished yourself in his condition; not only in respect of his future reward and glory, but also in respect of his present grace? have you not wished, that such had been your comeliness and beauty? have you not wished, not only with Balaam, to *die the death of the righteous*, and that your *last end* might *be like his*; but also your

life by living righteously? and yet still you continue in the same course and sinful state as formerly! Now such empty velleities and idle wishes, an unregenerate man may possibly have: he may wish he were a saint; even as a fond foolish man, according to his idle fancy, may wish that he were an angel. But such wishes do not put him upon a constant attempt and use of the means, whereby he might become such. His wishes and his sighs vanish away together; the one retaining no longer an impression upon his heart, than the other in the air: he runs into the commission of that sin, which with his mouth he wishes he might not commit; and lives in the neglect of holy duties, and yet can wish that he had performed them. Such contradictory wishes have unregenerate men! they wish themselves holy; and yet are wilfully sinful: they wish that they were better; and yet will not endeavour their own amendment.

2dly. An unregenerate man may not rest in these wishes, but he may rise to a resolution.

I say, to some degree of resolution: they resolve many things; that their lusts shall no longer enslave them, that the pleasures of the world shall no longer bewitch them, that the difficulties of religion shall no longer affright them; but that they will break through all, and act like men. And with such generous and ingenuous resolutions as these, men, in their natural estate, may fortify themselves. Grace they know they must have, else they are eternally undone: they know that God hath not been wanting to their endeavours; and they peremptorily resolve, that they will not be wanting to themselves. We may see the same strong resolutions, of those, that came to enquire of Jeremiah, chap. xlii. 5, 6. *They said...The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us, &c.* and, yet, none more rebellious and disobedient against God, than these men, that make this remonstrance.

3dly. And, now, notwithstanding these wishes and these resolutions, the will of a natural man falls short of a saving change; and that, usually, in these particulars.

(1st) In that it is a fickle and unconstant will.

Their desires may be sometimes violent and passionate, as if they would take heaven by force, and wrest mercy out of the hands of God: their prayers may be importunate and earnest, as if they would take no denial: but this violent spirit is soon spent, and this full bent of their souls soon flags, and returns

again, as formerly, ever and anon into the commission of some foul and gross sins. Such a will as this, though at first it hurries them apace, yet is soon tired, and leaves them short of grace and heaven. The Christian Race is not to be run by so many fits, but by a constant course and progress; still getting ground upon our lusts; still approaching nearer to the kingdom of heaven. But it is with such men, as it is with the sea, when a spring-tide covers all the shore: when it ebbs, it discovers nothing but sands, where before was nothing but deep water. So, these affected and flowing Christians discover, that there is nothing but barren sands at the bottom; and that they are as unstable as water. A Christian is not made in a fit: neither is the work of grace wrought in a passion; but it is a settled, solemn, and constant frame of heart, that brings a man to Christ and salvation.

(2dly) The will of an unregenerate man is never universally changed: still he reserves to himself some lust or other, that he will not part withal.

Their resolutions, concerning their sins, are such as the resolution of Naaman the Assyrian: 2 Kings v. 18. *In this thing, the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, &c. the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.* So, men may be peremptory in their resolutions to forsake their sins; yet still there may be some one dear lust or other, that makes them cry, with Naaman, *Lord, pardon thy servant in this thing:* they will be willing to receive Christ, if they may be allowed in one darling-sin. Now the partition, that any one sin makes between Christ and the soul, must needs hinder the soul from closing with Christ: as, if you throw but any little thing between the branch and the stock that it is engrafted into, the sap will never be communicated to it, and so it will never grow up to be a plant.

(3dly) The will of an unregenerate man is usually irrational.

It would obtain the end; and yet not use the means. Grace, possibly, they would have; but they cannot bring their averse wills to close with the performance of those unpleasing and irksome duties, wherein God usually bestows grace, and by which he conveys grace to the soul. Could they be holy with a wish, and a sudden fancy that enflames them, then none should be better Christians than themselves: could they enter into heaven by being willing, none then should shine above them

in glory: but, when there is so much hard and unpleasing work, first that they must be born of God; and, after they are true Christians, that they must exercise every grace and perform every duty that may fit and prepare them for glory; they look upon these things as too difficult, which makes them sit down with idle wishes short both of grace and glory. Their wills are very irrational: they would have heaven; but they slight grace, the way to it: and, possibly, they would have grace; but they cannot bring themselves to the performance of those irksome and unpleasing duties, in and by which grace is usually bestowed and conveyed.

(4thly) The will of an unregenerate man is usually a general, not a particular will.

If God should ask them, "Sinners, what would you do to be saved?" They would answer, "Any thing, every thing." But, let God bid them leave such and such a sin, perform such and such a duty, they answer with Naaman, "Any sin, but that; any duty, but that." So it is with these men: "Oh, any thing," in the general: but, when God brings them down to particulars, to do this or that, then they are willing to do just nothing.

I have shewed you how far the will itself may be changed in unregenerate persons: they may wish after grace, and resolve to be better, and to do better; and yet fall short of saving grace. And, also, what it is that hinders this change from being a thorough work of grace; what it is that obstructs them, when they are *almost*, that they are not *altogether* Christians.

(5) As for the Life and Conversation.

There may be a great change wrought in the lives of unregenerate persons, who yet fall short of Christianity.

The Apostle, 2 Pet. ii. 20. speaks of such who having *escaped the pollutions of the world*, through lust were *again entangled therein and overcome*, &c. It seems, to escape the pollutions of the world is no argument of true grace, unless they be also cleansed from the pollutions of the heart: for sin may be left merely from external and forced principles; such as terrors of conscience, for the heavy judgments of God; when God sets up a flaming sword, between a sinner and those sins, which he accounts his paradise here. Now to leave sin upon such a strait as this, is to leave it with a great deal of reluctancy: as when a mariner, in a storm, casts his goods overboard into the sea: it is with his will, indeed; but it is with an unwilling willingness: he is frighted and terrified to it. So, when the soul is tossed with

the tempest of divine wrath; and when ready to be split upon the rock of ages, and be sunk and swallowed up in a sea of fire and brimstone; he is forced to light himself, and to cast this and that dear lust overboard; this he doth from his will: but it is such a forced will, as that of mariners, who throw their treasure overboard; and, as soon as the tempest is over, the one gathers up his floating wrecks, and the other his sins. These men leave their sin, as Lot's wife left Sodom: they dare no longer continue in it, lest fire and brimstone rain upon them; and, yet, when they do leave it, they give many a wishly look back again, and have strong and vehement desires after it. That reformation of life, that only frees us from debauchedness, falls far short of true Christianity, and of making us altogether Christians: this is that, with which many soothe up themselves, when they reflect back upon the wild extravagances of their former time: how outrageously wicked they have been, riotous, drunkards, unclean, blasphemers; and, now that they find themselves deadened to these sins, and grown men of staid and sober lives, they straightway conclude, that, certainly, this great change could never be made on them otherwise than by the renewing work of the Holy Ghost: and, yet, in this amendment there may be no work of Regeneration; for men may gather up their loose and dissolute lives within some compass of civility and morality, and yet be utterly strangers to this work. Much of this may be ascribed, partly to convictions of God's Spirit, awakening natural conscience to see the horror and danger of such daring and outrageous sins; and, partly, too to prudence, gotten from frequent experience of manifold inconveniences that they brought upon themselves by such sins: and both these convictions and moral prudence are principles, that fall very far short of true Christianity. Usually, all the specious reformation and amendment of these men's lives, is, in effect, either a changing of the sin, or a tiring out of the sinner.

[1] The life may seem to be reformed, when men exchange their rude and boisterous sins, for such as are more demure and sober.

From riotous, they grow worldly: from profane and irreligious, they grow superstitious and hypocritical: from atheists, they grow heretics: from sins of practice, to sins of contemplation. They are, then, apt to think, that, certainly, this change must needs be the change of their nature, when indeed it is but the change of their sins; and usually it is such a change too, that,

hough it render the life more inoffensive, yet it makes the soul nore incurable. St. Austin, in his 29th Epistle, tells us, That ices may give place, when virtue or grace does not take it.

[2] The life may seem to be reformed, when men are only ired out; when they have outgrown their sins.

There are sins, which are proper and peculiar to such a state and season of a man's life, upon the alteration of which they vanish and disappear. Sins of youth drop off from declining age, as misbecoming them. Now this deceives men: when they look back to the vanities which they have forsaken, how deadened they are to those sinful ways which before they much delighted in, they conclude, certainly, this great change must needs proceed from true grace; when they do not leave their sins, so much as their sins leave them, and drop off from them as rotten fruit from a tree: the faculties of their minds and the members of their bodies, which before were instruments of sin and unrighteousness, are now become instruments of morality and seeming virtues: this sets them not free from the service of sin; but only restrains them from breaking out into notorious and scandalous vices.

[3] A civil and harmless demeanour doth not render a man altogether a Christian.

There be many ingenuous spirits, who live blamelessly in the world; their good natures nearly resembling grace. And such was St. Paul's, before his conversion: for he tells us, as *touching .....the Law*, he was *blameless*. So, the young man, that came to Christ to know what lesson he had further to take out. This only argues a sweet disposition, but not a gracious heart. Thus you see how dissolute men may mistake themselves in this work, upon which their eternal happiness depends. It is to be feared, that many may rest upon these; and think the great discriminating change to be wrought, only because they are morally honest, or gained over to a profession of truth, or to such a party or sect of professors; when, indeed, true Christianity consists not in these things.

This shall suffice for the First General propounded: What change may be wrought upon a man, so as to bring him almost to Christianity, and yet leave him short of being a Christian.

iv. I shall close up this branch with some PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

Use 1. *What then shall become of such, as fall short of those that fall short of grace, that are not so much as almost Christians? What will become of carnal, loose, and profane sinners?*

If those, that have been gazed at and admired for burning and shining lights, yet have fallen into the blackness of darkness, even into the dungeon of eternal darkness, were we but serious in this reflection, it would make all our faces gather blackness, and fill all our hearts with astonishment, to consider that we are not gone so far in Christianity as those may go, who yet fall short of heaven. Have we all been *enlightened?* Have we all *tasted of the heavenly gift*, and of *the powers of the world to come?* Have we all been *made partakers of the Holy Ghost?* Are there not many among us, possibly, whose hearts have never yet been touched with the sense of sin, never affected with any of the ways of God? that give themselves up to all wickedness with greediness? who never have given so much as one serious wish towards holiness? When those, that seemed to shine as stars in heaven, shall be at last burning in hell, oh, in what a dismal case shall these firebrands be!

Use 2. Hence, likewise, *See what a difficult thing it is to be a true Christian.*

May a natural man attain to all this, that I have spoken of before? we may then take up that same question, which the disciples asked Christ, (when he had told them, that it was as easy *for a camel to go through a needle's eye*, as *for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of* heaven) Lord, *who then* shall *be saved?* "What! may those, whose profession hath been eminent, who have been sainted in every man's calendar, may they at last miscarry and perish? Who then shall be saved? If such be not Christians, Christianity seems to be rather some fancied notion, than any thing real and attainable." To this we may make the same answer, that Christ gave to the disciples: *With men*, indeed, these things are *impossible, but with God all things are possible:* it is impossible for men, by their own strength and natural ability, to become Christians; but it is possible for God to make them Christians: it is possible, as miracles themselves are possible, only possible to the Almighty power of God. Not any soul can be persuaded to be a Christian, but he hath a miracle wrought upon him: and he himself must do that, which is little less than a miracle; he must act beyond the power of nature, and do more than a mere man can do: therefore, well may you suspect your Christianity, who find it so easy

a matter to be a Christian. Even natural men find it a difficult task to attain to that height and pitch, where they shine in moral virtues, though far short of heaven; and is it easy for you to mount far higher than they, far beyond them? Indeed it is an easy matter for any to make a slight formal profession, to run in a round of hypocritical duties, and live a moral civil life: this is easy: there is nothing miraculous in this. But is it easy to pluck out the right-eye, and to cut off the right-hand? It is not easy, to crucify a darling lust; to cut off the right-hand, when it lifts up itself to plead for mercy, and to be spared a little longer; to pluck out the right-eye, when it drops tears to beg compassion, and a little favour to be granted to it. Is it easy, to combat with principalities and powers, to baffle devils, and despise the scorns and affronts of the whole world? Is it easy, to live like an angel? nay, to live like Christ, to live like God himself? Is this easy? when we see so many tottering professors aspiring towards Christianity, some mounting till they are giddy and brain-sick with their most damnable errors, others tumbling down from the precipices of great and dangerous sins. We may well wonder that any are saved, when such as these miscarry. To consider, then, what it is that is wrought upon you, even that which the Omnipotent God hath wrought; and what it is that is wrought by you, that which is beyond the power of nature: we may well conclude, what a difficult matter it is to become a true and serious Christian altogether.

Use 3. *May natural men go thus far in Christianity? Oh, be you then persuaded to go much further.*

Do not rest in any attainment, short of heaven and glory. Rest not in any present attainment. And this, indeed, is the most natural use, that can be made of this subject, when you hear how great a progress wicked men may make. I know that the hearts of the best Christians are ready to suggest to them, and they will be apt to conclude against themselves, that all, that is wrought upon them, is but the common work of the Spirit: therefore, their graces are but counterfeit, and themselves yet short of Christianity: I know that this subject may cause such jealousies and suspicions to arise in the hearts of some: but the genuine use of this doctrine, is, not so much to pore upon our present condition, as to stir you up to make a future progress. May a natural man make so great a progress, as to be almost a Christian? then, certainly, I must never rest any where short of heaven. Well, therefore, the Apostle, in Heb. vi. 11, 12. after

he had shewn them at large what a height a natural man may arrive to, presseth them to be earnest in their endeavours after perfection. This will be the best evidence to you, that you are indeed Christians; that you have the truth of Christianity. Though natural men may possibly glister in a glorious profession, and shine like the sun in its radiant splendour: yet, like it, they have their zenith, their highest degree; which when they have climbed to, they fall down again. But a true Christian's course hath not any declension: he may proceed infinitely, from one degree of grace to another: he may ascend and reach higher and higher, till he hath reached heaven; where all his infirmities shall be swallowed up, and abolished in consummated glory. And, indeed, this is the greatest evidence of the truth of grace. A natural man's motion to heaven is violent and unnatural: it is forced from him, by some external impressions upon the conscience, illumination, and common works of the Holy Ghost; and, as soon as this external force is spent, he falls naturally back again to his former course of sin: as a stone may be carried a great height towards heaven, by an outward violent impression upon it; but, when that force is worne off, it falls naturally back again to the earth. Now a Christian mounts naturally to heaven; while, by reason of that dull mixture of earth that is in him, his course tends to the earth again: but the true Christian still mounts upward, from the principle that carries him up, which indeed never totally spends itself. Therefore, if thou wouldst prove thyself to be not *almost*, but *altogether* a Christian, continue thy progress: still gain ground towards heaven: rest not satisfied with any present attainments; but be still rising and soaring, until thou hast gotten the world and them too under thy feet.

Use 4. When you see any, who have been forward in a profession and gone far in Christianity, to forsake their station, and fall back to their former course of profaneness, take heed that you do not reproach, that you do not scandalize religion with their apostacy.

This is that, which opens the mouths and hardens the hearts of wicked men; when they see such glorious, but yet temporary professors, to return with the dog to the vomit. They, indeed, first, bless themselves in their own ways, as being better than the ways of God, as being better than the profession of religion: otherwise why should those, that so long have forsaken them, and, with a great deal of pomp, made such a glorious shew and ostentation of religion and of conscientiousness; why should

such return back again to their old ways? Secondly, it makes them think, that all professors are but hypocrites, that it is but a solemn cheat put upon the world, since such forward professors of it are found forsakers of it: "Some men please themselves with a few idle conceits of grace, and the new-birth communion with God, and the like unintelligible notions, when there is no other difference between them and others, but what only their fancies make." Oh, take heed, therefore, that you do not blaspheme the ways of God, when you see the apostacy of professors. No, these men were never in those ways. Had they been Christians indeed, they would never have deserted those holy ways: their natures were never changed; and, it is no wonder, that they are relapsed and fallen back again into their old customs: to see the swine that is cleansed return back again to the mire, is nothing strange: had Christ changed the nature of these swine, and made them his sheep; then, as they had first *escaped the pollutions of the world*, so they would have kept themselves from ever being *entangled* by them. But this makes highly for the honour of Christianity; and proves it to be a thing so excellent, that it cannot be long counterfeited: hypocrisy shall certainly betray itself by its apostacy, that it had never any thing of true and saving grace, although it carried fair in a shew and pretence of it.

Thus much for the first thing propounded, how far a man may attain towards Christianity, and yet be in a natural sinful state.

II. The next thing is to shew you, WHENCE IT IS THAT NATURAL MEN ARE ENABLED TO MAKE SO GREAT A PROGRESS TOWARDS CHRISTIANITY.

I shall give you a brief resolution to this question: and that shall be drawn,

From the consideration of the Subject; and that is a Natural Man himself.

From the consideration of the Object; and that is Holiness or Christianity, to which it tends.

i. If you look into the SUBJECT, the Natural Man himself, so you shall find that man, and that which is wrought upon him; which may carry him out possibly to a very great progress in religion, and that may be Twofold.

The Power of Nature.

The Elevation and Recruit, which that power may receive from a common work of the Holy Ghost, much helping nature, quickening conscience, and reforming the life.

1. The carnal man may be carried very far towards Christianity, *from the mere Strength and Power of Nature.*

For the mere power of corrupt nature is, of itself, sufficient to raise a man to any attainment, that is short of true saving grace. A natural man may so prepare and dispose his heart, as that the very next thing to be wrought upon him should be grace: it may carry him out to the externals of Christianity; and, it may be, with more pomp and grandeur, than sometimes the power of grace doth carry out a child of God: when the Power of Nature takes on it the Form of Godliness, it will make bright and glittering professors. Now these externals of Christianity lie in two things, the Performance of duties, and the Avoiding of sin.

As for Duties, they may so far outstrip and outshine a child of God, in the pomp and gaudiness of them, as to be their emulation and example: and, for Sin, there is not any one particular sin, setting aside those common and unavoidable infirmities which are inseparable from the frailty of human nature, but a carnal man may keep himself from the commission of it, by the mere power of nature; and there is scarce any sin, that is branded remarkably in the world, but some wicked man or other doth abstain from it, and that merely from the power of nature: one, by this power, abstains from this sin; another, from that; and a third, from another sin: and each of these has power to abstain likewise from all these sins; because what power the one hath may, possibly, be found in the other, since, in nature, there is nothing partial, for a man naturally is not so. Again, the Devil, when he tempts, doth not force and constrain them: he doth not forcibly move the black tongue of the swearer to curse and blaspheme; nor doth he screw open the drunkard's mouth by force, to pour down intemperate cups; nor force the murderer's hand to sheath his sword in his brother's bowels, whether he will or no: but he solicits the wills, and insinuates into the affections by his temptations, and makes these freely move the engine to that to which his design tends; and therefore all his triumphs are but for beggarly victories: he could not prevail over us, did not we prove traitors to our own

ls; did not we surrender up ourselves, by the consent of our ı wills; else, we could never be distressed, much less taken :he violence of the tempter.

- As men may proceed far toward Christianity by the Power Nature, so *they may have Common and Ordinary Works of Holy Ghost upon them, that may carry them out to a very zt progress.*

'hey may be made, saith the Apostle, *partakers of the Holy ▸st:* Heb. vi. 4. and that is, of its common gifts and opera- ıs. It is the Spirit of God, that enlightens their understand- s, that awakens their consciences, that excites their affections. s the Spirit, that works conviction, that works reformation; , and sanctification in wicked and unregenerate men: for we e that expression concerning them.

There is a Twofold Sanctification.

1) Of the Flesh, consisting in the removal of all carnal and ernal filthiness; called by the Apostle an escaping of *the 'utions of the world* through lust: 2 Pet. ii. 20. and that consists a separation from all those gross and vile sins, wherein the fla- ious and debauched world do wallow.

2) There is likewise a Sanctification of the Spirit, consisting ı separation from a state of nature to a state of grace.

The one is external, by reformation: the other is internal, renovation.

The former sanctification a natural man may be made par- :er of by the Holy Ghost; so as to have his life and actions nd at a greater distance from and a greater opposition to ›se carnal gross sins, which the world is generally defiled with: : this is no more than a common and ordinary work of Holy Ghost: they may account the blood, whereby they sanctified, an unholy thing. There is a far different force energy, that the Holy Spirit puts forth, when it works con- ıion, and when it works only outward sanctification: in both ıay work upon the heart; but in conversion it works upon the rt so as to change it and renew it, while in the reformation of atural man he works upon the heart indeed, but it is only change and amend the life: the Spirit may persuade the one change his heart, but then he changeth the heart of the er: he may persuade the will of the one to submit to Christ, then he subdues the will of the other: he persuades the one become a Christian, but he makes the other a Christian. w there is a very wide difference between these two ways of

working: by the one he only excites men to use somewhat of the power they have, but by the other he gives them the power they want.

And thus you see, what there is in man, considered both in nature and with the help of the common work of the Holy Ghost, that may carry him so far towards Christianity.

ii. There is also something considerable in the OBJECT, viz. Religion and Christianity itself, whence it is natural men may make so great a progress towards it: and that is Twofold,

The Attractiveness of Religion:

The Subserviency of Religion to itself.

1. The *Attractiveness of Religion.*

And this consists not only in the inward and spiritual beauty of holiness, which these men have not eyes to discern; but also in that happiness, which is annexed to Religion and Christianity. This is that, which draws out natural men to all their attainments. Happiness is the great bait of men's desires; and that, which sweetens the means tending to it: though they be in themselves very difficult and burdensome, yet, leading to happiness, they close with it: and, therefore, as the apprehensions of heaven and hell work upon a natural man more or less forcibly than the thoughts of the difficulty or tediousness of holy duties; so is his progress more or less strong and vigorous towards Christianity.

2. Another thing in Christianity or Religion, that advanceth some to so great a progress, is the *Subserviency of Religion to itself.*

Religion doth mightily promote and advance itself.

(1) In that the performance of one part and of one duty of religion, obligeth and engageth to the performance of another.

As one sin draws on another, by consequence likewise doth one duty draw on another. There is a connexion and dependance between them: hearing engageth to meditation, and meditation to prayer, and prayer for grace to endeavour after it: a glorious profession obligeth to something, at least that may be answerable to that profession. Thus, one duty of religion hands a man over to another; and, when he is passed through one, another stands ready to receive him.

(2) A little progress in religion doth facilitate.

It is harder, at first, to begin; than, having begun, to continue: because use and custom in any thing make it easy.

Now it is this subserviency of religion to itself, that may carry men very far in it. When they have begun a profession, and entered upon one duty, that duty delivers them over to another, and makes it more facile and easy to them; because the precedent duty, as it doth engage them to, so it prepares them for, the subsequent duty, as well as engage them to the present duty. One duty doth, as it were, perform half the task and bear half the burden of the other.

Thus then you see, whence it is that natural men may make so great a progress towards Christianity, so as to be almost Christians, from the Power of Nature, and from the Attractiveness of Religion.

Now, here, if you ask me, " How shall I know, whether it be the power of nature helped by the common workings of the Spirit, or the power of supernatural grace, that carries men out to all their profession?" I shall give you but this one discriminating character of it: See whether your abilities be greater in the things that belong to grace and holiness, than they are to natural things. A child of God, who is but of weak parts as to the things of the world, that can scarce give you a rational account of such affairs when propounded to him, bring him but to the things of God, and how admirably will he be able to unfold, even the very mysteries that are hid from the wise and prudent of the world! Put him upon any common discourse, how broken and incoherent is he! but engage him in prayer, how doth he expatiate and enlarge, and what a torrent of divine rhetoric will he then pour into the bosom of God! Is this from nature, that he is able to exceed and go beyond himself? No, certainly. It is very observable concerning the ways of God, what the Prophet speaks, Isa. xxxv. 8. *A highway shall be there.....and it shall be called, The way of holiness: the unclean shall not pass over it:* though they wander and err in every other way; though they do not take the right way to be rich, and great, and honourable in the world; yet these, that are fools in every thing else, shall not err from the way of holiness: and, therein, lies the only wisdom. But, take a mere carnal man, that hath eminent abilities in earthly things; usually, he is never weaker than when he is engaged in that which is holy and spiritual: at least his chief excellency doth not lie there: though he doth perform the duty well, yet he doth not

do it beyond what he doth in ordinary and natural things. Now how is it with you? do you find yourselves carried much beyond the rate and size of your natural abilities? that you never so much exceed yourselves, nor do so well, as when you are about some holy and spiritual employment? that you are not so artificial in any thing, as in holy performances? This is a good sign, that it is the power of grace, and not only the power of nature, that carries you forth to the profession of religion which you make. I take the extraordinary gifts, bestowed upon unregenerate men in a vast disproportion from their natural abilities, to be long ago ceased.

Thus you see what enables a natural man to go so far towards Christianity.

III. The Third General propounded, was to shew WHAT IT IS THAT HINDERS THESE PROFICIENTS FROM MAKING FURTHER PROGRESS: that, when they are *almost*, what keeps them from being *altogether* Christians.

I answer to this, in general: It is only through a wilful and wretched neglect of what they might do, that any of them do fall short of grace here and glory hereafter. It is not our want of power, but our want of will, or rather indeed our willingness, that makes us miscarry to our eternal perdition.

I shall illustrate this by a plain and obvious similitude. Suppose that God should promise to bestow heaven upon us, if we would but reach forth and touch it with our hands. Now, although we can never reach so high: yet if we do not stretch forth our hands, and reach as high as we are able to do, the fault of losing heaven will not lie upon the inability and impossibility, that were in us to touch it; but upon our wilful neglect of striving to our utmost to do what we are able to do: the reason why we fall short, would not be because our arm is not long enough; but because we do not stretch it forth to the utmost length.

The instance is somewhat plain and familiar; but yet it holds an exact proportion to the case in hand. God promiseth heaven to us, if we will but touch it; that is, if we will lay hold on Christ by faith: which faith we can no more work in ourselves by our own proper efficiency, than touch heaven with our finger; yet, howsoever, if we do not do our utmost, our falling short of hea-

ven and faith cannot be imputed to the impossibility that we lie under, but to our wilful sloth and neglect. It is not men's "cannots" but their "will nots," not their impotency but their obstinacy, that destroys them: *Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life:* John v. 40. *Ye will not!* Doth not Christ himself tell us, that no man can come to him, except the Father draw him? true: but the fault lies in the stubbornness of your wills: though you could come, you would not: therefore, it is not your weakness, but your wilfulness, that keeps you from coming to Christ.

Let me here appeal to yourselves. Doth not he deserve eternal death, who had a power in his hand to make himself a Christian, and yet would not? Certainly you will all conclude, this man is very equally and justly dealt with, if sentenced to eternal misery; since he had a power to avoid that misery, and to lay hold on eternal life and happiness: his condemnation lies on his own head for his wilful contempt of salvation, which he had a power to work out; and, by a diligent improvement of the means tendered to him, to make sure of. Every carnal man, if he had power to convert himself, yet, through his wilful neglect and obstinacy, would not do it: and this appears, because there is not one of us, that doth as much as he might do. There is not one natural man, that doth as much as he might do: will he not now do what he can, to prepare and dispose his heart for grace? then much less would he work grace in his heart, though he had a power to do it; and therefore the whole default of men's falling short of grace, lies in their wilful neglects. Men indulge themselves in carnal sloth: and, if they can but maintain the pace and rate of common ordinary professors in a formal course of duty, or abstain from gross sins, then they are contented, and will be drawn on no further. Cannot they command their thoughts to dwell more fixedly and more abidingly upon spiritual objects? Cannot they be oftener in meditation; and meditate more fervently, and with more affection? In both, have they not power to refuse temptations and sinful motions? Doth the Devil use any force or violence upon them? Did they ever find, when they threw themselves upon their knees in prayer, that he stiffened them that they could not bend? or that he stopped their mouths from speaking, or their hearts from thinking? Had he a power to strike men lame, when they should come to the ordinances; or deaf, when

they should hear; or dumb, when they should speak; then there were some shew and colour of reason, why men attended no more frequently, why they heard no more attentively, why they did not ponder more considerately, why they prayed so seldom and heartlessly: did but the Devil compel them to this, the sinner might have some excuse; but, when he must woo their consent and allowance, and wait their pleasure and leisure, it is merely a wretched neglect or wilfulness, that they yield to the commission of any sin. Can you do all this, and more; and yet will you not? know, that, if you perish, it is only your own fault: you your ownselves are the bloody murderers of your own souls. It will be in vain for you to plead, that you had no power to make yourselves Christians: you never went so far as to make a trial, whether you had a power or no: for a man not to do the utmost that he might do towards Christianity, though he hath no power to make himself a Christian, is the same as if he had a power, and yet will not make use of it. Oh, let this that I have said prevail with you, to be not only *almost*, but *altogether* Christians; and to put forth all the power and might and ability, that you have, in the working out of your own salvation. Is there not infinite reason, why you should speedily set about this important work, while you have time and opportunity for the doing of it? Is it not a matter of the greatest moment in the world, and not to be delayed one moment? Be persuaded, then, to the speedy practice of it.

OBJECT. Some desperate wretches may think, indeed, that "Arguments to persuade men to work out their salvation, may be of weighty import to enforce the duty, upon those that do expect salvation; but, for my part, I pretend not so high: let me but enjoy now the sins which I serve and the pleasures which I pursue; and, for the state of my soul hereafter, I commend that to the mercy of God: and, if I must perish, I will perish with as much ease and content as I may. It is hard to alter an irreversible doom; and, if it be to perdition, it is but folly to hang down the head, and blubber the eyes, and break the heart for that which cannot be altered. If I must go to hell, I may as soon be carried down thither in a flood of tears, as in doing ungodly actions. Why should I conspire with God's decree to make myself miserable. If he hath sentenced me

to hell hereafter, I may as well sentence myself to a heaven here. My future torments are in his hands, but my present delights are in my own. Therefore, if salvation and happiness be such nice points, I forego them; and will embrace more easy and more obvious pleasures."

Answ. I know there is no pious heart here, but shivers with horror at such language, though it be but personated. Methinks, rather it represents the speech of a devil, who is without all possibility of happiness, than of men who are in the way to it. Indeed, it is the speech of the Devil; but it is likewise in the hearts of men: when they storm and bluster at the difficulties of salvation, and narrowness of the way, and straitness of the gate, the Devil interposeth this suggestion, "It is as good to perish with ease, as to be saved with so much labour and pains." But, what! shall we leave men to such desperate resolutions, and suffer them to go dreaming to hell and destruction? Certainly, religion hath arguments enough to prevail, even with these; if they would but shew themselves to be men, and but ponder how much reason can speak.

For, consider thou, that wilt rather perish, than make thy life a trouble to thee by obedience: God may, under thy disobedience, make thy life a trouble, yea a hell to thee, by his terrors. Thou thinkest that thy garments of sin and pollution will sit more loose and easy about thee, than the garments of holiness, that are too straitlaced and troublesome: yea, but what if God should roll these thy filthy garments in brimstone, and fire them about thee? How dreadfully wouldst thou be disappointed, when, instead of that ease which thou seekest in the service of sin, God should make thee thine own tormentor, and make thy conscience a hell incarnate! Believe it, the wrath of God can fry the marrow in thy bones, and reduce thy soul to ashes. Read Psalm lxxxviii. and you will think it a doleful and sad description of the state of the damned. *While I suffer thy terrors I am distracted:* and, if the wrath of the Almighty lay thus sore upon a holy man, how fretting and corroding will it be upon the leprous soul, and upon an ulcerated conscience! If it burns up the green tree, what will become of the dry tree, which is but as prepared fuel for it to prey upon? No man hath his present delights and contentments in his own power, because no man hath his own conscience in his own power: it will speak, yea,

and that terrible things; even then, when a sinner hath done all he can to sear and stupify it.

Consider, again: how is it with you, after the rage of your sinning is over? are you not haunted with fearful reflections and ghastly thoughts of despair and horror? Could we but unbowel a sinner, we should find those conscience-worms, gnawing and knotting about him, and devouring his heart. And are these wont to dissolve into trouble, for fear religion and holiness should trouble them? are they content to buy ease and quiet at such a rate, as the loss of heaven and eternal torments amount to? and is this the ease and quiet, that they purchase with it? The Devil puts a gross cheat upon these men: he changeth not the trouble, but the time of it: they shun the work of God, only because it is troublesome in doing, though it doth leave behind it the blessed fruits of peace, joy, and satisfaction; and they engage in the work of the Devil, which, as soon as the heat and fury of it is a little over, leaves, in their sober thoughts, nothing but anguish, stings, and torments. And, therefore, be not deceived: suffer not the Devil any longer to abuse you; and to impose his drudgery upon you, under the notion of ease and quiet. If your consciences were once awakened, I know the work of the Devil must needs bring you more vexation, besides the shame, than ever you would have from the work of God: yea, the very omission and neglect of God's work is a far greater trouble, than the performance of it would be. Therefore, if you look no farther than your present content and satisfaction, if you would go to your final estate the easiest way whatever it be, think not to attain this by giving up yourselves to a way of sin, nor by wounding your own consciences, which with trouble afterwards will be sure to be avenged upon you; but, in a way of duty and laborious working, you only can find present content, and shall certainly find future happiness.

OBJECT. "True," may some say, "possibly the work of God might be more pleasing and satisfactory to us than the work of the Devil, if we could work it. But, to what end is it, that God requires from us to work? to what purpose doth he command us? Doth not he himself know, that we have no power? Doth not he himself say, that we are *dead in trespasses and sins*? Is it rational, is it just, to bid a dead man work? or, doth it become that God, who would be thought by us to be infinitely

gracious and merciful, to mock and deride human misery, when he commands those things from us which he knows to be impossible? Had he bid us blend light and darkness together, or bend the axle-tree of the world till both poles met; had he bid us fling the stars out of their orbs, or with our hands stop the sun in the midst of his course; all these great impossibilities are as easily achieved, as by our own power to work any part of divine and acceptable obedience without gracious assistance from God. We can as soon glorify, as sanctify ourselves. What should we then do, but only sit still and expect, till efficacious grace should move and act us, and we not able to gainsay and resist it? till God so draw us, as that we must run; and so call us, as that we must answer? Till then, our obedience is an impossibility, and all our attempts are vain and fruitless."

This now is a slothful sinner's pretence, why he will not work: and no doubt but that too often it doth flash into the thoughts of most men; whereby their hearts are discouraged and their hands weakened, in the service of God.

Answ. In answering this, I shall not enter into that great debate of the power of nature to do what is good and acceptable to God: but proceed in a plain way, and accommodated to practice; and that, which will be most convictive to the conscience.

First. Men will not plead thus in matters of far less concernment, than the salvation of their souls.

Would a master, when he commands his servant to work, take this, think you, for a sufficient excuse, that he hath no power to work till God act and move him? It may as well be objected by your servants to you, as by you to God. Tell me, what power have I to speak, or you to hear one word, unless God do concur to it? Nay, we are not sufficient to think one good thought: 2 Cor. iii. 5. and do we make this an excuse to forbear those actions, that are necessary and convenient? do we therefore resolve to do nothing, because it is impossible for us to do any thing unless God concurs with it? What stupid, dull folly were this! We put it daily and hourly to trial: and produce me that man, that can say God was wanting to him in his concurrence. What a miserable and ridiculous task would it be, if, in every action of our lives that we cannot do without God, yet we should sit still, and question God's concurrence! Do you sit

down, to try whether God will enable you to rise when you are down? or, do you question whether God will concur to another step, though it is impossible you should stir and move, unless God act and move you? Yet this hinders not men's endeavours: *In him we live, and move, and have our being*. Why do not you do so in spiritual matters? We can do nothing without God. True: yet put it to the trial, whether or no God will concur with you. Certainly, that man must be nameless, that can say, "I was truly willing, and endeavoured to do some spiritual good, but God was wanting to me in his concurrence."

Secondly. Those men, who thus make impotence a pretence for their sloth, do not indeed believe what they themselves pretend.

No: it is the inward and secret thought of them all, that they have a power to work out their own salvation: and, therefore, whether they have or no, still they are inexcusable: while they think they have this power, yet they sit still. Although a man be chained fast down that he cannot go; yet, if he thinks himself at liberty, and notwithstanding sits still, you may soon tell where the fault lies: it may be imputed to want of will, and not to want of power. So, here: wicked men think they have power to work, however they speak otherwise: therefore, they are utterly inexcusable if they do not work: it is as clear as the light, that their sloth proceeds not from their impotence, but from their own wilfulness.

I shall endeavour, by a few arguments, to convice you, that you do indeed think that you have power to work out your own salvation: therefore, if you do it not, you are altogether inexcusable, whether you have that power or no.

First. Did you never, when God hath shaken his rod and whip over you, seriously promise and resolve to work; his rod, I mean, either of conviction or affliction?

Have not these made you enter into an engagement with God, that you would serve and obey him for the future? Did you not really thus resolve? There are few here, but sometimes, at least, in a fit and pang of conscience have so done. And why did you resolve all this, and yet at the same time think and believe you could do nothing? Did you only mock God, and play with your own consciences? Certainly, your consciences then were too much provoked, and too much awakened to be thus jested and dallied with. We find this temper in the Israelites, when they were frighted at the terrible glory from Mount Sinai: Exod.

xxiv. 3: see how confidently they promise and resolve: *And all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words, which the Lord hath said, will we do.* So the Jews, in their great distress, Jer. xlii. 6. *Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, &c. that it may be well with us.* Alas! how many pious purposes and holy resolutions have your dangers, your fears, and your sick-beds been witness to! Have they not heard you breathe out, "Spare, O Lord, spare a little longer: give some space: try us yet once more: and, O Lord, we will reform, we will amend our sinful lives, we will perform neglected duties, and never more again return to folly?" Are not these resolutions an evident conviction? Certainly, you thought you had a power so to do; and, therefore, if you do not endeavour to perform, you are altogether inexcusable.

Secondly. Did you never, in your whole lives, perform a duty unto God? Did you never pray?

Is there any here so desperately profane, so lost to all shew of goodness, that hath not done this? And to what end have you prayed? For what did you perform your duty? Was it not for salvation? And did you work for salvation, and yet think you had no power to work for it? It is impossible: men's very works do plainly shew, that they do think that they have a power: something still must be done, though it be but formally, slightly, and coldly: a mere "Lord, have mercy upon me," a customary "Lord, forgive me;" yet something conscience will require, which men reckon upon, and make account to be working out their salvation.

Thirdly. Wherefore is it that you trust unto and rely upon your good works, if you think you have no power to work out your salvation?

Would it be so hard and difficult a matter to take men off from leaning so much upon their works, if they did not think that they had power to work out their own salvation? Men do apprehend a worth and sufficiency in what themselves do, in order to eternity. Bid them forego their works, and renounce their own righteousness, and this is a hard saying: you may almost persuade them as soon to renounce all their hopes of heaven. This is an evident conviction, whatever notions men may entertain to stop the mouth of a clamorous conscience, when it calls on them for working and labouring, that yet they

do not believe what they themselves speak concerning their impotence.

Fourthly. When the Spirit of God was dealing with your hearts, persuading you to enter upon a course of duty and obedience, did you never procrastinate and use delays? Did you never stifle the breathings, nor quench the motions of the Holy Spirit, by thinking it was time enough to do it hereafter?

"What need I begin so soon, or vex my flesh, or deny myself the joys and pleasures of this life, even as soon as I am come to relish them? When sickness or grey hairs admonish me, and tell me I am near unto eternity; when old age promiseth me, that the severities of religion shall be no long trouble: then, will I look after the concernments of my soul; then, it will be time enough; then, I will repent, believe, obey, and work out that salvation, that will be then hastening upon me." Tell me truly, have not these been the foolish reasonings of your hearts? have you not thus often promised God and your own consciences? and doth not this plainly imply, that you thought you had power to do it? *Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art:* it is in vain to plead want of power: God will confute thee by thy very thoughts. Hadst thou no power? although thou hadst not, yet thou thoughtest thou hadst, yet wouldst not endeavour to work: therefore, thy ruin is as wilful, and thy condemnation as just, as if thou hadst a power, and wouldst not work; for thou perishest merely through the default of thine own will.

Thirdly. Whether wicked men have this power or no to work out their own salvation, I shall not now stand to enquire: but, if they had it, yet they would not work with it; and, therefore, it is a most vain and insufficient plea, to pretend they wanted power.

Now this appears evidently, because there is no wicked man, that ever did so much as he was able to do by the mere strength of nature, without the assistance of supernatural grace: and, therefore, it is not their inability; but their wilful sloth, that doth destroy them. Do but answer your own consciences: was there not one duty more, which you could have performed; not one temptation, not one corruption more, which you could have resisted? Could not you have prayed, read, or meditated upon heavenly things; then, when your hearts and thoughts have been vain, worldly, and sinful, and devilish? Might not that

time have been spent in holy converse, which you trifled away in idle, impertinent discourse, or in doing nothing, or that which was much worse than nothing? What force, what constraint is laid upon you? Can you not think? and, if you can, cannot you think of God as well as of the world? as well concerning fulfilling God's will, and working out your salvation, as fulfilling your lusts? Can you not speak? and, if you can, can you not speak to God in holy prayer, and of the things of God in holy discourse, as well as of your trades and bargains; those low and trivial matters, that are not worthy of men, much less of Christians? What force is there upon you? doth the Devil skrew open the drunkard's mouth, and pour down his excessive and intemperate cups whether he will or no? doth the Devil violently move the tongue of the swearer and blasphemer, to revile the holy and reverend name of God? doth he strike men dumb, when they should pray; or deaf, when they should hear; or senseless, when they should understand? Is there any such force or constraint laid upon you? May you not avoid the one, and do the other, if you yourselves please? You can: but you will not: therefore, neither would you work out your own salvation, if you could. Is there any hope, that you, who will not do the less that God requires from you, should ever be induced to perform the greater? Let your weakness and impotence be what it will, yet your condemnation will lie upon you, so long as your wilfulness is much greater than your weakness. No, Sinners, your precious and immortal souls will eternally perish now for want of will to save them. Pity yourselves: will you lose yourselves for ever, only out of sloth? Will you sleep yourselves into hell, and go drowsily into destruction? Is it more painful to work the works of God, than it is to perish for ever under insupportable torments? Therefore, do you what you possibly can: labour and sweat at salvation, rather than fail of it. Let this never grate nor fret your consciences in hell, that you lie there burning for ever, merely for your wilful neglects.

When a man is gone far towards Christianity, there are several things, that make him neglect a further progress. As,

i. HIS GROUNDLESS FANCYING OF DIFFICULTIES AND HARD ENCOUNTERS IN THE WAYS OF GOD.

Oh, were it but as easy to be holy as sinful, he were wretched that would refuse to be a Christian; or, were Christianity but

one hard pull or difficult pang, that would soon be over, there were some encouragement for them: but, when they have already struggled, and wrestled, and waded against the stream, thus far; and yet see no end, duty to be performed upon duty, and temptation upon temptation to be resisted, still to be combating with devils, still to be crossing and vexing of themselves, no respite, no breathing-time allowed them: this takes off their wheels; and, though they are able to do this, yet they will rather sit down quite short of grace, than run through such hardships to attain it: and so they come up in the mid-way, neither holy, nor profane; but please themselves with a mediocrity, and middle rank of religion, and dare not go further for fear of difficulties, nor yet dare fall further back for fear of conscience; and so they lie hovering between heaven and hell. Now this is merely from wilful sloth: Prov. xxvi. 13. *The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way: a lion is in the streets:* here the Wise Man brings in a drowsy sluggard, dreaming of dangers and difficulties, to excuse his sloth: "I dare not stir abroad, for there is a lion in the streets:" a likely matter, that there should be a lion in the streets! but yet see how this fancy works with him: any thing is an excuse for the sluggard. In ver. 14. *As the door turneth upon* the *hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed:* a door is often in motion, to and fro; but it gains no ground, makes no progress, still hangs where it did: so it is with slothful professors: that, which they have already attained to, is, that they move to and fro like a door upon the hinges, still the same motion over and over again, no new progress, no new attainment; and that, merely because they are sluggish and lazy, and fancy difficulties to themselves, and strange apparitions in the ways of God, that make them stand at a stay where they are, and not dare to take one step forward. As it was with the Israelites, who came to the very borders of the land of Canaan, Numb. xiii. 27, 28, 33. when the searchers had brought reports to them, that the land indeed was good and fruitful, but the walls of the city were built up to heaven, and that there were many giants, and that they should be beaten and eaten; they were not so much allured with the goodness of the land, as they were deterred by the thoughts of the difficulties; and, though God himself bad them arise, and enter, and take possession, they would not venture upon so hazardous an exercise, and so difficult an enterprise: so, there are many forward professors, who are come to the very borders

of the Land of Canaan, to the very entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, who, when they see what strong-holds of iniquity they must cast down, what principalities and powers they must fight with, and what lusts, gigantic as the sons of Anak, they must subdue and destroy, this frights them from attempting any further.

ii. TO BE ALMOST A CHRISTIAN CARRIES IN IT THOSE ADVANTAGES AND ACCOMMODATIONS, WHICH, WERE THEY ALTOGETHER SUCH, THEY MUST LOSE: and, therefore, this is one reason, why so many stick in the New-Birth.

Such an one is no saint; and, therefore, the men of the world embrace him: such an one is no profane and scandalous person; and, therefore, the children of God embrace him, and think well of him too: and thus he doth hold a correspondency with both of them, which, were he altogether either one or the other, he must break off; and, therefore, finding the conveniency of this neutral estate, he stops where he is, short of true grace. Were he a profane wretch, then those, that are truly godly, would avoid his company: or, were he truly godly, then the world would reject and scorn him: the godly esteem and love him, and from their ready charity they look upon him to be truly gracious: "Those, that are true Christians," thinks the Almost Christian, "look upon me as such as themselves: and what need I begin, by a forward zeal, to disoblige the world? And the wicked and profane respect me too, because I go a little before them; though not quite cross and contrary to them: and so I enjoy the good opinion of both sorts; which, were I fully one or the other, I should hardly attain." This man can, as it were, hold heaven with one hand, and yet hold the world with the other; not lose his interest in the one, and yet retain his interest in the other: he can enjoy the delights and pleasures of the one, and then hope for the rewards and happiness of the other. Were we lodged in a star, then the earth would appear very small, and almost nothing, as the stars do now to us; so, were we more above, the earth would appear either as very small, or as nothing: thus it is with a child of God: he soars up by the wings of faith and love to the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the earth appears very inconsiderable to him; but an unregenerate man, when he mounts highest, yet still will be sure to keep earth in his eye: he will not lose the sight of that; and, therefore, when he hath got to such a pitch, that he is able to

discover something of heaven and yet not lose the sight of earth, there he hangs in *æquilibrio*, and will be drawn no further: he keeps something of the earth in his eye; and will not lose nor diminish his sight or share of it, for the hopes and joys of heaven.

iii. FALSE OPINIONS AND CONCEITS THAT THEY ARE ALREADY CHRISTIANS, hinder these forward professors from being true Christians.

It may be, they would be Christians indeed, did they not think they were already such. When men are gone far, then they are apt to think they are got home; and so they have taken up their rest, and will be driven on no further: they think that what they have already gotten, is enough to bear their charges to heaven; and so they grow careless of getting more: they are persuaded that they are Christians; and that keeps them from being persuaded to be such. I do not intend to forbid eminent professors to think they are indeed Christians; but let them look how this persuasion works with them: doth it tend to make them more careless, negligent, and remiss? when they have been under troubles of conscience for their sins, then they saw themselves in a lost and undone condition, and had hot and scalding apprehensions of the wrath of God; then they were laborious to frequent duties, conscientious in their walking, and fearful lest they should sin: but, since their troubles have been worne off, they have entertained better hopes and better opinions of their state: are they not grown more loose, and more regardless? they do not take so much pains with their hearts; nor are they so strict, and holy, and severe in their lives: I must tell such, what the Apostle tells the Galatians, ch. v. 7, 8. *Ye did run well: who* hindered *you? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you:* this persuasion that you are Christians, cometh not of him that calleth you: possibly it would be well with them, if they did not think they were so. Sirs, if the thoughts of your being Christians and in a state of grace, do encourage you to walk worthy of that holy calling; if the hopes of your good and holy estate, do engage you to purify yourselves as God is pure, as they will work if they be right and genuine; then still entertain and cherish them: but, if they turn to looseness, remissness, or presumption, here suspect them to be the overweening conceits and elevations of a carnal heart; and such, as will certainly hinder you of what you thus fondly imagine yourselves to be, hinder

you from making further progress in the ways of Christianity, in regard you take up false conceits that you are Christians already.

iv. Another ground, whence it is that forward professors many times fall short of true Christianity, is, that, when they are already gotten far, then, ESPECIALLY THE DEVIL DOTH ALL HE CAN TO HINDER THEM: when they have gone far towards grace and Christianity, then he unites all his force and subtlety to stop them from proceeding further, lest they get from under his power and jurisdiction.

He knows that if they once become Christians, they are then almost out of his reach; and, therefore, whatever lust be in the soul, he will then especially stir it up; whatsoever reserve of temptations there be, he will then send them upon the soul: for none are more assaulted with horrors and multiplied temptations, than those, who make a great progress towards the ways of God, and are near to the borders of true Christianity; because then the Devil suspects that he shall lose them, and that they are even revolting from him. When they begin to move towards heaven, and labour after true grace and holiness, the Devil sees that ordinary temptations are not then sufficient to secure them; that those lusts, which before hampered and captivated them at his pleasure, will not now so easily prevail; for he finds them too resolute, too rough, and untractable to deal with. He begins then to fear to what a rebellion this may grow; and, therefore, he sets upon them with all his power, way-lays them with all ambushments, circumvents them with all his wiles and stratagems: and, though these be only armies and musters of shadows, which a man might break through without any danger, would he but arm himself with noble and undaunted resolutions; yet, with these, the Devil assaults and undermines them, and that incessantly, and doth at last stop them in their course towards grace, if not beat them back again to their former course of profaneness. Luke xi. 24, 25, 26. *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and, finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house, whence I came out: And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh....seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first:* i. e. when men have cast out unclean, gross lusts by an external sanctification, so that the Devil seems to be dislodged; when he seeks to return again to

his ancient seat and possession, he finds the heart swept and garnished: swept from the filth of common sins, and garnished with common graces, as its ornaments; so that there seems no re-admission or re-entrance to this unclean spirit: and then he goes and takes to himself seven other spirits worse than himself, that is, as I conceive, stronger temptations and more prevailing lusts; and, by them, he enters, and dwells there, and defiles that clean-swept house, and not only keeps the sinner from being better, but make his latter end worse than his beginning.

v. When men have gone far towards Christianity, NATURAL CONSCIENCE THEN LEAVES THEM, AND CEASES TO EXCITE AND PROVOKE THEM TO A FURTHER PROFICIENCY.

Conscience is the spur, that quickens wicked men to make that progress which they do make: now when it hath brought them past common sins to known and common duties, then it leaves them, and urges them no further; and so they sit down far short of true grace and Christianity, which they endeavoured after. Let me say to such men, as St. Paul to the Galatians, chap. v. 7. *Ye did run well: who* hindered *you?* was it the difficulty of religion, or the strength of temptation, or the flatteries and allurements of the world, or the violence and rage of your own lusts? But might you not, nevertheless, have armed yourselves with peremptory resolutions? might you not undauntedly and victoriously have broke through all these? were you not able, when you stood still, or when you gave back as frighted and terrified at these things, to make one step, and another step still forwards? could you not proceed still further, and press onwards through all these? Yes: you might have gone much further, if you would: you might have made a further progress, though all hell had armed itself against you: therefore, if you perish, there will be cause and reason to blame yourselves: you can only charge your damnation on your own wilful sloth and negligence.

This may suffice for an Answer to the Third General: Whence it is, that professors, that have gone far towards Christianity, yet fall short of grace, and of being true Christians. They were too nice to encounter difficulties: they were apt and forward to think well of themselves: they were too faint-hearted to cope with temptations, loth to disoblige the world, and would not proceed further than spurred on by natural conscience; and,

therefore, wilfully fell short, through their own sloth and negligence, of grace here, and of glory hereafter.

IV. The Last General propounded, was to shew you THE FOLLY AND EXTREME MISERY OF THOSE, WHO PROCEED THUS FAR AS TO BE ALMOST-CHRISTIANS, AND YET WILL NOT BE PERSUADED TO BE SUCH ALTOGETHER.

The Apostle seems to be very passionate, Gal. iii. 1, 3. *O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you. Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?* What! are you mad? are you besotted? are you bewitched out of your common reason and understanding; that, having begun in the Spirit, and made so far progress in the ways and knowledge of Christ, after all this, you should fall back again to carnal, fleshly rudiments? Why, the same may I say to many: You, that are professors, who hath bewitched you? why are you so foolish, as, when you have not only begun, but proceeded far towards holiness and true grace, that yet you should give over, and sit down in a state of nature and unregeneracy short of it?

Consider but your folly and misery in these particulars.

i. Is it not extreme folly, madness, and misery, WILFULLY TO FALL SHORT OF THAT, WHICH YOU HAVE ALREADY TAKEN SO MUCH PAINS TO ATTAIN?

What! after all the labour, and hardships, and difficulties that you have already gone through to obtain grace, now to sit down short of it, and lose all! Will you wilfully lose all your prayers, and all your tears? all your convictions, and all your conflicts? Shall all these be so much labour in vain? Is not this much below the ingenuousness of your resolutions in inferior matters? Do not you use to quicken your endeavours by such arguments as these: "I have spent so much upon it, I have taken so much pains about it, therefore I will see the end of it, and go through with it?" Do you think much to lose your labour in any thing but salvation; but in working out the salvation of your precious, immortal souls? What though it be hard and difficult to go further: consider, was it not hard and difficult to arrive at that, which you have already attained unto? and are

you so foolish, as to be willing to lose the fruit and benefit of the difficulties, which you have already passed, only for fear of difficulties that are yet to come? If Christianity be not worthy your pains, why did you ever engage in it? and if it be, why do you sit still? You will be guilty of extreme folly, either in this or that: for you enter upon Christianity, without sitting down, and reckoning what it will cost you: Christ himself brands you for fools: Luke xiv. 28, 29, 30. *For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest, haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.*

If it is was not worth your pains, what a folly was it to attempt it! if you thought it worth all and more, what a folly then was it to flag! And could you, before you came so nigh to grace and so nigh to glory, could you see such beauty and such desirableness in it at so great a distance, as to persuade you to come thus far; and, now, when you are much nearer, and can see much more of its excellency and comeliness, dare you now despise and contemn it, when you have not only the promise of God to be your encouragement, but you have also given earnest too? for that profession, and those endeavours, and those duties, which you have already passed through, are all, as it were, the earnest of your further progress: this earnest you lose: profession, endeavours, and duty, all come to nothing, if, after all, you rest any where short of grace: you lose your earnest which you give, if you be but almost Christians, and rest any where short of true Christianity. What extreme folly is this, for men to disquiet themselves in vain, and take so much pains to pray and hear, and to keep themselves from many sins, and perform many duties; and, yet, because they will do no more, lose the benefit of all this! What is it, that you do all this for? is it not to obtain grace and glory? And will you do so much for such an excellent end, and yet wilfully fall short of it? You may remain graceless, without all this labour: if you are fully resolved for hell, why do you do any thing? to hell you may go, without praying or hearing; without striving, or conflicting, or performing one duty, or resisting one sin as you do: if you are resolved for heaven, why do you not do more? all your praying, hearing, striving, and wrestling will be lost and in vain,

if you do not hold on, if you do not continue. What a folly is it, for you to have gone so far, and to have won every step of ground by clear force; to have toiled in the ways of religion, with sweat and anguish, and disquieting to your soul; and yet, at last, to lose and frustrate all this pains, through your cursed and wilful sloth and negligence! to give all away, and fall wilfully short of grace and salvation!

ii. Is it not gross and inexcusable folly, TO DESIST, AFTER SO FAR PROGRESS; whereas, for ought we know, had we but proceeded a little further, we might have obtained that grace which we fall short of?

And how know you, but that, upon your further endeavours, God might have bestowed that grace you strive for? God is not wanting in this kind: to those, who improve the power of nature which they have, he gives the power of grace which they have not. Yet, when men arrive thus far, and come as it were to the very porch of heaven, what thick and dull folly is it, when there is as it were but a step or two between them and glory, to break off their progress and sit down short! What! is it more labour, to go those few steps more, than those which you have already gone? Were you willing and contented, to do all that you have already done, for that, which is but like grace; and will you not be persuaded to do a little more, for that, which is true grace? It may be God may convert you, by the very next prayer you make: he may convert you, by the next sermon you hear: he may give you true grace, when you next of all oppose any temptation; or when you next of all struggle against any lust: the very next step, which you take in his way, may carry you to heaven, for ought you know. Now the great probability of this, nay were it only a bare possibility, makes a man guilty of the greatest folly, who hath gone thus far towards holiness, if he neglect a further progress towards it.

iii. WHAT A DANGEROUS AND DREADFUL THING IS IT, FOR MEN TO CLIMB SO HIGH; AND YET TO HAVE NO HOLDFAST TO DEPEND UPON, NO FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT THEM!

Yet thus it is with every elevated carnal professor, that falls short of grace. He is like a man, that stands upon the sharp top of a towering pinacle, where he hath no other holdfast but a handful of air. But the standing of a child of God is firm:

his feet are fixed upon an immovable rock, even the Rock of Ages; and God reacheth out his hand from heaven to support him. It is disputed by some nice inquisitors, whether a man, if he were lifted up above the magnetic and attractive virtue of the earth, may not stand as safely and walk in the air as he doth now upon the earth. It is true of a child of God, when he hath got beyond the reach of earthly attractions, he may walk safely in that sublime way which leads to heaven; but, for wicked men, that have not got beyond the malignity of the earth, it is exceeding dangerous: their earthly minds and affections, and their earthly conversations, will in the end bear them down headlong; unless they climb still higher, until they have got beyond these terrene attractions. Now would it not make you tremble, to see a man borne up in the air, as the poets feign of Icarus, with waxen wings, that are subject to melt and fall off, and betray their charge to certain ruin and perdition? thus it is with every carnal professor, that has gone far in Christianity. And is it not YOU, that fly only with waxen wings, I mean the power of nature and the common works of the Holy Ghost, which may fall off and leave you in eternal ruin?

iv. And hence it follows, in the fourth place, that these mountainous professors, who have attained to a high pitch, yet fall short of grace, BECAUSE THEY WANT FIRM FOOTING TO ASSURE THEIR STANDING.

They usually either desperately tumble headlong into the commission of some foul gross sins; or else they grow brain-sick, and turn aside to the maintaining of some prodigious error. This is usually the issue of such lofty professors. As we see a cloud, that hath been sucked up by the sun, how it hovers a while in the air, but anon is wrapped and whirled about with every wind, and so is utterly lost and dissipated; or else it falls down again to the earth in storms, and is turned only into mire and dirt: even so fares it with many a professor: he is drawn up out of the earth, and above the pollutions of the world, by a common influence of the Holy Spirit, and for a while he hangs and hovers in a lofty profession; but, having no firm basis to sustain him, he is either blown up as an empty cloud, and driven away by every wind of doctrine, and lost amongst various sects and opinions; or else, after a while, he falls back again into the filthy conversation and worldly pollutions that he had escaped, and ends only in mire and dirt, and this because he hath not that

incorruptible seed within him that shall never die. Indeed, true grace is of itself immortal; but it is from that engagement, that God hath laid upon himself to preserve it in those, who are diligent in the use of those means, by which it may be maintained. But an unregenerate man is left wholly to his own power, to preserve him in that station, in which he shines: and, if the angels themselves and Adam fell from their first estate, merely through the mutability of their own will, who had power to continue in it, how much more certainly then will these carnal professors fall from their high pitch, who have less power to enable them to stand, and greater power against them to cast them down!

To aggravate the exceeding great folly and apostacy of these elevated break-neck professors, see that most dreadful place, 2 Pet. ii. 21. *For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.* Is not the wrath of God certainly to be revealed against all those, who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus? It is better never to have known the Gospel, and never to have gone a step in the ways of God, than afterwards wilfully to desert them and apostatize from them.

1. *The fall and apostacy of those, who are great and eminent professors, carries much of malice and wilfulness in it, which is the highest rank that can be in any sin.*

If there be any in the world, that commit the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost, it must be these men. There is, indeed, a great difference between sinning willingly and sinning wilfully: profane, carnal men sin willingly; but none, but those who have been forward professors in the ways of God, and have utterly deserted those ways, can sin maliciously, and merely because they will provoke and offend God by their sins. See what the Apostle saith of such, Heb. x. 26, 27. *For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins: but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, &c.* Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, &c.* This is the first aggravation of their sin and misery.

But, then,

2. *When elevated and eminent professors fall away, they usually fall lower than they were before, when they took their first rise towards Christianity and true religion.*

Falling away from a profession, is like the falling down from a steep precipice; where they can have nothing to stop them till they come to the very bottom. And it is observed, that none prove more notoriously wicked, and more desperate haters and revilers of the ways of God, than apostate professors.

(1) God doth judicially give them up to commit all manner of sin with greediness. See that black catalogue of the foulest sins that can be imagined, Rom. i. from 21 to 30. The Apostle speaks there concerning the heathen; but the case is parallel with our carnal professors, who do not like to retain God in their knowledge: therefore, *God* gives *them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, &c.*

(2) The Devil takes possession of such men, with stronger power and force than ever; (as the unclean spirit re-entered with seven spirits worse than himself, Luke xi. 26.) to secure that soul, that hath been so likely to revolt from him; and therefore no wonder Christ saith, *the last state of that man is worse than the first.* So that these eminent professors, when they fall away, usually fall lower than they ever were, before their first rise and motion towards religion.

(3) Unregenerate persons not only fall lower, but they seldom return to make a profession of their deserted religion: it is impossible to renew such a one to repentance again.

Now how should these sad and dreadful considerations make every one of us to do our utmost that we are able, to get true and saving grace, if we rest any where short of it! When the winds of temptation tempestuously beat, and the floods of trial, affliction, or persecution rush in upon us, we shall fall, because we have no foundation, but have built merely upon the sands. If you stand not built upon the corner-stone, you will fall of yourselves; yea, that stone will fall upon you, and crush and grind you to powder. Nay, you fall off from a steep and slippery precipice, where there is nothing at all to stop, nothing to receive you but sin after sin; and thus you rebound from one wickedness to another, till at last you be plunged irrecoverably into that lake, which burns with fire and brimstone.

And this is the Fourth Consideration; discovering the folly

and misery of those, that go far towards Christianity, and yet fall short.

v. THOUGH THESE PROFESSORS MAY HOVER BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH IN THEIR LIVES, YET THEY SHALL NOT HOVER BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL IN THEIR DEATHS.

No: the half Christian shall be as infallibly and as certainly cast into hell, as those who were altogether wicked. Here, it may be, thou art neither godly nor profane; but, hereafter, thou must be either saved or damned. There is none, as the Papists picture Erasmus, that hang between heaven and hell. Whoever thou art, thou must be either in a state of nature or of grace; and, accordingly, shall thy estate then be for ever, either a state of salvation among the saints, or else a state of damnation with the unregenerate. Though thou art never so lofty and sublime a professor, yet the same hell, that holds the profane, must eternally hereafter hold thee too, if, through thine own wilful negligence, thou stop any where short of true grace. If the Almost Christians could, by their glittering profession, gain a cooler hell; if they could get, I say, but a cooler place in hell: if their profession could gain you this; if it could procure you purgatory for venial sins, or the moderate punishment which the Papists call *Limbus Patrum*, then you had some show of reason to rest where you are: but, when the same hell and the same everlasting fire must be the portion of those, who have proceeded so far, and yet fall short; as well as the portion of the vilest wretch, whom they have now as far exceeded in goodness, as the holiest saint alive exceeds them; it is the very height of folly and madness, to sit down any where short of true grace, unless they are fully resolved to sit down no where short of hell.

vi. It will be the insupportable aggravation of these men's just and everlasting condemnation, for them to lie grating upon this sad reflection in hell, THAT ONCE THEY WERE NEAR TO HEAVEN, BUT LOST IT THROUGH THEIR OWN WILFUL DEFAULT.

It will be the aggravation, I say, of these men's just and everlasting condemnation, to make this doleful and furious reflection upon themselves in hell, that once they were in a very hopeful state, that they were once near to heaven, but lost it through their own wilful default. When they shall lie in hell,

and from thence give a sad and ghastly look up to the glory of the saints in heaven, oh how will it pierce their souls to think, that they were once near to that blessed estate, though now there be an infinite and unpassable gulf between them and that blessed inheritance, which the saints enjoy in heaven! Thus will they reflect upon themselves: "Though now there be an unpassable gulf between me and heaven; yet, once, there was but a step or two that parted us. Had I mortified but one lust more, had I opposed one temptation more, had I put up but one fervent prayer more; possibly, I might now have been in heaven: but, O my cursed, cursed folly, when I was at the very gate and threshold of heaven, that even then I should stop; and, after the relinquishment of my lusts, and after all my progress in the ways of holiness, to return again to the commission of those sins, in which I had formerly lived; when I had already gone through the hardest and most difficult part of religion, then to break off my course! what is this, but procuring for myself this damnation, which I now suffer, and must suffer for ever? Oh, that light, that once I enjoyed, how it thickens this everlasting darkness! Oh, those tastes that I once had of the powers of the world to come, and relished so much sweetness in, how do they now embitter this cup of fury and trembling, that I must for ever drink of! Oh, those heavenly gifts, that once I had, do now but increase these hellish torments; and the sight of heaven, which I have had, now discovers to me what I have lost; nay, what I have wilfully thrown away through mine own sloth and negligence. Oh, how strange is mine apostacy! after I had gone so great a way towards Christianity, rather than I would move one step further, I chose to lie here in this hell for ever burning and consuming!" Oh, what sad and tormenting thoughts will these be! how will they fret and gnaw the souls of those wretches, with eternal anguish and insupportable torments!

Thus you have seen, in these particulars, somewhat discovered to you of the desperate folly and madness, and misery also, that men are guilty of, that do proceed so far as to be *almost*, and yet will not be persuaded to be *altogether* Christians.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

NATURE, CORRUPTION, AND RENEWING,

OF THE

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ACTS xxiv. 16.

HEREIN DO I EXERCISE MYSELF, TO HAVE ALWAYS A CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE TOWARD GOD AND TOWARD MEN.

INTRODUCTION.

In this chapter, St. Paul gives an account to Felix of the general course and demeanour of his former life; being accused by Tertullian, a flattering orator, as one who was profane and seditious. After that he had purged himself in sundry particulars, he comes, in the text, to shew, that he was far from those crimes that were laid to his charge; having made it his constant exercise, all his life-time, to keep a good conscience.

The words have little or no difficulty in them: and, therefore, instead of giving you an elaborate exposition, I shall only run them over with a brief Paraphrase.

Herein do I exercise myself: that is, I make it my constant care and employment, *to have always a conscience void of offence:* that is, to keep my conscience clear, that it may not justly accuse me of any offence done either against God or against men: that is, I labour conscientiously to practise, as well the duties of the Second, as the duties of the First Table; to be just towards men, as well as to be religious towards God; knowing, that the one without the other, to be without offence towards

men only is but mere morality, and to be without offence only towards God is but vain hypocrisy.

Without farther explication, the words do, of their own accord, deliver to us this Doctrine:

THAT IT SHOULD BE OUR CONTINUAL CARE AND EMPLOYMENT, IN ALL THINGS, WHETHER RELATING TO GOD OR MAN, TO KEEP CLEAR AND INOFFENSIVE CONSCIENCES.

Conscience is nothing but a practical syllogism or argumentation; and always infers a personal conclusion, either excusing or accusing: and it hath Three offices.

First. It discovers to us what is Sin, and what is Duty; and the Reward, that is entailed upon both.

And thus it gives in its verdict according to that light that shines into it. If it hath only the twilight of nature to illustrate it, as the Heathens had no other, then it can pass judgment only upon natural duties and unnatural sins: thus the consciences of Heathens, through some remainders of original knowledge, informed them that worship was due to God and justice to men; and that all impieties against God and all injuries against men, should, in the end, be severely punished. But, if conscience enjoys the superadded light of Scripture, it judges then of those duties and those sins, that could only be known by Divine Revelation: hence it is, that conscience is enabled to form such a proposition as this: *He, that believeth, shall be saved: he, that believeth not, shall be damned:* this proposition it forms, not from natural light, but from the super-induced light of Scripture. This is the first direct act of conscience, whereby it pronounceth of men's works, whether they be sinful or not, and what the reward or punishment is that shall follow them, according as it finds it written in the dark and imperfect Law of Nature, or in the superadded Law of God.

Secondly. When conscience hath thus pronounced whether the action be good or bad, and what reward or punishment belongs to it, its next office is, to Witness and Depose, that we have done such or such actions.

This is a reflex act, whereby, when conscience hath discovered what is sin and what is duty, it testifies, that, either we have performed the one, or that we have committed the other. The Scripture reveals, that faith shall be rewarded with eternal life, and unbelief punished with death eternal: hereupon conscience

makes reflection upon itself, and applies the proposition: "But I believe, or I do not believe:" and that is its witnessing or deposing office.

Thirdly. It hath besides this, the office of a Judge, to acquit or condemn.

And this it doth, by inferring a comfortable or a terrifying conclusion from the former premises; applying the reward or punishment to ourselves, according as those actions have been ours to which they belong. If it hath proved us unbelievers, straight it pronounceth us condemned persons; or if it evidences our faith to us, presently it justifies and acquits us. Hence it is, that wicked men are haunted with pale fears and ghastly reflections; because they are always malefactors arraigned at a bar: a bar, that they carry about with them in their own breasts; where they hear a thousand witnesses sworn and examined; where they hear their judge, ten thousand times a day, pronouncing them cursed and damned. And hence it is, also, that there is sometimes diffused into the hearts of God's children such sweet joy, such solid peace, such calm stayedness, and some prelibations of heavenly bliss; because they carry in their breasts a court of judicature, where their Earthly Judge, Conscience, acquits them, and assures them that their Heavenly Judge will do so also.

This is Conscience: that faithful register in every man's bosom, that writes down the actions, discourses, and cogitations of every hour and minute.

This being premised concerning the Nature and Offices of Conscience, I shall come, in the next place, to inquire into these following particulars, into which I shall digest the method of this subject.

What it is, that doth Corrupt and Vitiate Conscience.

What it is, to have a Clear Conscience.

Of what Importance and Consequence it is, that our Consciences be kept clear and void of offence: under which, I shall give you the reasons of the point.

I shall lay down some Rules and Means, whereby we may attain unto and keep a pure and clean Conscience.

I. WHAT IS IT, THAT DOTH CORRUPT AND VITIATE CONSCIENCE, IN EXECUTING ITS OFFICES.

This I shall couch under two particulars: and they are,
Ignorance; and,
Wilful sinning.

i. IGNORANCE corrupts the Conscience.

Conscience is the guide of life, and knowledge is the eye of conscience; and if this be darkened, the blind leads the blind till both fall into the ditch. Conscience is a guide, that leads apace; and, therefore, had need see its way before it: which some not being well able to discern, have wound themselves into inextricable wanderings; pursuing every glaring delusion; and running after every skipping light, that dances before it, till at last they have lost both themselves and their consciences too. How many are there, that have thus bewildered themselves in their own fancies and opinions; and so have fallen upon the precipice of damnable errors, and into bogs of mire and filthy lusts, only through an ignorant conscience and self-conceited pride that is always a companion of it! This ignorance fills the conscience with false presumptions, and draws it to wrong determinations and conclusions; which, though they seem to be but little mistakes in the notion, yet are most destructive and pernicious in a man's practice. As a small mistake, in the levelling of an arrow at the hand, makes a wide distance at the mark; so a small mistake, in the notion of truth, makes a wide error in the practice of godliness. A mis-persuaded conscience usually gives rise to misguided zeal: and zeal, without knowledge, is but a religious frenzy, that fashions out to itself strange shapes of sin and duty, of good and evil; and, usually, takes the one for the other, until it falls under that woe denounced by the prophet, Isa. v. 20. *Woe unto them, that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.*

Ignorance vitiates and corrupts the conscience two ways: either it makes it unnecessarily scrupulous; or, else, it makes it daringly presumptuous.

1. Ignorance fetters and binds up the conscience, *either to the doing of or abstaining from that, concerning which God hath laid no law and obligation at all upon it.*

This is an Encroaching Conscience, which makes that an enclosure, that God hath left common; and rigorously exacts from us, what God hath permitted as indifferent. It is a very sad judgment, to be given up to the domineering impositions of a Scrupulous Conscience. Such a conscience as this is will certainly make much more sin, than ever the Law made: for, whatever we do against the commands of conscience is sin, though it be not immediately and directly against the commands of God: Rom. xiv. 23. Now some there are, who do so needlessly pin and coop up themselves, that they cannot stir, nor moderately use that lawful liberty which God hath indulged them, but presently they are entangled in sin, because of the imperious prohibitions of their own consciences.

2. Sometimes, Ignorance makes conscience licentious; *indulging itself in those actions, that the Law of God condemns; making it daringly presumptuous.*

And this is a quite contrary extreme; and yet, as opposite as these are, we oftentimes find them joined together in the same persons: the same persons, that have a needlessly Scrupulous Conscience, have also a daringly Presumptuous Conscience: and this proceeds from an ignorance of their due bounds and limits. Who, ordinarily, so profane, as the superstitious? Their ignorance makes them scrupulous observers of little circumstances, and yet bold adventurers upon notorious sins. What a strange wry conscience have such men; who tie up themselves strictly where God gives them scope, and yet run riotously where God's commands and threatenings restrain! dreading more the transgressing of one law of man, than they do the transgressing of the whole moral law of God! This is from ignorance; whereby men do not know the due bounds, either of that liberty which God indulgeth them, or that restraint which God lays upon them.

And this is the First thing, that corrupts conscience; namely, Ignorance.

ii. WILFUL SINNING corrupts and vitiates the Conscience.

And that, Two ways.

1. Sometimes, such sins *stupify and deaden the Conscience*, especially if they become frequent and customary; and, therefore, we usually call them Conscience-wasting Sins.

Believe it, through a continued course of known and presumptuous sins, you will bring your consciences into very sad

consumptions, that they will pine away under iniquities. And how many are there, who have their consciences already lying speechless, senseless, and gasping; ready to give up the ghost! The Apostle, in Eph. iv. 19. speaks of them, that *being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness.*

2. Sometimes, such sins do *affright, terrify, and enrage the Conscience;* filling it with dreadful thoughts of eternal, future vengeance.

Wilful and known sins sometimes terrify and enrage the conscience. And this is a corruption of the conscience, when the terrors of it are so overwhelming, as to sink men into despair: for, mark it, it is its office to accuse and to threaten for sin; and, the greater the sin is, the more sharp and stinging ought to be its reproofs: but, be the sin never so great for which conscience reproves, if yet it denounceth wrath without making mention of repentance and hopes of mercy, it exceeds its commission that God hath given it, and becomes an evil and corrupt conscience. And, therefore, we have that expression, Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near.....having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.* By an *evil conscience*, here, is meant a Despairing Conscience; from which we are freed, only by the blood of sprinkling: to be convinced of sin, and not at all to be convinced of righteousness, is such a conviction, as constitutes one part of the torments of the damned in hell, whose worm never dies; and, certainly, that conscience must needs be very evil and very corrupt, which breeds in it this hellish worm, while we are here upon earth.

And, so much, for the First thing: What it is, that corrupts the Conscience.

II. The next thing propounded, is, to shew you, WHAT IT IS TO HAVE A CLEAR CONSCIENCE.

There are two things, that denominate a conscience to be clear; when it is Pure, and when it is Peaceable: when it is free from all known and wilful defilements, and when it is not justly burdened with the guilt of sin, then is it a Clear Conscience.

1. Then a man hath a Clear Conscience, WHEN IT IS FREE FROM ALL KNOWN AND WILFUL SINS.

I say, from all known and wilful sins: for it is impossible, while we are encompassed about with infirmities and oppressed with a heavy body of sin and death, to keep ourselves free and

pure from all sin: *For in many things we offend all*, says St. James: ch. iii. 2. But these sins of daily weakness and sudden surreption, as they are usually small sins and scarce discernible, so are they no obstructions to a Clear Conscience; no more than the moats of the sun-beams are obstructions to a clear day. As for those quotidian weaknesses and sins of daily infirmity, they neither leave guilt nor defilement upon the conscience of God's children: but, as their more foul sins are done away, by particular acts of repentance; so these are done away, by a general state of repentance, which state the children of God are always in: and there is also a constant out-flowing of the blood of Christ and of the mercy of God upon the soul, to remove the guilt and filth of those sins as we fall into them. Then is the conscience clear, when, all former sins being pardoned to us, we daily labour to please God: though it be with manifold imperfections and weaknesses, this doth not hinder but that our consciences may be both pure and peaceable; while we thus sincerely strive to keep ourselves from all wilful and from all presumptuous sins, our consciences are clear, notwithstanding the sins of daily infirmity. So says the Psalmist, Psal. xix. 13. *Keep back thy servant from presumptuous sins.....then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*

That is the first thing: Conscience is clear, when it is free from all known and wilful sins.

ii. Then a man hath a Clear Conscience, WHEN IT IS NOT JUSTLY BURDENED WITH THE GUILT OF SIN.

I say, not justly burdened; because, sometimes, we may burden ourselves without cause, when God hath already forgiven us. Many times, through temptations and desertions, God's children reflect back upon their old sins with new troubles, and rip up their old wounds and make them bleed afresh. They remember against themselves, what God hath forgotten; and, with great terrors, accuse and condemn themselves, for what God hath already remitted to them.

Here I shall lay down Two things.

That every Quiet Conscience is not a Clear Conscience.

That every Troubled Conscience is not an Evil Conscience.

1. *Every Quiet Conscience is not a Clear Conscience.*

Some are lulled asleep in security; and their consciences are

quiet, merely because they are insensible: it may be, they have so harrassed and wasted their consciences by dreadful sins, so often mortally wounded them, that now they have not strength enough to become quarrelsome and troublesome; and this they call Peace: indeed, it is such a peace as Galgathus reproaches the Romans with in Tacitus; when they had laid all waste, then they called it Peace: so these sinners think they have good and peaceable consciences, because they do not menace, torment, and worry them; and, alas! how can they? their consciences are murdered: there is no sense nor life left in them. This is no Peace, but a mere Solitude and Desolation of Conscience: and, yet, believe it too, these quiet and peaceable consciences will not be long so: at the hour of death, or if not then the next moment after death, these peaceable consciences will be startled out of their sleep, and will roar so loud, that heaven and hell shall hear them. As, in still weather, many times, matter is gathering for a storm; so, while conscience seems so still and quiet, it is only gathering matter for a tempest, that will one day pour upon your heads. And, oh, how grievous will it be, when those consciences, that never gave them an ill word before, shall on a sudden drag them before the tribunal of God, and there bitterly accuse them of those horrid sins that once they seemed to take no notice of, and call for the severest execution of divine wrath and vengeance upon them! And, possibly, many, that speak of the peace of their consciences, do not find it so neither: they are as far from a peaceable conscience, as they are from a raving and a raging conscience. A raving conscience soon discovers itself in hellish despair: but there are many, whose consciences do not rave, and yet are never quiet: they give them many a secret twitch and gird at the very heart, not outwardly discernible by others: as thunder rumbles long in the entrails of a cloud, that never breaks forth into dreadful and terrible cracks; so a man may have a rumbling and a grumbling conscience, a conscience that may murmur and scowl upon him, and yet he may carry it as if all were calm and serene within him: however, though all within may be quiet, yet a quiet conscience may be a polluted conscience; as a standing puddle may be as foul as the raging sea, when it casts out its mire and filth.

2. As every quiet conscience is not a clear conscience, so *every Troubled Conscience is not an Evil Conscience.*

Hypocrites and wicked men may indeed, and do often, so judge: "Would God ever suffer such strange terrors to seize upon men, were they not notorious sinners?" As those barbarians at Malta, spoken of in the Acts, when they saw the viper fasten upon the Apostle's hand, presently concluded that he was some wicked person, whom divine vengeance would not suffer to live: so these men, when they see the worm of conscience fasten upon others, presently judge them guilty of notorious crimes; crimes, for which the vengeance and wrath of God pursue them. But this is a wrong censure, and most unjust. For the most part it is seen, that those, that have the best consciences, are most troubled, at least for a time; until the Holy Ghost persuade them of the love of God, and of the pardon of their sins. It is the greatest fault of a tender conscience, that it misinterprets every thing against itself: and, oftentimes, when God rejoices over it, it apprehends he frowns upon it; mistaking the firing of a bonfire for the firing of a beacon, and giving an alarm when they should proclaim peace and joy: many times it is so with them, that have tender consciences. A man may be long troubled for those sins, that are already pardoned to him: Nathan comes to David, and, upon his confession that he had sinned, 2 Sam. xii. 13. *I have sinned*, says he: God by Nathan tells him, that he had put away his sin from him; and yet his conscience, though it were clear in respect of any guilt that God charged upon him, yet was not clear in respect of what he himself charged upon himself: he thought himself guilty in his own apprehension, as you may perceive by his penning of the 51st Psalm; yet he was not guilty in God's account, for he assures him, by his prophet, that he had pardoned him.

QUEST. "Now it being so, that both a quiet conscience may be impure, and that a troubled conscience may be a clear conscience, how shall we know whether when our consciences are troubled, it be from the guilt of sin remaining upon them; or whether, when they be clear and quiet, it be from the removal of that guilt?"

FOR ANSWER unto this;

First: It may be known when a man's conscience is troubled from the guilt of sin remaining upon it, by considering the

Effects of this trouble. Doth he find, that, when conscience is disquieted, he is apt to shift off the trouble by diverting it, and doing what he can to lull it asleep? doth he neglect prayer, reading the word, and other duties and means that God hath appointed to bring him to a true repentance for his sin? If it be so, this man hath great cause to fear, that the trouble of his conscience proceeds from the impurity and defilement of it. Where God will save the soul, this trouble of conscience works in another manner, and stirs up a man to pray, to hear, to meditate upon God's word, where his condition will be stated to his hand; to follow God in all his ways and ordinances, making him restless till he come to know that his sins are pardoned, and his wounds healed and closed up by the blood of Jesus Christ. Many there are, in whom the troubles of conscience never produce any good effects; but all their care is, how they may divert all troublesome and disquieting thoughts from themselves; and so they wear off convictions: now this trouble can never produce any saving effect; and is itself produced merely from that corroding and gnawing guilt, that lies upon conscience, which a true and genuine trouble is a means by God appointed to remove.

Secondly. "How may a man know when conscience is quiet, whether it be quieted upon God's grounds, because the guilt of sin is removed from it?"

To this I answer: It must be considered, whether quietness of conscience comes after trouble: and, if conscience be quiet after trouble, then you must consider how it came to be quieted. Did you wear it away with other businesses? or, did you seek to God by prayer, and applying of the promises to yourselves? Did you, in the way of God, obtain peace? Now if a man's quietness, that he hath, be got after trouble, and if got in God's way, that way which he hath appointed to still and quiet the conscience, you may then satisfy yourself in it. But, when as you never have been troubled, or having been troubled have worne it off, you may be assured such a peace of conscience is far worse and more dangerous, than the most horrid troubles and disquietments of conscience that can be.

III. I come now to the Third General Head propounded: and that was, to shew you, OF WHAT GREAT IMPORTANCE, AND OF WHAT BENEFICIAL CONSEQUENCE IT IS,

TO KEEP OUR CONSCIENCES CLEAR AND INOFFENSIVE.

And, in speaking unto this, I shall, at once, both give you the Reasons of the point, why it should be our continual endeavour to keep clear consciences; and, also, give you Motives to persuade you to the duty.

I shall name only Six.

i. A Clear Conscience is THE MOST COMFORTABLE RELIEF UNDER FALSE REPROACHES AND ASPERSIONS, THAT ARE CAST UPON US.

A good conscience is in our own power alone; but, it is in the power of every slanderous tongue, to blast a good name: and, indeed, it is a thing almost impossible, to keep at once both a good conscience and a good name. The world is shattered and fractured into so many parties, and each of them of such different relishes of good and bad, that, unless our actions have as universal a gust, as, according to the Rabbins' tradition, the Israelites' manna had, that it had the taste of that which they best fancied; we must of necessity fall under mis-constructions, censures, and defamations. For, indeed, if we observe it, it is usually our similitude to others that makes them think and speak well of us: whosoever commends another, commends him for somewhat, that he supposeth at least he hath in himself: and this is the reason of that woe, which our Saviour denounceth, Luke vi. 26. *Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you.* When wicked men speak well of us, it is a sign that we are but too too like them: even a Heathen could say, when he was highly applauded by the vulgar rout, "What evil have I done, that these men praise me?" the very reproaches of ungodly men are the best testimonials that can be given of an excellent and singular Christian. In a strict and holy conversation, there is that contradiction to the loose profaneness of the world, as, at once, both convinces and offends them, reproves them and galls them: and if, as we ought, we thus reproach them by our lives, we must expect that they will again reproach us by their lying slanders. It is a sinful tenderness of our esteem among men, when we tack about to every popular breath that blows: such must needs prefer the praise of men, before the praise of God. And, let me tell you, this is as fruitless, as it is sinful; since this wind will always blow from contrary points: while some extol us, others will as much vilify and scorn us. It

is miserable to live upon the reports and opinions of others: let us not reckon what they say, but what reports our own consciences make: it is far better to offend the whole world, than God and conscience: and, if a storm of obloquy and reproaches, railings and curses, do at any time patter upon us; how sweet then is it, to retire inward into the calm innocency of our own hearts! there, a thousand witnesses will tell us, we have not deserved them: how comfortable is it, to remit our cause to God; and leave our vindication to him, for whose sake we suffer reproach! Thus Jeremiah appeals to God, Jer. xx. 10, 12. *I have heard the defaming of many....Report, say they, and we will report it:* that is, let us raise a disgraceful and reproachful report of him: *But*, says he, *O Lord of Hosts*, thou *that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart....unto thee have I opened my cause.* Thus, if, while wicked men are maliciously conspiring how to blot and sully our names, we can but keep our consciences clear; what need we much trouble ourselves how the wind blows abroad, since we are harboured under the retreat of a peacefull heart? They may, possibly, persuade others to believe their calumnies; but they can never persuade God to believe them: He, who searcheth the heart and conscience, knows that we are injured; and he is hastening forward a day, wherein he will clear up our righteousness: and, then, the testimony of a good conscience shall put ten thousand slanderers to silence.

ii. A Clear Conscience, as it enables a man to bear reproaches from others with patience, SO IT GIVES HIM AN ADVANTAGE TO REPROVE OTHERS WITH AUTHORITY.

It is a true rule, That he, who reproves another, ought himself to be free from the fault which he reproves: for, otherwise, the reproof neither comes with freedom from the reprover, nor with efficacy to the reproved.

1. *A reproof, that comes from a guilty conscience, is but stammering and timorous.*

Such a man's own conscience must needs rise up in his throat, and choke his reproofs. Consciousness of the same miscarriages will retort whatsoever we can say against others, more forcibly against ourselves; and will suggest to us, that it is but a base piece * of hypocrisy, to blame that which we ourselves practise.

* Κυβευτης αναγκη και ῥαδιουργον ειναι, ὃς-ις, ενεχομενος τινι αυτος κακῳ, επιμησθαι τοις αλλοις. Arriani Epictet. l. iii. c. 22.

With what face canst thou press others to repent and reform? What arguments canst thou use, who, by continuing in the same sins, dost thyself judge that those arguments are of no force! Thus conscience suggests; and, thereby, tongue-ties reproof.

2. This too *makes reproofs ineffectual.*

It were a temper to be wished and prayed for, that we could only respect how righteous the reproof is, and not how righteous the person is that gives it; and be content to have the motes plucked out of our eyes, though it be by such as have beams in their own eyes. For, indeed, there is no more reason to reject sound admonition, because it comes from an unsound heart, than there is to stop our ears against good counsel, because it is delivered perhaps by an unsavoury breath. Yet so it is, that, when men of defiled consciences and conversations reprove others, they are apt to think, either that they are not in earnest, and do but personate what they speak; or, else, that they envy them their sins, and would engross all to themselves; and so the reproof takes no place upon them. But, when a man of a clear and unspotted conscience reproves wicked men, his reproof breaks in upon them with conviction and authority; and, if it doth not reform, it must at least daunt and silence them. "Here is one, that reproves me for sin, who doubtless believes it to be evil, by his own avoiding it. Here is one, that denounceth wrath if I repent not, who doubtless believes it to be as terrible as he represents it, by his own carefulness to escape it." And, thus, a clear conscience hath a great advantage to reprove sinners with success; at least to work conviction, if not amendment in them.

iii. A Clear Conscience GIVES US BOLDNESS OF ACCESS UNTO GOD.

Guilt abashes the soul, and makes it both ashamed and afraid to appear in the presence of God: and therefore Adam, as soon as he had sinned against his Maker, presently hides himself from him. We may observe in ourselves, what a slavish dejectedness seizeth us when we come to God in duty, after we have wronged him by any known sin: we come to him suspiciously; and with

Τοις βασιλευσι και τυραννοις οι δορυφοροι και τα οπλα παρεχε το επιτιμαν τισι, και δυνασθαι και κολαζειν τους αμαρτανοντας, και αυτοις εισι κακοις· τω δε κυνικω, αντι των οπλων και των δορυφορων το συνειδος την εξουσιαν ταυτην παραδιδωσιν. Id. ibid.

such a misgiving fear, as if we would not have God take notice that we are before him; and are still in pain, till the duty be over. But, when our consciences are clear, oh, with what delight do we haste to God, and with what content do we stay with him! How doth the soul dilate and spread itself under the smiles of God, beating full upon it! "Lo, O Lord, here is a heart, that I labour to make and keep void of offence: do thou fill it with thy promised Grace and Spirit. It is not, indeed, a mansion pure enough for the pure and holy God; yet is it such, as thou wilt accept of and dwell in. There are still many hidden corruptions in it, but do thou search them out; and thou, who hast kept thy servant from presumptuous sins, do thou also cleanse me from secret faults." Thus a clear conscience, with a holy and reverend boldness, addresseth itself to God; and sweetly closeth up every duty and every prayer, with full assurance of obtaining mercy from God. So the Apostle, Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near....in full assurance of faith:* how may we gain this full assurance, when we draw near to God? by *having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience:* get but a pure and clear conscience, and that will enable you to draw near to God *in full assurance of faith.* And so, in the like parallel place, 1 John iii. 21. *Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God:* if conscience be not evil to accuse us, then have we confidence towards God: when the face of a man's conscience looks chearful, and hath not a frown nor a wrinkle upon it, this makes us joyfully to apprehend that God's face towards us is serene also, and that we shall be welcome at all times into our Father's presence: this conscience suggests to us, and makes us come with a holy, yet with an awful boldness unto God.

iv. A Clear Conscience is THE SWEETEST BOSOM FRIEND, WITH WHICH WE MAY AT ALL TIMES FREELY AND INTIMATELY CONVERSE.

Wicked men, indeed, of all company in the world, dread and hate themselves most; they have a lowering, rumbling conscience within, that always threatens and disquiets them; and, therefore, they love to keep abroad: soliloquies and heart-discourses are a very torment to them; and they wonder that the Psalmist should ever bid them *commune with* their *own heart, and be still;* as it is in Psal. iv. 4: they are never less still, than when they discourse awhile with their own consciences; which, upon many high provocations given them, are grown so quarrelsome, and

do so thunder out woes and curses against them, and so hurl about swords, firebrands, and death, that they dare not so much as once look within doors. But a Christian, whose conscience is clean and clear, finds it the best companion in the world: in his solitudes and retirements, with what delight doth he call his own heart aside! There he and his God, sweetly and peaceably confer together; and there pass mutual endearments and embraces: the soul embraces and clasps about God, with the arms of faith and dependance; and God embraces the soul, with the arms of his everlasting love. Here is mutual communication of secrets: the soul unlocks the secrets of its own conscience before God; and God, again, reveals the secrets of his own love to the soul. Here are mutual rejoicings: the soul rejoiceth in God, its Saviour; and God rejoiceth over the soul, to do it good. And, under these intercourses of love and favour, the soul is ready to faint away, and to dissolve with sweetness and delight. This is that continual feast, which a good conscience entertains a Christian with, where all is transacted with a noiseless mirth.

v. A Clear Conscience is THE BEST COMFORT AND SUPPORT, WHEN FEARS, AND TROUBLES, AND DANGERS, ARE ON EVERY SIDE.

It is a most blessed thing when trouble is without, to have peace within, in our own bosom; to be then at peace with God and ourselves. And therefore saith Christ, John xvi. 33. *These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation.* A Christian is a man made up of paradoxes: he is *sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing: poor* himself, and *yet* enriching *many:* he hath *nothing, and yet* possesseth *all things:* 2 Cor. vi. 10. And so, here, he hath tribulation in the world, and yet is at peace. When once that great and bloody quarrel between God and the soul, is taken up and compounded; when we are reconciled to God, and thereby our consciences become reconciled to us; all the enmity and persecutions of the world are but little pelting differences, which cannot disturb the solid and inviolate peace of a Christian. This is a peace, which as the friendship of the world cannot give, so neither can the enmity of the world take away. My *peace I leave with you: my peace I give unto you.* Let not your hearts be troubled. It is observable concerning Josiah, 2 Kings xxii. 20. that God promiseth him by the mouth of Huldah the prophetess, that he should *be gathered into* his *grave in peace:* and yet, in the very next chapter, v. 29. it is related, that he was

slain in the wars that he undertook against Pharaoh-Necho, King of Egypt: he was slain in war, and yet he died in peace: and no wonder; for whosoever dies in peace with God and his own conscience, dies peaceably, though he die in the midst of wars and tumults.

vi. A Clear Conscience AFFORDS SWEET AND UNSPEAKABLE COMFORT IN A DYING HOUR.

When all things must take their last leave of us, and we of them; when death sets all its terrors in array against us; oh what a blessed support will it then be to the departing soul, to be able to make its appeal, as Hezekiah did! Isa. xxxviii. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.* Such a testimony, at such a time, is as much worth as heaven itself. This is to have heaven let down into us one hour, and to be ourselves taken up into heaven the next. Now, possibly, men may frolic away their days in sin and vanity, and live as though they should never give an account: but that day and hour are coming, wherein conscience will begin to open its eyes, when their friends stand ready about them to close up theirs: and then it will see those horrid shapes of death and hell and wrath eternal, which, while they were secure sinners, they never believed, and, now that they are awakened sinners, (and, alas! possibly too late awakened) they cannot escape. If, therefore, you would have peace and comfort in death, be sure you cherish a good conscience in your life. You may now, indeed, bribe it to give in a false and flattering testimony; but, when eternity is in view, it will then speak truth. And, oh! thrice happy they, to whom a true conscience becomes then an excusing conscience.

And, so much, for the Third thing propounded, namely, of what concernment it is to labour, to keep consciences void of offence.

IV. The next thing propounded was, to give you some RULES and DIRECTIONS how you may get, and also how you may keep, clear and inoffensive consciences.

OBJECT. But you will say, "It is in vain to give rules for that, which is impossible to be done. Doth not the Wise Man challenge all the world upon this point, Prov. xx. 9? *Who can*

say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' Never did the raging sea cast up more mire and filth, than the heart of man doth; and, as soon may we empty the vast waters of the great deep, and scour the bottom of it from all its dirt and mud, as attempt to keep conscience clear, into which a sinful heart is continually emptying and pouring its filth and mire."

To this I ANSWER: were it impossible, yet there is no release to our obligation. We are commanded to be holy even as God is holy, whose infinite purity is such, as stains the heavens themselves, and puts the glorious angels out of countenance. This perfection is much more impossible for us, who are but lumps of dirt mingled and kneaded together with sin, than for a thick clod of earth to be as transparent as the sun that shines; but yet these excessive commands have a use in them, even to raise up our endeavours to a higher pitch and strain, than if we were commanded only somewhat that were within our own power; as he, that aims at a star, is like to shoot higher, than he, that aims only at a turf. Thus, though it were impossible to keep clean consciences, *void of offence* both *toward God and toward men*, according to the exactness of God's command; yet he, that is careful to avoid all pollutions, both of flesh and spirit, shall certainly have a much cleaner conscience by far, than he, that wallows in those sins. In a foul way it is perhaps impossible to keep ourselves from being bespattered with dirt; yet he, that walks warily and carefully, comes cleaner home, than he, that tumbles and rolls himself in it.

But yet this duty is not impossible. It is, indeed, difficult to keep a clear conscience; but, yet, it is a thing that is feasible.

i. And, IN GENERAL, there are Two ways to keep our consciences clear: either, by preserving them from being defiled; or, else, by cleansing them when they are defiled.

1. We may keep our Consciences clear, *by preserving them from being defiled.*

You will say, "How can this be? Is there any man living, says the Wise Man, *that doeth good, and sinneth not?* And doth not every sin leave behind it a spot and stain upon the face of conscience? How then can we keep them clear?"

I answer: Sins are of two sorts: there are sins, that are Crimes; and there are sins, that are but Faults. Crimes, I call

those sins, that are branded for infamous both by God and man; as murder, adultery, blasphemy, and the like, at which even natural conscience recoils; such carnal sins, as affright conscience, and make it look pale and ghastly: a Crime, I also call any sin, that is consubstantiated by an access of guilt, by the dreadful aggravations of being committed knowingly and wilfully. By Faults, I mean sins of daily infirmity and surreption; such, as do frequently surprize the best and holiest Christians; from which no man's piety nor watchfulness can secure him. Now, though we be overtaken with Faults, and every day and hour contract new and fresh guilt upon our consciences: yet we may have clear and good consciences, while we are careful to keep ourselves from Crimes; from all sins, that are so in their own nature by the horridness of the fact, and from all sins that are made so by greatening circumstances of being deliberate and wilful: while we keep ourselves from these we have good consciences, notwithstanding sins of ordinary weakness: that man hath a good conscience, who preserves himself from all infamous and gross sins, and from all other wilful and deliberate sins. Now this clearness of conscience is a thing possible to be attained: men may, with care and caution, keep themselves free from all self-condemning crimes; and may live so evenly, that, when their consciences are most peevish and touchy, yet they shall have nothing to accuse them of, but what is common to all men. Of such men as these, this we may affirm, that they have been able with joy to reflect back upon their past lives in a dying hour; who, possibly, never knew any other guilt by themselves, than what the sins of common and daily infirmity have exposed them unto. This it is, to keep good consciences. "We live well," says St. Austin, "if we live without crimes: to live without fault is impossible; and he, that thinks he doth it, keeps himself not from sin, but from pardon."

2. Another way to keep our Consciences clear, is, *by cleansing them when they are defiled.*

He keeps his garments clean, who keeps himself from falling; and, in the next degree, he, who, being fallen, hastes to cleanse himself from his contracted filth. And thus, at least, we may keep our consciences clear, both from Crimes and from Faults also, while we labour to cleanse them from their defilements, and to rub out and wash away those spots with which at any time we are occasionally bespattered. There is a twofold blot, which sin leaves behind it: there is a blot of Discredit, and a blot of

Defilement. The former is indelible as the scar remains, when the wound is healed; so this blot remains upon the soul, when the guilt of sin is removed: it is a Discredit to a malefactor, though pardoned, that ever he should do that which deserved death: and, so, it is a kind of blot upon a Christian's name for ever, to have committed those sins that have deserved eternal death, though, through the free mercy and unspeakable grace of God, he hath obtained the pardon of them. But, then, there is another blot, a blot of Defilement, that renders men loathsome and deformed in the eyes of God; and, thus, every sin that we commit leaves a blot and a stain upon the soul; a stain, that defaceth God's image, and that defiles our own consciences: and, when this stain and blot is cleansed, then are we said to have Clear Consciences, when we have taken off that blot and defilement that sin hath left, whereby we are rendered deformed in the sight of God, and whereby the image of God is defaced upon the soul.

Thus you see, in general, that there are two ways to keep a Clear Conscience; the one, by preventing its defilement, and the other, by cleansing it, when it is defiled.

ii. Now to help you, in both these cases, I shall lay down SEVERAL PARTICULARS.

1. If you would have your Consciences clear, *get them rightly informed.*

How can conscience be clear, so long as the fogs and thick mists of ignorance and error possess it? Labour, therefore, to let spiritual light into it, that you may see how to cleanse it. It is as much vanity to go about to cleanse an ignorant conscience, as it is in vain to sweep a dark room. An ignorant, conscientious man, that knows not the limits of sin and duty, may, after a great deal of pother with his conscience, leave it much worse than he found it; and cast out jewels, instead of rubbish. Indeed, it is impossible for an ignorant man to have a good conscience, whether we respect Duty or Comfort: in point of Duty, I have shewed you formerly, that ignorance will make conscience unnecessarily scrupulous, or daringly presumptuous: neither can an ignorant conscience be good in respect of Comfort; because, through ignorance, conscience oftentimes quarrels at that, which is a true ground of rejoicing. Conscience is that glass, whereby we may view both ourselves and our actions: now as a glass, when falsely framed, represents a beautiful face monstrous and

frightful; so conscience, when falsely informed, makes even lovely actions appear misshapen and terrifying, by distorted representations of those things that are lawful, and perhaps our duty also. Therefore, in the first place, get an enlightened conscience, if you would get a good conscience: for, what says the Wise Man, Prov. xix. 2? *That the soul be without knowledge, it is not good;* or, as some translations have it, *a soul without knowledge is not good:* it is, indeed, good for nothing, unless it be to make men sin conscientiously; and to embolden them to commit the greatest wickedness in the world, with peace and comfort. Thus, says our Saviour, John xvi. 2. *Whosoever killeth you* shall *think that he doeth God* good *service,* through the error and mistake of their conscience. So, in 1 Cor. ii. 8. *Had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.*

Knowledge betters the conscience Two ways.

(1) It gives it Direction, what to choose and what to avoid: it instructs it to discern betwixt good and evil.

Ignorant persons often mistake the one for the other; and eschew, what they should follow: or, if they chance to do that, which is good, as it is not of great worth to do good only by chance and hazard; so they sin also, in doing good: while the judgment is in suspence, the conscience must needs be under guilt. If I know not whether I ought to do an action or to forbear, which way soever I take I am entangled in sin; *for whatsoever is not of faith is sin:* that is, whatsoever is done with a wavering conscience, that I know not whether it be sinful or not, that thereby becomes sin; and, whatever a man doth doubtingly, he is damned if he doth it: He, that eateth doubtingly, says the Apostle, *is damned if he eat:* Rom. xiv. 23.

(2) Knowledge gives the Conscience *Strength,* to enforce us to the doing of that, which it discovers to be good; and to the flight of that, which it discovers to be evil.

A knowing person cannot sin so easily as an ignorant man may; but he must struggle and wrestle harder, and offer more violence by far to his own conscience: a man, that sees his danger before him, will hardly be dragged unto precipices; whereas one, that is blind, is easily led thither suspecting nothing: so, here, a knowing person, that sees the danger of hell and damnation before him, if he sins it must be with a great deal of inward reluctancy: an enlightened conscience struggles, and withholds him; and, if temptation be so violent as to wrest him out of the hand of conscience, how is he racked and torne

in pieces betwixt conscience and temptations! and, when conscience hath lost its hold, still it pursues him; and follows him to his sin; and disturbs his pleasure; and embitters that sweetness, that he thought to have found in sin before; and never leaves its clamours, till it hath, at least by a hypocritical and formal repentance, and by engagements to be more observing of the commands of conscience for the future, satisfied and appeased it. This force conscience hath, when it is duly informed with knowledge. But, where ignorance hath blinded it, it suffers men quietly to rush upon God's neck, and *upon the thick bosses of his buckler*: it sees not, neither respects any danger, when it is even on the very brink of hell: an ignorant conscience is like a benighted or bewildered traveller, which, because it cannot see its own way before it, what is to be chosen and what is to be refused, lays the reins upon the neck of men's lusts, and suffers them without controul to take their own course. And, therefore, if you would have good consciences, get them rightly informed, with the knowledge of what is sin and what is duty.

2. If you would have a Clear Conscience, then *cast out the filth of Conscience by a daily and frequent Confession.*

Confession, one of the Fathers calls the Vomit of the Soul, whereby it easeth itself when it is over-charged and glutted with sin and guilt: and so the Scripture also speaks, when the Apostle speaks of apostates relapsing back again into their old sins: in 2 Pet. ii. 22. he saith, they return with the dog to his vomit; that is, they return and do again lick up those sins, which before they disgorged and cast up by confession. This, indeed, is the way, when conscience is burdened with the guilt of any sin: when sin lies unconcocted and heavy within, go then and pour out your heart before the Lord in the confession of your sin. See what sudden ease this will bring to conscience: David was sin-sick, and he resolves upon this course, Ps. xxxii. 5. *I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I* would *confess my transgressions*, and suddenly there came ease to his conscience, *and thou*, O Lord, says he, *forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* Are our consciences oppressed with the burden and weight of great and numberless sins? here we may, by an humble and penitent confession, unload them all before God. And this is the Mystery of Confession: the way to unload our sins from off us, is, to take them upon ourselves: when we charge ourselves with them and impute them to ourselves, God will not impute them to us, but charge them upon Christ; for he

hath promised, *If we judge* and condemn *ourselves*, that *we* shall *not be judged* and condemned: thus, in 2 Sam. xii. 13. as soon as David had, by an humble confession, taken his sin to himself, saying, *I have sinned;* God, by the Prophet, tells him, that he had taken away his sin from him: *The Lord also*, says the Prophet to him, *hath put away thy sin.* And, indeed, have we not found it thus by manifold experience, that, when conscience hath been bowed down by the unsupportable weight of the guilt of sins, a sorrowful and ingenuous confession of them unto God hath lightened the burden? and whereas, before, conscience was heavy and gloomy; now, it looks chearfully upon us, under the apprehensions of God's pardoning grace, that God will pardon and forgive them to us? Now this easing of our consciences by confession must be frequently reiterated: our consciences are always filling with sin and guilt, and therefore we must be always casting of it out by confession: as, in the emptying of a pond, where there are many streams rising and bubbling up, if we stop and intermit the work, the pond grows presently full again; truly our hearts and consciences are like such ponds, in which there are many corrupt streams still sprouting up: now confession is the laving of it out, which if we do but a while intermit, our consciences again grow as full of sin and guilt as ever; and, therefore, there must be a frequent and daily confession of sin, yea our confession must be reiterated as often as we fall into and commit any sin. And that is another means to keep our consciences clear.

I might also add, That an effectual means to keep the Conscience clear, is *frequently to wash it with Repenting Tears:* but, because unfeigned confession of sin doth also include and suppose a penitential frame of heart, I shall not, therefore, insist upon this as a particular head.

3. In the Third place, therefore, If you would keep your Consciences clear and inoffensive, then *labour to get a Mean and Low Esteem of the World.*

The inordinate love of the present world is utterly inconsistent with a good conscience. What is it, that makes so many offer violence to their consciences, to stretch and rack them to any base compliance or sinful practice, but only that they may thereby gain some secular advantage, or that they may thereby avoid some worldly inconvenience? This is that, which fills the world with fraud and cozenage, with rapine and extortion, while

all tug hard to get from one another, although they lose their consciences in the scuffle. This is that, which makes men so often shift their sails, that they may run before every wind that blows. If times grow rough and tempestuous, and they must throw overboard either their gain or their godliness, this inordinate love of the world persuades them to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, only that they may bear up in the world. Now they, who have but a low and mean esteem of the world, such as it deserves, escape this temptation; and they can, with a holy generousness, scorn to prostitute their consciences and to barter their precious souls for the gain of any of these fading and perishing riches here below; riches, that perish in the using. If, therefore, you would keep good consciences, learn to despise the threats and frowns, the flatterings and fawnings, of this world: look upon it as of no great concernment to you, whatever in adversity or prosperity can happen to you in this short and frail life: reflect upon those, who groan under the terrors of a wounded conscience: all the world cannot give them one moment's ease or comfort: yea, had they the whole world at their dispose they would give it all to procure peace, yea but a truce for a while with their own consciences; such a vain and contemptible thing is the world, in comparison of inward tranquillity and serenity of mind. Now thus to rate the world below the peace and quietness of our own consciences, is an excellent means to preserve them clear and peaceable.

4. If you would keep Conscience clear, *labour, above all things, to strengthen your Faith.*

Faith is a purifying grace. Acts xv. 9. *Purifying their hearts by faith.*

Now faith hath a double influence to purify the heart or conscience.

A Dogmatical Faith keeps the Conscience clear and pure; and that, morally.

A Justifying and Saving Faith purifies the Conscience; and that, mystically.

(1) A Dogmatical Faith keeps the Conscience clear and pure.

A dogmatical faith I call that, which hath for its object the whole revealed truth of God: and it is nothing but a firm, undoubting assent to the verity and certainty of whatever is contained in the Holy Scriptures; upon no other account and reason, than merely the authority and veracity of God, who is

the author of it. This is a Dogmatical or a Historical Faith: which, though it be not justifying, as the Papists hold; yet is it of a mighty influence to sanctify the heart, and to keep the conscience and conversation inoffensive. And this it doth in a moral way: for, did but men believe that heaven is so unconceivably glorious, sparkling with light, flowing with pleasure, resounding with praises, a place where joy and bliss ever dwell, and where we shall dwell too in an endless eternity in the smiles and love of God, if now but for a few short years we strive to live holily; did we but as really believe these things to be true and certain, as we know those things to be true and certain that we see with our very eyes, what manner of Christians would this force us to be in all holiness and godliness of conversation, cleansing ourselves from all pollutions both of flesh and spirit! Wherefore is it, that the promise of some temporal reward, the hope of some mean preferment from some great person, is of force sufficient to make men obsequious to them; and yet the promises, that God himself hath made of heaven and glory (in comparison of which to promise crowns and sceptres, is but to promise pebbles and gewgaws) work so little effect upon the generality of men, to allure them from sin to a holy life? whence is it, but that men believe not that heaven is so glorious as the Scripture describes it to be? Nay, indeed, if they would speak their minds, they are not yet sure whether there be a heaven or not: it is from their unbelief: did men but believe the insupportable wrath of God, those horrors and torments, that fire and sulphur, that stench and darkness, those burning chains and those fiery whips, the woe and anguish of the damned in hell, which are as far from being utterable as they are from being tolerable, did they as certainly believe these things, as if they believe them not they shall certainly feel them, would they dare still to venture on to treasure up wrath to themselves *against the day of wrath?* would they still dare, by wounding their consciences now, to enrage them to their own wounding and smart for ever hereafter? would they dare to do it, did they believe these things? did they but believe that conscience will be revenged sevenfold on them for all the wrongs and violence that they have done it; that this worm, which they now carry in their breasts frozen and benumbed, shall be heated by the fire of hell, and fly upon them and sting their souls with a burning and flaming anguish; did they believe this, would they not be careful

to give no offence to their consciences? would they not be as careful to avoid all sin, that arms the terrors of hell against them, as they have reason to think a damned wretch in hell, who hath had the experience of these things would be, if God would release him out of it, with a promise that he shall for ever escape it, upon the same terms that he hath promised us? think with yourselves, what effect the sense and feeling of those dreadful things would have upon such a one, to make him rigorously conscientious, that in nothing he provoke so terrible a God, or offend and irritate a revenging conscience, that will be sure to repay him home sevenfold into his own bosom; why the same carefulness and circumspection would it work in all of us, did we as firmly and strongly believe those things to be true, as God hath evidently and clearly revealed them to be true in his word. It is true, these things we all know, and we persuade ourselves that we do believe them: do we not profess to believe that Jesus Christ shall judge both quick and dead? and that all shall receive rewards according to their works: those, that have done well, the reward of eternal life; and those, that have done ill, the reward of eternal death? These things we may, indeed, profess to believe; and these things we may frequently represent to our own thoughts: but the weak and small influence, that these things have to over-awe our consciences, evinceth clearly that this is not Faith but Fancy: it is a wavering, unevident opinion, that we have taken up, and that we call by the name of Faith; for, did we live in the belief of these truths, we should no more dare to sin against our consciences, than if we saw hell flaming before these eyes of ours, and knew that upon the next sin we commit we were to be cast into it. And thus you see a Dogmatical Faith is a great help to purify the heart, and to keep the conscience clear and inoffensive.

(2) A Justifying Faith also is of great use to purify the Conscience.

And this it doth not morally, by any natural influence or efficacy of its own; but only mystically, as it applies to the soul the blood of Jesus Christ, that blood that alone takes away the defilement of our sins. A Historical Faith may keep the soul from contracting defilement; but this Justifying, this Saving Faith washes out the stains and defilements that we have contracted, and makes us white and spotless in the blood of the Lamb. Faith is that conveyance, which God hath appointed to

bring the blood of Christ to stream forth upon the defiled soul and conscience; and, upon every renewed act of sin, we ought, by a renewed act of faith, to lay our spotted and defiled souls under the fall of that fountain, that is set open to wash and cleanse us from our filth and pollution. Thus faith cleanseth the conscience, mystically; and, by the actings of faith, we may thus get and keep our consciences clear and inoffensive.

5. If you would keep your Consciences clear, then *set a strict Watch and Guard upon yourselves; both upon your inward and upon your outward man.*

Set a guard on your heart, and on all the approaches to your heart.

(1) Keep a narrow guard upon your Heart.

The heart is the great meeting place, where objects, thoughts, and affections do swarm and crowd together: and, as much concourse leaves dirt behind it upon the place, so this great heart-assembly usually leaves it foul and polluted. Our Saviour, Mark vii. tells the Jews, that it was that which was within them, that wickedness which lay latent in their hearts, that, which proceedeth from the heart, *that defileth the man:* there is a defilement in the thoughts and in the desires, as well as in the more gross and bulky sins of the life. Hence the Prophet Jeremiah says, Jer. iv. 14. *O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness!* why, wherewith is it polluted? the next words shew it: *How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* Vain thoughts leave a stain and contagion upon the soul; and, certainly, if a vain thought, that is such a fleeting and volitary thing, breathes a kind of contagion and taint upon the heart, they certainly then must have foul hearts indeed and their spots in grain, who lie soaking and stewing themselves in unclean, malicious, and covetous thoughts and designs. Since, then, conscience is apt to receive taint, but with the breathing of a vain and sinful thought upon it, how doth it concern us to keep a watchful and circumspect eye over every motion of our hearts! It is the Wise Man's counsel, as you have heard; *Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.* Look to it, therefore, that you suffer not your hearts to be defiled with sinful thoughts or sinful affections, by those inward and invisible corruptions that settle at the bottom of it: though the life be never so clear and crystal, yet, if that mud be but stirred and raised, conscience becomes thereby defiled and an evil con-

science. And therefore the Apostle, 1 Tim. i. 5. joins them together, speaking of *a pure heart* and *a good conscience.* But, if the steams of lust rise up thick in the heart, they defile and pollute the conscience: hence the Apostle, again, joins them together, Tit. i. 15. a defiled mind and a defiled conscience: the *mind and conscience*, says he, *is defiled.* How can the mind be defiled, unless it be with sins of the mind? Evil thoughts and evil affections, as sprightly and aerial as they seem to be, yet leave a stain upon the conscience: as the breathing upon a glass sullies it, and dims the representation of the face that looks into it; so the breathing of evil cogitations upon conscience, the glass of the soul, leaves a mist and cloud upon it, that it can but dimly and darkly represent to us our true state.

(2) Watch diligently, as the heart itself, so all the Approaches unto the Heart.

The approaches to the heart are like your roads to a great city, which are full of passengers, and usually full of dirt also. And these are the senses, by which and through which objects are continually travelling to the heart, and carry with them a world of wickedness. These are sluices, which, instead of letting in pleasant streams to refresh, commonly let in nothing but mud, which pollutes the soul. There is no actual filthiness in the hearts of any, but what enters in by these inlets. Through these the Devil casts in abundance of filth; stirs up and encreases indwelling lust; and, by sinful objects that the senses convey to the soul, dungs that ground, which is of itself but too too fruitful. Thus, the Devil makes use of the ear; through it he blows up the bladder of pride, by the breath of popular applause and praise: and thus he makes use of the lascivious eye, as a burning glass to set the heart on fire: and so also he makes use of the other senses, as sinks of luxury and intemperance. Now if you would keep your consciences clear and undefiled, set a strict guard and narrow watch upon all these passages to your hearts: critically examine every thing that goes in, and every thing that comes out by these gates: arrest whatever cannot produce its pass and warrant from the word of God: keep the same watch upon these gates, that God would keep on the gate of the Heavenly City, the New Jerusalem. It is said, Rev. xxi. 27. that *there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.* Let us, who would keep our consciences clear, guard all the approaches to them, with the same strictness; and let nothing, that defileth, enter in by these approaches to our hearts.

6. Take this direction: *Be sure to listen to the Voice of Conscience.*

Those, that stop their ears and will not hear conscience when it directs and reproves, shall be sure to hear it loud enough when it shall accuse and condemn them. Conscience is the voice of God in the soul: now if this voice be slighted, beware lest the next time it speak to you in thunder. Do nothing contrary to the dictates of your consciences; for this will provoke God to give you up to a reprobate sense, and judicially to harden you in your sins: for, if sinning against your consciences doth not corrupt them by making them insensible and stupid, it will certainly corrupt them by making them enraging and despairing.

Now, for your encouragement, let me tell you, while you are careful, by following these directions, to keep your consciences clear, you shall also keep them peaceable. It is the foulness of a gun, that makes it recoil in discharging: and, so, it is the foulness of men's consciences, that makes them recoil back again upon them in discharging of their offices. But, while conscience is kept clear and void of offence, it will be also kept free from quarrelling with you, and from accusing and condemning you.

So much for this time and text.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

GREAT DUTY OF MORTIFICATION:

ON ROMANS viii. 13.

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GREAT DUTY OF MORTIFICATION.

ROMANS viii. 13.

IF YE LIVE AFTER THE FLESH, YE SHALL DIE: BUT IF YE, THROUGH THE SPIRIT, DO MORTIFY THE DEEDS OF THE BODY, YE SHALL LIVE.

INTRODUCTION.

In these words, without any preface or account of their coherence, are,

First. A Promise: the greatest promise, that God can make, or the Scripture propound, or we embrace: *Ye shall live:* that is, *first*, ye shall live a life of grace and comfort here; and, *secondly*, ye shall live a life of immortality and eternal glory hereafter.

Secondly. We have the condition, upon which this life, both of grace and glory, is propounded: *If ye mortify the deeds of the body:* εἰ θανατοῦτε: the word signifies to kill or put to death: *If ye* KILL *the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* The life of sin and the life of grace and glory are utterly inconsistent and repugnant: you must live, upon the death of sin.

Now, here, we have

First. The object of this mortification: what it is, that they must put to death: and that is, *the deeds of the body.*

By the *body* we must here understand the same that the Apostle speaks of in the beginning of the verse: *If ye live after the flesh. Flesh* and *body* are but equivalent terms; both of them signifying one and the same corruption of nature. Indeed, the proper seat of sin is the soul; and they are the deeds

of the soul, that we must chiefly mortify: the deeds of the body are sinful but at the second hand, as they are swayed and exerted by a sinful soul; yet the Scripture doth frequently call this corruption *flesh, the body, the members*; opposing it to *the spirit*, to *the mind*: Rom. vii. 23. *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.*

And this it doth,

First. To denote the degrading malignity, that there is in sin.

It doth unspirit and unsoul a man. A sinner is called a carnal man; a man, made up of nothing but a lump of dull flesh, kneaded together without spirit, without life. And therefore the Apostle doth not bid them mortify the deeds of their souls, because wicked men act as though they had no souls, or at least not so noble a soul.

Secondly. It calls sin *the deeds of the body*, to denote what it is that sin tends to.

It is only to please, to pamper the body; the sensual, sordid, and baser part of man. The soul of a wicked man acts for no higher an end, than the soul of a beast doth. The soul of a beast acts not for itself, but is made a drudge and underling to the body: it serves only to carry the body to and fro to its pasture, and to make it relish its food and fodder. Thus, truly, it is with the souls of wicked men: they act not for themselves, but are only their bodies' caterers; that seek out and lay in *provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof*: Rom. xiii. 14.

Thirdly. Sins are called *the deeds of the body*, because, though the soul be the chief seat of their abode, yet the body is the great instrument of their acting.

Rom. vi. 19. *As ye have yielded your members servants.....to iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness.* Indeed, there are some refined sins, that hold little communion with the body, and partake but little of that gross carnality and corpulency, if I may so term it, that makes other sins swell to such a bulk; and yet these must be also mortified: and these are also *the deeds of the body*; because the soul, acting even these spiritual sins, acts as much below itself, as the body's actings are below the soul's.

As for *the Deeds of the body*, by *deeds* we must understand, not only the inward ebullitions and the outward eruptions of this body of sin, but also the spring and fountain itself whence these flow. The corruption of nature itself must be mortified:

the body of death must be put to death. All these are called the deeds *of the flesh:* not only those, that the Apostle reckons up and tells us are manifest, Gal. v. 19. but also the inward motions, yea the depraved root and habit itself; which are secret, because, though these be not outward acts, yet they would be so, and sin is not perfected nor finished till it be so.

Secondly. As the deeds of the flesh are the object of mortification; so, here, we have the Persons, on whom this duty of mortification is pressed: *If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify:* that is, ye, who have received the Spirit; ye, who are believers: for such are those, whom he describes in the foregoing part of the chapter, vv. 1, 5, 10, 11.

Both these branches are comprehended in the condition required to life: *If ye.....mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

THIRDLY. Here is, likewise, the Way and Means, whereby believers are enabled to mortify *the deeds of the body:* and that is, *through the Spirit: If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify.* Whatsoever other helps, either of outward or inward rigour and severity, men use against their lusts, they may indeed thereby for a time stifle and suppress them; but, if the Spirit of God do not set in with the work, it can never amount to a true mortification.

From the words thus opened many Propositions may be drawn out: as,

First. From the promise of life, if we take life for the Life of Comfort and the Life of Grace, made upon the condition of mortification, observe,

That IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THAT SOUL TO HAVE LIVELY COMFORTS AND LIVELY GRACES, WHOSE LUSTS ARE LIVELY AND UNMORTIFIED.

There is a necessity for it, that the deeds of the body be put to death, if you intend that either your grace or your comfort should survive. I do not absolutely say that grace cannot live in the children of God, under every present neglect of mortification: but yet, certainly, this will destroy their comforts; yea, and eat out the vigour, activity, and liveliness of their graces, that, though they do live, yet they will live but a lingering and decaying life: they will but live such a life, as sin

doth in those, who exercise a constant mortification, that is, they will but live, as it were, a dying life.

Secondly. If we take the life promised for Eternal Life, then observe,

That THE FUTURE LIFE OF GLORY IS INFALLIBLY ASSURED TO THE PRESENT DEATH OF SIN.

If ye mortify, ye shall live. Not that life proceeds from mortification, as the effect from the cause; but only it follows upon it, as the end upon the use of the means.

Thirdly. From the Persons, on whom this duty of mortification is pressed, observe,

That BELIEVERS THEMSELVES, WHO ARE FREED FROM THE REIGNING POWER OF SIN, HAVE YET CONTINUAL NEED TO MORTIFY THE INHERENT REMAINDERS OF IT.

Fourthly. From the Aid and Assistance, that believers must call in to this work, observe,

That WHATEVER ADVANTAGES MEN HAVE GAINED AGAINST THEIR LUSTS, EITHER IN SUPPRESSING THEIR MOTIONS, OR IN RESTRAINING THEIR ERUPTIONS; YET, IF THIS BE NOT FROM THE WORKING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD IN THEM, IT IS NOT TRUE NOR RIGHT MORTIFICATION: *If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify.*

I shall not handle all these Propositions, but only the Third, That the children of God have continual need to exercise mortification: and the other points will be subervient to the prosecution of this.

This the Apostle urgeth Col. iii. 5. where he speaks to those, that were *risen with Christ;* as you may see v. 1: to those, who were *dead* with Christ, and whose *life* was *hid with Christ in God;* v. 3: to those, who shall certainly *appear with* Christ *in glory;* v. 4: and, yet, such as these he commands to *mortify* their *members which are upon the earth.*

And it may appear strange, if you consider what members they are, which must be mortified. Not vain thoughts; deadness of heart; uneven walkings; and those inward sins, which if men did thoroughly mortify, they would be made perfect, and become even as the angels of God: but they are the great and the visible limbs of the Old Man: they are *fornication, un-*

cleanness, inordinate affections, evil concupiscence, and covetousness: and, in v. 8. he bids them again, *put* ye *off all these, anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication,* and lying. Strange it is, that believers of so eminent a rank should need calling upon to mortify such gross and foul sins as these; and yet it is no more than necessary: the best Christians on earth have a stock of corruption in them, which doth habitually dispose them unto these sins, as great and heinous as they are; and the Devil will so suit his temptations, as will certainly draw forth this corruption into act, unless they keep a strict hand and a strict watch over themselves in the constant exercise of mortification. And, therefore, as we urge it upon wicked men, that they slight not sin because it is small, and say, *Is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?* so we must press it upon the best and greatest of saints, that they would not slight any sin because it is great and heinous; and say with themselves, "Is it not a great one, and my soul shall never commit it?" As we presume upon the pardoning mercy of God in the commission of small sins, so we are apt to presume upon our own strength to preserve us from the commission of great and crying sins; and so, by their security and carelessness, the best do sometimes find themselves surprised by them. If we should be earnest in exhorting you to beware that you murder not, that you blaspheme not, that you turn not apostates from the profession of your religion; would you not reply with Hazael, Are we dogs, that we should do this great wickedness? Yes, certainly, this great wickedness you would do, yea there is no abomination so abominable which you would not do, if you do not bring the cross of Christ into your hearts by a daily mortification.

I. But, before I can proceed farther, I must lay down this for a GENERAL PRINCIPLE, That all Mortification is the weakening of sin, in respect of some strength and power, that it formerly had over the soul.

There is, especially, a Threefold power observable in Sin.

Its Damning and Condemnatory power, whereby it makes the soul liable to wrath.

Its Ruling and Reigning power, whereby it keeps the soul under a wretched slavery and vassalage.

Its Indwelling and Captivating power, whereby, through its continual assaults, it oftentimes breaks in upon a Christian, beats him from his defence, batters his spiritual armour, routs his graces, wastes his conscience, and at last leads him into a woeful, and it may be a long captivity.

According to this Threefold Power, so we must likewise distinguish of a Threefold Mortification of Sin.

i. There is a mortification of sin, as to its CONDEMNING power.

There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus: Rom. viii. 1. Sin, though it may still hale us before God, and make our consciences confess guilty; yet cannot now cast and sentence us, if we believe: it is still strong enough to drag us before God, to accuse us to God, to affright and terrify conscience; but it is not strong enough to drag us into hell, to adjudge us to everlasting wrath: it hath lost its power in that respect, and is become weak and mortified. Whence is it, that sin hath its condemning power, but from the Law? *The strength of sin is the Law:* 1 Cor. xv. 56: had not the Law threatened condemnation to the transgressor, sin could have had no strength at all to condemn him. But is this sentence of the Law still in force against believers? no, says the Apostle, *we are delivered from the Law, that being dead wherein we were held:* Rom. vii. 6. and, if the Law's power to condemn believers be dead, sin's power to condemn them, which was but only borrowed from the Law, must certainly be dead also. But how came the Law thus mortified? the Apostle tells us in Col. ii. 14. that Christ *took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross:* and no wonder, then, if it be dead: that is, the cross and the sufferings of Jesus Christ have so fully satisfied for those who believe, that the Law is as it were now dead, and hath no strength nor power left to condemn them. But this is not that mortification of which I intend to speak, and to which my text exhorts us: therefore,

ii. There is a mortification of sin, in respect of its REIGNING power.

What saith the Apostle, Rom. vi. 11, 12? in v. 11. saith he, *reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin:* what then? why upon this he founds an exhortation in ver. 12. *Let not sin reign therefore in your mortal bodies.* Now this reign of sin consists

not in the multitude, greatness, or prevalency of sins; for all these are consistent with a state of grace, and may be in a child of God, in whom sin doth not nor cannot reign: but in the inbeing of sin without grace, whether it acts more or less violently, yea whether it acts at all or no; yet, if the habit of sin possess the soul without any principle of grace implanted which is contrary to it, that man may be said to be still under the dominion of sin. This mortification, then, of sin as to its reigning power, is completed in the first act of conversion and regeneration; for, in that very instant that any is born again, he hath a principle of spiritual life put into him: the habit of supernatural grace, which lusteth against the flesh, weakens the whole body of sin, and crosses and contradicts every corrupt motion; so that, though he cannot do what he would, yet he would not do what he doth: and this breaks the tyranny of sin, and mortifies it as to its reigning power.

iii. There is a mortification of sin, in regard of its CAPTIVATING and INDWELLING power.

And this is that, which the text chiefly aims at.

Corruption, wheresoever it is, doth not use to lie dormant; but, where it cannot reign, there it will molest: stir, and struggle, and fight it will; and, it may be, prevail to a victory, even over those, over whom it shall never prevail unto condemnation. This calls for a constant work of mortification: every day and hour there are corrupt propensions to be reined in, sinful thoughts to be struggled against, sinful motions to be suppressed; and it is not the mere habit and principle of grace, without a vigorous and continued exercise of it in a way of mortification: that, indeed, gave sin its death's wound in our regeneration; but still we must follow it, doubling stroke upon stroke, while it hath any life and motion in it. We do not content ourselves that we crush the head of a serpent: no; but, while it stirs and writhes itself, we still lay on. So should we do with lust: it is not enough that the head of it is crushed, that its first wound in our conversion is incurable; but still, so long as it stirs and moves within us, we must be continually striking at it by continued acts of mortification: nor must all suffice, till death comes in to our part, and by one blow destroys it.

In these Three senses, sin may be said to be mortified. In its Condemning Power: and, so, it was at once mortified for

all the elect, by Christ hanging on the cross: and this mortification is particularly applied to them, when they believe. In its Reigning Power: and, so, it is mortified in the first moment of regeneration, by the implantation of an active principle of grace and holiness, which dissolves its government, and frees the soul from its dominion. And, lastly, in its Captivating Power, as it rebels and makes an insurrection against the sovereignty of grace: and, so, it is mortified by weakening its forces, hindering its inroads, resisting its assaults, beating down its first risings and motions; and all this, by constant, careful, and sincere endeavours, even all our days.

II. I might now easily demonstrate, in several particulars, HOW ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY IT IS, EVEN FOR THE BEST AND HIGHEST CHRISTIANS, TO KEEP UP THE CONSTANT EXERCISE OF MORTIFICATION.

Take only some few.

i. IN AN UNMORTIFIED COURSE, YOU FRUSTRATE THE VERY END OF YOUR GRACES.

Hath God implanted in you a noble, active, and divine principle, that will certainly in the end prove victorious if it be employed? and will you, while lusts and temptations are overrunning your souls, and making a prey of you, will you, I say, check it, and keep it under a restraint? Grace hath in it a natural antipathy and repugnancy against sin; and would, where it hath its free scope, naturally and necessarily destroy it. Gal. v. 17. the Apostle tells us *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit.* And, what! doth the Spirit sit down tame and quiet under such an affront and opposition? no, saith he, *the Spirit* also lusteth *against the flesh:* it doth no sooner see a corruption begin to heave and stir in the heart, but it would be presently upon it: it would beat it down and keep it under, did not your deceitful hearts betray it, or did they but concur with it.

Now consider,

1. *Is not this a foul piece of ingratitude and disingenuity against God, the God of all Grace?*

He, seeing thy weakness and impotency to deal with those mighty corruptions, that storm, rage, and domineer within thee, hath sent the auxiliaries and succours of his divine grace to aid thee: and thou either turnest treacherous, and deliverest them up bound to be abused, yea if possible to be slaugh-

tered by thy lusts; or, else, cowardly desertest them in the combat. How canst thou answer it to God, that thou goest the way not only to betray thine own soul to ruin, but his grace; that grace, which doth so naturally oppose, and would in the end infallibly subdue all the corruptions thou strugglest with?

2. *Is it not desperate Madness and Folly, to neglect or hinder that, which would side with thee, and fight for thee?*

Alas! the quarrel is not grace's, but thine: and it is no less than thine eternal salvation or thine eternal damnation, about which this war is commenced. When corruption comes up against thee in a full body, and the Devil in the head of it leading it on, dost thou think thou canst of thyself stand against these many legions? and, yet, shall grace stand by and proffer thee a sure aid, and thou refuse or neglect it? what else is this, but to make void the use and office of grace, and to be injurious to the goodness of God; who hath therefore given thee grace to this very end, that thou shouldst employ it against thy lusts?

That is the First thing.

ii. Unmortified sin doth not only frustrate the end and use of grace; but, what is worse, it doth also MISERABLY WEAKEN AND WASTE GRACE.

It is impossible, that both grace and corruption should, at once, be strong and vigorous, in the same soul. If the one thrive, the other must needs languish: if corruption prosper and be well-liking, grace must needs pine away into a consumption. They are like plants growing together in the same soil, that have a mutual antipathy: they cannot both flourish at the same time. If a garden be overrun with weeds, they choak up and starve the profitable herbs, that they cannot live there; and and why is it, but because they draw away the sap and moisture that should feed them? so is it with grace and sin in the soul: if thy soul be overspread with unmortified sins, like so many stinking and hurtful weeds sprouting up in it, grace must needs decay and wither, for it cannot have its sap to nourish it.

There are Two things, that do as it were nourish grace unto a mighty increase, both of strength and beauty: and they are Holy Thoughts, and Holy Duties. A man ordinarily needs nothing more to strengthen him but food and exercise: holy thoughts are, as it were, the food of grace; that provision, which we are always to lay in to sustain it in life: and holy duties are,

as it were, its exercise; whereby grace is breathed and preserved in health.

But an unmortified lust hinders grace from gathering strength from thoughts or duties. For,

1. An unmortified lust *doth usually sequester a man's Thoughts to itself.*

How doth such a lust summon all the thoughts to attend upon it! some it sends out upon one errand, and some upon another, and all must be busied about its object. Where covetousness, or pride, or wantonness is the unmortified sin, how is the imagination crowded full of thoughts that are making provision for these lusts! some fetch in their objects, and some beautify and adorn them, and some buz and whisper the commendations of those objects to the soul: nay, and lest any thought should be vacant, some it will employ in fancying fictions and chimæras, things that never were nor are like to be, if they have but any tendency to the feeding and nourishing of that corruption. I appeal to your own experience, for the confirmation of this. And, this, indeed, is a good mark, whereby we may find out what is our unmortified sin: see what it is, that most of all defiles your fancy, that the stream and current of your thoughts most run out after. Do your thoughts, when they fly abroad, return home loaded with the world? do they ordinarily present to you fantastic riches, possessions, gains, purchases; and still fill you with contrivances how to make them real? then Covetousness is your unmortified lust. Do they dwell and pore upon your own perfections? can you erect an idol to yourselves in your own imaginations, and then fall down and worship it? or do your thoughts, like flies, pitch only upon the sores and imperfections of others? then your unmortified sin is Pride. And the like trial may be made of the rest. Now, I say, when an unmortified lust hath thus seized all the thoughts, and pressed them to the service of a corrupted imagination, grace then wants its food: it is ready to be starved; and no wonder, if it languish and decay. And,

2. An unmortified lust *doth much hinder and interrupt the life, vigour, and spiritualness of Holy Duties.*

And this it doth Two ways: either by deadening the heart, through the guilt of it; or, by distracting the heart, through the power of it.

(1) An unmortified lust deadens the heart in holy duties, through the sense of the guilt of it lying upon the conscience.

Alas! how can we go to God with any freedom of spirit, how can we call him Father with any boldness, while we are conscious to an unmortified lust that lies still at the bottom? Speak: do not your consciences fly in your faces, and even stop your mouths, when you are praying with some such suggestions as these? "What! can I pray for pardon of sin, for strength against sin, who yet do harbour and foster a known lust unmortified? Do I beg grace against sin, and yet maintain a known sin? What! dare I beg grace, to have it abused, to have it baffled, to have it destroyed by this sin of mine, that is yet unsubdued? Is not such a prayer mere hypocrisy and dissimulation? Will the Lord hear it? or, if he doth hear it, will he not count it an abomination to him?" You, now, whose consciences thus accuse you, do you not find such reflections to be a great deadening unto duty? such, as clip the wings of the spirit, and take off the wheels of the soul, that it can drive on but heavily and slowly? Certainly, guilt is the greatest impediment to duty in the whole world: it takes off from the freeness and filialness of our spirits; and fills us with distrust, diffidence, and a slavish fear of coming before God, rather as our Judge than as our Father.

(2) An unmortified lust hinders holy duty, by distracting the heart through the power of it.

It draws away the heart from God: it entangles the affections: it scatters the thoughts: it discomposes the whole frame of the soul: so that, at the best, it proves but a broken and a shattered duty. And herein lies the cunning of Satan, that, if there be any corruption in the soul more unmortified than another, that corruption he will be sure to stir up, and interpose betwixt God and the soul in the performance of duty. Now when lust thus hinders duty, grace hath not its breathing nor exercise; and no wonder, if it grow faint and decay.

That is the Second thing.

iii. SOME FOUL AND SCANDALOUS ACTUAL SIN LIES AT THE DOOR OF A NEGLECTED MORTIFICATION.

Do we see a professor at any time break out into the commission of some notorious wickedness, what can it be imputed unto, but that corruption took advantage of his neglect of mortification? When inward motions are suffered perpetually to solicit, tempt, and importune the soul, it is a sign that lust hath

already gained the affections; and, could conscience be laid asleep, nothing would hinder it from breaking out into act. And, alas! when all the work of restraint lies merely upon conscience, it is a great hazard to that soul, lest the violence of temptations, and the importunity of occasions, or some other advantage that lust gains, should force its guards, and break out to the eminent provocation of God and scandal of religion. And, therefore, beware you do not license corruption to stir and act within: you cannot set it bounds, nor say to it, "Thus far thou shalt go, and no farther: thou shalt go as far as thoughts, as far as fancy; but, Conscience, look thou to it, that it proceed no farther." If you would, therefore, secure yourselves from this danger, mortify lust in the very womb: there stifle and suppress the motions and risings of it, otherwise you know not to what a prodigious height of impiety it will grow. The least and most inconsiderable sinful thought tends to an infinite guilt: an unworthy and unbecoming thought concerning God tends to horrid blasphemy; every lacivious thought, to open uncleanness; every envious thought, to bloody murder: and, unless mortification be daily exercised to suppress and beat down these motions, you know not into how many soul-destroying sins they may hurry you.

iv. One unmortified lust DOTH MIGHTILY ALIENATE THE HEART FROM ITS ACQUAINTANCE AND COMMUNION WITH GOD.

God and the soul grow estranged, as soon as any unmortified sin and the soul grow familiar. What God saith, Ezek. xiv. 5. concerning the idols of the house of Israel, the same I may say concerning men's lusts, which, while unmortified, are as so many idols set up in the heart: *They are all estranged from me through their idols.* And yet these very men, of whom God thus complains as being grown strangers to him, we find in the first verse crowding about the Prophet to enquire of God by him: they come to him, and yet are estranged from him. Such is the wonderful malignity of unmortified lust, that it makes men strangers to God, even when they are nearest attendants upon him.

There are but Two things, that keep up acquaintance between God and the soul.

On God's part, the gracious communications of his Spirit; through which, by enlightening, enlivening,

supporting, and comforting influences, he converseth with that soul to whom he vouchsafes them. And,

On our part, the spiritual frame of the Heart; whereby it doth, with a holy delight, freedom, and frequency, converse with God in the returns of sincere and cordial obedience.

But an unmortified lust breaks off this acquaintance, as to both the parts of it.

1. *It provokes God to suspend the influences of his Spirit, and so to cut off the intercourse on his part.*

Isai. lvii. 17. *For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth:* so, truly, in the day of our desertion, whether it be in respect of grace or comfort, it is for the iniquity of such or such an unmortified sin, that God is wroth and hides himself. Think you that God will so debase himself, as to be in the same heart an inmate with lust; when that shall be regarded and he slighted, that attended and he neglected? will not this provoke him to call in the influences of his grace, and depart? wherefore else is it, that Christians do so often complain, that God is unto them but *as a stranger, and as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry* but *for a night*, nay for a moment? that God is not unto them, as in the days of old? that those quickenings, revivings, supports, and comforts are now lost, which before they enjoyed? and that they become as the heath and wilderness; barren as to grace, and parched as to comfort? If they look inward in this case, will they not find some iniquity regarded, some sin allowed and indulged, to be the cause of all this? Certainly, if mortification doth neither strike at this root of bitterness, nor lop off its branches, it will spread itself over the whole soul; and intercept both the light of God's countenance, and the influences of his Spirit.

2. One unmortified lust *doth mightily untune the soul, and disorder the spiritualness of that frame and disposition which it should be kept in, if we would maintain communion with God.*

Look how estrangement and distance grow between familiar friends, so, likewise, grows the estrangement between God and the soul. If a man be conscious of any injury that he hath done his friend, this will make him afraid and ashamed to converse with him, less free and less frequent in his society. So it is here, in this case: an unmortified lust fills the soul with a guilty shame,

arising from the consciousness of an injury done to God: this guilty shame is always joined with some degrees of a slavish and base fear of God, who is thus wronged: both these take off from that holy freedom, which reverently to use towards God, is the great privilege of a gracious heart in its communion with him: and this lessens that sweet and unspeakable delight, which formerly it could enjoy from the intimacy, freedom, and spiritualness of this fellowship: and all these do finally cause a shyness, distance, and estrangement in the soul towards God. The root of all this is still in some unmortified lust, which is the occasion of the whole breach.

Now reflect upon yourselves, you, who have indulged any sin: hath it not by degrees eaten out the spiritualness of your hearts, and weakened the life and vigour of your communion? hath it not made you dead, and cold, and indifferent unto the things and ways of God? have you not beheld God as it were at a great distance, and cared not for a nearer converse with him? Is it not high time, think you, that this lust, which hath thus divided betwixt God and your souls, should now at length be mortified; and, this make-bait being once removed, that you again should renew the nearness of your acquaintance with him? otherwise, let me tell you, it is sadly to be feared, lest this estrangement grow into a woeful apostacy, and that end in a fearful perdition.

v. One unmortified lust GIVES AN ADDITIONAL STRENGTH TO OTHERS ALSO, which of themselves were weak and impotent, and could not otherwise have such power over the soul.

And this it doth, as it is the ringleading lust, that unites all others under a discipline and government: scattered enemies are not so powerful nor so formidable, as when they are combined together in a body: then their design is one, their enterprise one, and they all act as one enemy. Now an unmortified lust doth, as it were, rally all the rest under a discipline: this heads them: this leads them on: and they all promote the designs, and fight under the conduct of this lust; which union adds a mighty strength and power to them. It may be, a temptation, which could not prevail for itself and upon the account of its own interest that it hath in the soul, will yet certainly prevail, when it pleads its subordination and serviceableness to the unmortified sin, the master-lust. This is very remarkable: and therefore suppose, for instance, that pride be the

unmortified sin, the great ringleading lust, and a temptation to covetousness assaults the soul: possibly, this being but an underling sin, and not having made so great a party for itself as the other, might be easily rejected, did it plead only for itself; but, when it pretends the interest of the master-lust, and pleads how serviceable great and rich possessions would be to the advancement of pride and ambition, this adds a double enforcement to the temptation, and thereby bears down the soul before it, as unable to make any available resistance. And thus, proportionably, it is in all other sins whatsoever: they have a dependance one upon another: the great sin sways principally; and cannot subsist, unless provision be laid in, and a way made for it by inferior sins, which it countenances and bears out by its own authority, and derives to them the same prevalency that itself hath gained over the soul. Let not men, therefore, think that their captivity to sin is more tolerable, because they find but one the most prevailing: alas! this doth but serve to unite and drive the rest to a head, which perhaps otherwise would be vagrant, and wandering, and uncertain in their tempting; and, by this one unmortified lust, the Devil hath gotten a fit handle to the soul, whereby he may turn and wind it to whatever other sin he pleaseth. It was therefore a wise command of the King of Syria to his captain, 1 Kings xxii. 31. to *fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel:* he well knew, that if the chief commander were once slain, the ungoverned army might easily be routed and put to flight. We must, in the mortifying of the deeds of the body, take the same counsel, and follow the same course; fight, if not only, yet chiefly, against the commanding lust: if that be once mortified, the rest are as an army without a head, who quickly will find themselves without hands too: otherwise, while any one lust remains unmortified, the soul is almost in as dangerous a condition, as if every lust were violent and raging.

vi. An unmortified sin WILL MOST CERTAINLY BEREAVE THE SOUL OF PEACE AND COMFORT: and hinder it from ever enjoying that heaven upon earth, of assurance.

If you send to enquire of your souls, as Joram did of Jehu, "Soul, *Is it peace?*" Is not this sad answer returned, *What hast thou to do with peace?* Or, What peace, so long as thy pride, thy covetousness, thy intemperance, while such and such a lust remains unmortified?

An unmortified lust hinders peace and comfort these Two ways.

1. *As it blots our evidences for heaven.*

Let any man in the world tell me that his title to heaven is clear and past all uncomfortable doubtings, whose conscience doth not witness his sincerity to him, that he doth maintain an universal opposition against all sin, and exercise a constant mortification of it; and I shall presently conclude that man's assurance to be the false and glowing presumptions of a spirit of error and delusion. We know no better test of a man's condition than what my text affords: *If ye mortify, ye shall live.* Now when any lust is allowed and indulged, will not this blast a man's comfort, and raise in him fears and jealousies concerning his eternal welfare? "Such a corruption I do not strive nor struggle against, I do not labour to beat down and keep under; and how then shall I assure myself that I am free from the reigning power of it, or shall be free from its condemning power?" Let me tell you, though freedom from the dominion of sin may possibly consist with a much-neglected mortification; yet a comfortable evidence of that freedom cannot: and, therefore, no wonder if, through the carelessness of Christians in this great work, so few attain solid and constant comfort; the most being sadly perplexed with doubts and jealousies of their hypocrisy and unsoundness, even all their days. This all riseth from some unmortified lust or other, which either leaves a deep blur upon their evidences for heaven, or else raises a thick mist before their eyes that they cannot read them.

2. An unmortified lust hinders peace *by fomenting a perpetual civil war in the soul.*

Sometimes so it fares, where there is no higher a principle than merely natural conscience: this strives and combats, as it is able, against the sin, before it is committed: this cries out and rages against the sinner, after it is committed. But it is always so, where there is a principle of true grace implanted, to excite and assist conscience. Let corruption be never so great, its faction never so potent; yet grace, though but mean and weak, will still fight it: it will neither give nor take truce, till, at length, the great unmortified lust be subdued, and fall conquered and slain under it. What tumults, what uproars, what bandying of affections against affections, will against will, thoughts against thoughts, do woefully disquiet that soul, where corruption will not submit, and grace cannot! There is no de-

liberate act, either of grace or corruption, exerted, but what must first break through a whole army of its enemies, set to oppose it. Gal. v. 17. *The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh.....so that ye cannot do the things that ye would:* that is, neither can ye act according to the bent of your corrupt will, nor yet of your sanctified will, without opposition and resistance from one of these two quarrelling principles within, *the flesh* and *the Spirit.* Such men are like those builders in Nehemiah, that wrought with one hand, and with the other held their weapons: so, truly, if a child of God, in whom corruption is yet too prevalent, work the works of God with one hand, he must hold the weapons of his spiritual warfare in the other. This is that unpeaceable and turbulent condition, into which an unmortified lust will certainly bring you. And though, indeed, in the most mortified Christian on earth, there will sometimes be combatings between these two contrary parties; yet it is not with so much distraction, anguish, and terrors, as where corruption is more violent and outrageous.

That is the last thing.

I might add that an utter neglect of mortification binds you over to eternal condemnation: *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.* Your election itself cannot save you; your vocation, regeneration, and whatever else you might build the certainty of your salvation upon, are all in vain if you do not mortify. There is no other way, by which you can possibly get to heaven, but by marching over the necks of all your lusts. But I shall insist no longer on this head.

And now, if to profess God with our mouths and to deny him with our hearts and lives, if to talk of religion and live without it, if to have a form of godliness and to deny the power of it, be indeed this necessary mortification, I need press this duty no farther: we have such mortified ones, more than enough. But, if wantonness, censoriousness, contempt of the means of grace, giddiness of opinions, libertinism, and strange large allowances that men take to themselves in their conversations, be signs of an unmortified heart; never certainly was there any professing age in the world, that had more need to have this doctrine often pressed upon them, than that in which we live. I am not now urging you to that churlish and rigorous way of mortif-

cation, consisting only in a froward abstinence from the comforts and conveniences of this life, which some perhaps blind devotionists have too rigidly exercised themselves with: I know the maceration of the outward man is not the mortification of the Old Man; and yet were there among professors a greater moderation even in the use of the lawful comforts of this life, there would not possibly be so great an advantage given to deceivers as now there is, who, under the specious shew of self-denial in these things, draw away numbers of proselytes after them, as being the only mortified men. It is the inward mortification, that we labour to press upon you, which were it once industriously exercised, outward exhorbitancies would of themselves fall into a decency and sobriety.

But, alas! when men shall talk at such a rate of spiritualness, as if some angels sat upon their tongues; and yet live at such an excess of vanity, it may be of profaneness, as if legions possessed their hearts; what shall we judge of such men? If we judge the tree by the leaves, what other can we think of them, but that they are trees of righteousness, and plants of renown? but if we look to their fruits, unprofitableness in their relations, envy, strife, variance, emulation, wrath, excessive pride, worldliness, selfishness, what can we think of them, but that heaven and hell are now as near together, as these men's hearts and mouths? And, truly, to let go these gross professors, have we not cause to take up sad complaints even of true Christians themselves, in whom the reigning power of sin is in their regeneration mortified? may we not take up the same speech concerning them, as St. Paul doth concerning the Corinthians, 1 Cor. iii. 3. *Ye are yet carnal and walk as men?* If the Apostle could have laid in charge against these Corinthians, not only envy, strife, and divisions; but hatred, bitterness, implacableness of spirit, brain-sick opinions, and self-seeking practices, joined with a great measure of neglect and contempt of the glory of God; as justly as we can against the Christians of our times; certainly his reproof would not have been so mild, as to tell them that they walked *as men;* but, rather, that they walked as devils. Would to God their miscarriages were not so generally known, as that every one could not supply the sense!

III. I have already set before you the great evils, that follow upon a neglected mortification. As to your own particulars, if that cannot affect you, there is but little ground to hope that

your charity to others should prevail: yet give me leave to mention TWO GRAND EVILS, THAT HEREBY BEFAL OTHERS.

i. Hereby THEY ARE INDUCED TO THINK ALL PROFESSORS ARE BUT HYPOCRITES, AND RELIGION A MERE MOCKERY; and so come to have their hearts embittered against the ways of God, as being all but mere deceit and cozenage.

It is a sad accusation, Rom. ii. 24. *The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you:* How so? because, as in the former verses, they rested in the Law, and had a form of godliness, and were confident that they were guides to the blind, and lights to them which were in darkness: eminent professors they were, like the men of our days: but mark, *Thou, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?....Thou, that makest thy boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God?* Thou, who professest mortification, dost thou indulge thyself in thy lusts? Thou, who pretendest to near fellowship and communion with God, dost thou live as one without God in the world? Tremble at it, the name of the Great God is blasphemed among wicked wretches through you: those, who were profane, you make atheistical; scoffing and deriding godliness, as an idle whimsy: and, because they see so little in their lives, they presently conclude there is no other difference between saints and sinners at all, but that the one have their tongues a little better tipped and their fancies a little higher wound, than the other. What is the common raillery of these profane persons? "Oh! this, forsooth, is a saint, and yet how covetous, how griping and greedy! Well, of all men deliver me from falling into the hands of a saint." Beware, lest these their blasphemies, be not at last charged upon you; who, through a loose, wanton, and unmortified conversation, have made religion even to stink in their nostrils. It is mortification alone, that can convince the world, that religion is any thing real: but while men profess largely and live at large too, this keeps men off from religion; not because they think it a thing above them, but because they scorn it as a baseness below them, so to juggle and dissemble with the world.

ii. Hereby, also, WICKED MEN FLATTER THEMSELVES IN THEIR SINFUL ESTATE, supporting themselves upon the lives of unmor-

tified professors, that certainly they are in as good a condition as they.

"They are proud, and impatient, and earthly: and, if these men get to heaven, why may not I? It is true they talk of self-denial and mortification; but look into our lives, and mine is as harmless and innocent as theirs: they discourse of experiences, and communion and acquaintance with God, and a road of words that I skill not; but, certainly, if God will not condemn them, although they do nothing but talk, he will not condemn me, for not talking as they do." And thus the hands of wicked men are mightily strengthened, and hereby they fortify themselves in their unregeneracy.

Now, Christians, if you would adorn the Gospel, and bring a credit upon religion, live so that your conversations may be a conviction to all the world, that God is in you of a truth: which will be, when mortification is more endeavoured and practised. You have a principle within you, which would you exert to the utmost, mere moralists, with all their civility, and legalists, with all the forced harshness which they use to curb and restrain sin in themselves, must confess that they fall short of true mortification.

IV. Now, though there be, in the whole course of Christianity, no other duty that can plead more for itself than this of mortification; yet there is none, that hath more cause to complain of a general neglect from the most of professors, than this hath. A slight superficial Christianity is that, which now serves the turn; and, if men can but keep themselves from the gross and scandalous pollutions of the world, and together with that maintain a shining blaze of profession, whatever other mortification is pressed upon them, they reject as a needless rigour and severity. To ENQUIRE INTO THE CAUSES WHY IT SHOULD BE SO would be to uncase a considerable part of the deceitfulness of sin, and the stratagems of Satan. I shall, therefore, content myself with the discovery of some few grounds, that are more obvious and apparent.

As,

i. The HARSHNESS AND DIFFICULTY OF A THOROUGH MORTIFICATION deters many from going to the bottom of it.

If lust will take pet, and die of spite and sullenness, for a few sharp words spoken against it, or for a few hard thoughts conceived of it; then, indeed, the professors of our age are generally very mortified Christians. But, when we tell them that corruption is both tenacious and powerful, and must be dealt roughly with as a stubborn enemy; that it will cost much sweat and blood, many sad thoughts, many bitter conflicts and agonies of soul to subdue it; this frights them from so hot a service: it is a hard saying, and they cannot bear it. What saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 9, 26, 27? *So fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I beat down my body*, for so the word signifies, *and bring it into subjection.* But is there any such hardship in this? would any man be frighted with the difficulty of such a combat, wherein he may beat down his enemy, and yet suffer nothing from him? were it no more but to beat it down, trample upon it, and triumph over it, who would ever detract this spiritual warfare? See 2 Cor. xii. 7. *There was sent me....a messenger of Satan, to buffet me.* Paul beats down his body, and the messenger of Satan buffets him: he and his corruption are already at blows, and the contest grows sharp between them. Heb. xii. 4. The Apostle speaks of resisting *unto blood*, in *striving against sin.* Striving against sin and mortifying it, is not so trivial and easy a work, as the generality of professors make it: it will draw tears from the eyes, and groans from the heart. Our Saviour compares it (and indeed the comparison is drawn home) to plucking out the right-eye, and cutting off the right-hand: Matt. v. 29, 30.

Now there are Two things, that make this exceeding difficult.

The Pain and Anguish: and the Unnaturalness of it.

And both these are suited to a double distemper too prevalent in the best Christians, whereby the work of mortification is rendered very hard and difficult: and they are,

A sinful Niceness, Tenderness, and Delicacy, utterly misbecoming spiritual soldiers; whereby they are so softened and effeminated, that they cannot endure pain or hardship.

A sinful Fondness and Compassion, which, being still in part carnal, they do bear unto their carnal part: and this makes mortification seem very unnatural.

1. *Christians, through a spiritual sloth, that hath seized upon*

them, are grown nice and delicate: and this makes the work of mortification seem very painful.

A little pain is more intolerable to men accustomed to a tender education, than torments are to others. Truly, Christians, by too much indulging their corruptions, do bring them up tenderly; seldom crossing or molesting them: so that, when they come in earnest to set upon the work of mortification, the extreme anguish and torment of it is such, that they cannot bear it; and so either they shrink from it, or else perform it very slightly. I may well say, that, through the niceness of Christians, mortification is now-a-days grown so easy and gentle, that corruption itself scarce feels it: some excrescences and superfluities of naughtiness they may possibly prune off; but when is it, that they lay the axe to the root? What is it for a man to pare the nails, or cut the hair? This goes not to the quick. Truly, that, which Christians now call their mortification, is but very little more: they do but pare away the superfluous and less sensible parts of corruptions, that, of a wild, over-grown thing, which else it would be, they may thereby reduce it to a decorum and decency. And shall I call this mortifying? or, rather, is it not an adorning, of lust? Shew me the Christian, that stabs sin to the heart, and draws blood at every encounter, that cuts off limb after limb, and member after member; contemning that smart and anguish, which frights tender and delicate Christians from so rough an engagement.

2. There is, in the best, *too much of a sinful fondness and compassion, that makes mortification seem to be cruel and unnatural.*

And how can it be otherwise, while, in the very best, there are still remainders of that other self, I mean corruption! Every Christian hath a double self, his carnal and his spiritual self; and mortification is as it were self-murder: he doth what in him lies to murder himself, that is his carnal self. Now look how difficult it is for a man to offer violence to himself; for the right-eye to be torne out by the right-hand, and that again to be cut off by the other, so difficult it is (abating only that it is another self that doth it) for a Christian to exercise mortification; because it is a kind of self-destruction. Lust is so close and intimate with the soul, so inlaid with the principles and wrought into the very bowels of it; that what the Apostle saith, Eph. v. 29. *No man ever yet hated his own flesh*, I may apply to this case: No man ever yet hated his fleshly part; that is, with such an

utter antipathy and detestation as he ought. With what compassion, or rather with what extremity and rage of passion, would a mother see an infant of her own conception delivered up to the slaughter! truly, there is in all men somewhat of the like natural affection towards the conceptions of their own lust; so that it is with a great deal of reluctancy and violence offered to nature, that they expose their infant lusts as soon as born to the sword and slaughter of mortification. Now, until this fondness be removed, and Christians more hardened against their corruptions, (so that their hearts shall not pity them, nor their eyes spare them, though they are their own offspring: though they are so much themselves, yet they can with their own hands thrust the sword of mortification through them, and with delight look upon their gaspings and blood;) this great work can never go forward, proportionably to the great and absolute necessity of it.

That is the First particular.

ii. As the difficulty, so THE CONSTANCY, THE PERPETUITY OF THIS WORK frights many from engaging in it.

If sin would be laid dead by a blow, most men would for once strike home: but, when they think that mortification is a perpetual quarrel which they must all their lifetime prosecute, without a day's or minute's respite, that still they must be in arms, still upon the watch, and still fighting, without the truce of a breathing allowed them; this makes some give it over quite as an endless thing, and others to follow it but very remissly.

And, truly, unless this work of mortification be pursued with an indefatigable constancy, without intermission, these Two evils, will necessarily follow.

1. In the interval, *Lust, after it hath been defeated, will again recruit and gather head,* and possibly assault the soul with a redoubled force. And

2. *Grace will, for want of exercise, grow unwieldy, unactive, and less fit for service than it was.*

If at any time there be a neglect of mortification, all, that was formerly done against corruption, is merely in vain, and but so much labour lost. Lust will rally, after a rout; and therefore grace, when it hath defeated it, must pursue it close; still gaining upon it, and disputing its ground by inches, till it hath at last quite forced it out of the soul. Men, that are to empty a pond, in which there are many springs rising, must be still

casting out the water as it is still bubbling up: if they stop, the pond grows presently full, and their labour is again to begin. Truly, our hearts are like this pond, in which there are many springs still spouting out corrupt streams: mortification is the laving of this pond: if Christians do but for a while cease and give it over, the heart grows full again of all manner of wickedness, and the work is set as far back as it was at the beginning. These incessant pains few will bear; and therefore it is, that this work of mortification is generally so much neglected in the world.

iii. The many DISCOURAGEMENTS, WHICH EVEN CHRISTIANS THEMSELVES MEET WITH IN THE WORK OF MORTIFICATION, do make them backward to it, and negligent in it.

Many discouragements I might here mention, both from without and from within: as, the evil examples of unmortified professors; the auxiliaries, that lust receives from the policy and power of Satan; the manifold enforcements, which, when a temptation is in its hour, it hath from objects, occasions, and such like outward advantages; the inward, secret conspiracies of the heart itself with lust: all which, and many more, are great discouragements unto Christians; making not only the hands of their enemies strong against them, but many times their own hands weak and their hearts faint: so that they are ready to say they shall one day fall by the hands of these mighty lusts; and that, therefore, it is as good to give themselves up for lost men, and never more to struggle against what they cannot possibly subdue. And, truly, did not the Spirit of God, in the midst of these sad thoughts, break in with extraordinary supports and assistances, all their hopes and confidences would here give up the ghost; and they would abandon themselves over to the power of their lusts, to be captivated by them at their pleasure.

But, omitting these, I shall only speak to Two great Discouragements, drawn from the bad event of an endeavoured mortification.

The little visible Success which they gain, after all their pains and labour.

The many sad Defeats and Foils, which, notwithstanding all, they receive from their lusts.

1. *The little visible and apparent Success of the exercise of mortification*, doth mightily dishearten even true Christians from it.

And this discouragement is by so much the greater, if, before their conversion, conscience was tender, and lust never outrageous, nor broke out into any scandalous foul sin. Such Christians can hardly perceive the difference, between themselves now, and themselves long ago. After all the labour and toil which they have taken in mortification, they are, they think, but almost where they were: little progress have they made, little ground have they got: they are not conscious to themselves of any wilful neglect: they have constantly stood upon their guard, kept their watch, carefully used the means for mortification; and yet, after all, lust, they think, is still as prevalent with them as before: and this discourageth them from taking so great pains, as they think, to so little purpose.

Now there are Two grounds, why the success of mortification is not always visible and apparent.

(1) Because of the rooted permanency of every lust in the soul.

Mortification doth not utterly kill, but only wound and weaken sin. And, therefore, though you single out any one particular lust, and set the whole strength of grace against it; though you do as Samuel did with Agag, hew it in pieces before the Lord, so that you would think it should never be able to stir more: yet it is in this like to worms and serpents: every piece will move: the very next temptation, object, or opportunity, will draw forth the same corruption again, which you thought you had utterly killed. Mortification doth not put sin to death, so as that it shall never move more in the soul. And therefore Christians, aiming at this death and extirpation of sin, think that all their labour is but lost, when they find every one of those corruptions to stir and move as they did formerly. And this discourageth them.

(2) Another thing, that hinders the visible success of mortification, is, the great variety and multiplicity of corruption.

Whereby it comes to pass, that one follows upon the neck of another; and, as soon as one is beaten down, another riseth up: so that, though a Christian exercise a daily mortification, yet he can scarcely tell whether the number of his enemies be diminished or augmented: every day he fights, and every day he conquers; and, yet, every day he hath as many to fight against and to conquer, as before. What a discouragement this is, any one who is loth to put himself to a great deal of trouble

to no purpose, may easily imagine. "Oh!" saith such an one, "could I perceive that I gained advantage against my corruptions, that I subdued and put to death any of them, I should count all my pains well bestowed: but, alas! there is such a lust, that I have been struggling against so long, and yet am not free from it: nay, there are so many thousand lusts, that are still rising in me; and, when I turn myself against one, another surpriseth me: if I oppose that, another gets within me. All my victories are in vain: my work is endless; and, still, I have as many enemies to combat with, as at the first." And, hereupon, he is strongly tempted to give over mortification, as a fruitless work.

That is the First Discouragement; the little visible success, by reason of the permanency and multitude of corruptions.

2. Another great discouragement in the work of mortification, is, *the many sad Defeats and Foils*, which, notwithstanding all their endeavours, even the best Christians have often received from their lusts.

Though the conquest at the last be assured, yet it is not without many doubtful trials and various successes. Paul, the greatest champion that ever fought the Lord's spiritual battles and maintained the cause of grace, yet complains of his captivity to the law of the members, Rom. vii. 23. David, no less a warrior against uncircumcised lusts than against uncircumcised Philistines, yet cries out of his wounds, Psal. xxxviii. 5. *My wounds stink, and are corrupt; because of my foolishness.* It would be a very sad and discouraging spectacle, if we could see all the spoils, which Satan and corruption have by force taken from the most eminent Christians: such a man's *shield of faith* lost, in such an encounter: such a man's *sword of the Spirit* wrested from him, in another: another loseth *the breast-plate of righteousness*; another, the *helmet* of *hope*. Yea, there is no Christian, but is in some encounter or other despoiled of part of his armour, and himself taken prisoner. Now, hereby, they are disheartened from again attempting that enemy, whom they have found too hard for them. When they find lust to be an over-match for them, they flee and give place; and conclude it utterly in vain for them with their ten thousand, to make war with him that comes against them with twenty thousand: and so they sit down under the neglect of mortification.

These are some of the grounds, why this great duty is so little

practised among Christians. And what is at the bottom of all this, but only a great deal of spiritual sloth and laziness, that makes them loth to put themselves upon difficulties and hazards; yea and possibly makes them fancy more difficulties and hazards in mortification than indeed there are? Prov. xxvi. 13. *The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way, a lion is in the streets:* it is a very unlikely thing, that a lion should be in the street; yet this his sloth suggests to him, as an excuse to keep him from the labour of going abroad. Well, what doth this sluggard do? in the next verse, the Wise Man tells us: *As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful man upon his bed:* the door turns often, but gains no ground: still it is where it was. So, truly, it is with a slothful Christian, that neglects mortification for fear of difficulties: let him turn himself to whatsoever he will, yet still he is but upon his hinges: he gains no ground upon his lusts, nor makes any progress towards heaven. Alas! heaven and happiness are not to be obtained with ease: by sitting still and wishing against lust; but by a laborious contending and struggling against it. What saith our Saviour, Matt. xi. 12? *The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.* There must be a holy roughness and violence used, to break through all that stands in our way; neither caring for allurements, nor fearing opposition: but, with a pious obstinacy, and (if I may so call it) frowardness, we must thrust away the one, and bear down the other. This is the Christian, who will carry heaven by force; when the whining, pusillanimous professor, who only complains of difficulty, but never attempts to conquer it, will be for ever shut out.

V. The next thing to be enquired into, is, WHAT THIS NECESSARY AND YET MUCH NEGLECTED DUTY OF MORTIFICATION IS, AND WHEREIN IT DOTH CONSIST.

An exact method would, perhaps, have called for this first; since it were in vain to press the necessity, and not to open the duty: but I know that there are few here, who, when mention is made of mortification, do not, in the general notion, apprehend it to be some earnest and constant striving against sin, so as to weaken and conquer it: which supposition is a sufficient ground for adjourning the more minute explication of this duty until now.

And herein I shall proceed,

Negatively, to shew you what it is not: which is made apparent by the many counterfeit mortifications that are in the world. Either disciplinary severity, and a pontificial rigour in tormenting, rather than subjecting the outward man; or else, at best, civil morality, are rested in as true mortification. It will be, therefore, of considerable advantage, to uncase to you those appearances of mortification, which yet indeed are not it.

And

Positively, I shall endeavour to open what is necessarily required unto true mortification, and wherein that great work and duty doth consist.

i. NEGATIVELY, what it is not.

And, here, I need not tell you,

1. That *mortification is not the utter and total extirpation and destruction of sin's in-being in the soul.*

There are a sort of fanatics, or frantics rather, risen up among us, who, by pretending to that in this life unattainable privilege of a perfect immunity from all sin, do make mortification inconsistent with mortality; and, while they promise to themselves that liberty which God never promised them, they are become the servants of corruption. St. John frequently gives these men the plain lie: 1 John i. 8. *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us:* v. 10. *If we say that we have not sinned, we make* God *a liar, and his word is not in us:* this is that, which the manifold falls, the grievous outcries, the bitter repentings, the broken bones, and the bloodied consciences, even of the best and perfectest saints on earth, have too sadly attested beyond all contradiction; unless it be from those men, to whom customariness hath made the difference between sinning and forbearing to sin unperceivable. It is, indeed, the sincere desire and endeavour of every child of God, so thoroughly to mortify corruption, that it should never more stir, nor tempt; never more move, nor break forth, unto eternity. Oh! it would be a blessed word of promise, if God should say to us concerning our lusts, as Moses did to the Israelites, "Those Egyptians, whom you have seen this day pursuing your souls, ye shall see them again no more for ever:" no,

God is, if I may so say, more provident than to spoil heaven, by forestalling that happiness, which makes it so infinitely desirable: and, therefore, he here suffers these Canaanites to be thorns in our eyes and scourges in our sides, to sweeten the place of our rest; and, when we are most victorious over them, all that we can do is but to make them subject and tributary: they have so possessed the fastnesses of our souls, that there is but one mortification can drive them out; and that is our dissolution. Under the Ceremonial Law, if an earthen vessel were polluted by any unclean thing, the only way of purification prescribed, was to break it: truly, we are such earthen vessels, though mortification may scour and cleanse us from much of that filth which cleaveth to us; yet we can never be fully purified, till death breaks us to pieces. It was only sin, that brought death into the world; and it is only death, that can carry sin out of the world. So that every true Christian is another Sampson: he slays more of the uncircumcised at his death, than he did in all his lifetime before. It is true, God is many times pleased to vouchsafe eminent and signal successes, in a way of mortification; but yet these are but as it were pickeering small conquests, obtained by singling out some particular lusts: it is only death, that makes the general defeat and slaughter. And, therefore, as the weakest grace is sufficient to destroy the reign of sin; so the strongest grace, exercised in the most constant and severe course of mortification, is insufficient to destroy its residence.

That is the First thing.

2. *A harsh severity and rigour used only towards the outward man, is not true mortification.*

This is that, which blind devotionists rest upon; who, by sharp penances, long fastings, and other ways of ignorant will-worship, do go the way rather to destroy themselves than their corruptions. This churlish and rugged way of mortification is altogether as incongruous, as if a man should lay a plaster upon his clothes to cure a wound in his body. Should he tell down rivers of tears for every vain thought, should he fine himself in a thousand prayers for the commission of every sin, should he fast till his skin cleaveth to his bones and his bones stare him in the face; yet all this would be as far from the mortification of sin, as it is from a satisfaction for sin: all these cannot reach that bottom and centre of the soul, in which lust sits enthroned, and despises all the attempts and batteries that men make

against the outworks only. But I need not insist much longer on this particular: the greater light, yea I may say the greater atheism and profaneness of our days, will discharge me from that trouble. Yea, professors themselves, by neglecting that moderation, which they should use towards the outward man, in diet, in attire, or in any other enjoyment; do omit, if not a part of, if not a means to mortification, yet certainly that sign and character, which should evidence them to all the world, to be mortified persons. The truth is, men now live, as if it nothing at all concerned their souls what their bodies do. Whatsoever these men pretend, yet it must needs be very difficult to believe that there can be humility and mortification in the one, where there is not sobriety and decency in the other.

I will not undertake to prescribe how far a true mortification must, in particular, reach the outward man; yet, in the general, take these Two rules.

(1) All that indulgence, which indisposeth to holy and spiritual duties, or hinders us from them or in them, must, by the exercise of mortification, be taken off and removed.

There must be rigour and severity used, even towards the body, if formerly we found the want thereof made us unfit for or remiss, in the duties of religion. It is fittest for your own Christian prudence, to descend unto particulars; and to examine what it is, that indisposeth you, either in hearing, or in praying, or in any other means of communion with God. Whatever it be, whether it proceed from infirmity or custom and habitude, if it be an occasion to hinder the life and spiritualness of our duties, mortification must be here set on work, though not without violence and regret unto the outward man. What saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 27? *I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection:* that is, he made it useful and serviceable to his soul. Where mortification is neglected, even the body, that underling and servile part of man, grows wild and unruly; rebelling against the soul, and hurrying it whither itself will.

(2) All that provision, which indulgence towards the outward man lays in for the flesh to fulfil it in the lusts thereof, must be cut off by the careful exercise of mortification.

Do you find, that the pampering of the outward man, is the strengthening of the Old Man? that outward ease, plenty, or any other conveniences, are but instruments for lust to work with, or objects for it to work upon? it is high time for mortification to be exercised; even about those things, which are

lawful, when once lust turns them into food and nourishment for itself. I leave it to your own experience, to frame instances, and accordingly to proceed in mortification for the future.

These two general rules being supposed, (which it were to be wished professors were more careful in observing), whatsoever other severity men execute upon themselves, may be called cruelty and will-worship, but cannot be reckoned for true mortification.

That is the Second thing.

3. *The not-breaking-forth of corruption into a scandalous life and conversation, is no evidence of true mortification.*

Many men's lusts are like secret imposthumes, that breed within the breast; which are never known, till they prove their deaths. It is not necessary, that unmortified sin should be like a running sore, offensive and noisome to others: it may rankle and fester within, till it become incurable and mortal. Lust hath a large and ample dominion inwards, in the heart: there are thoughts, contrivances, desires, affections, and motions; all which may be altogether unmortified, when yet the life and conversation may be so innocent and blameless, as not to be justly chargeable with the guilt of any one notorious sin. What can we judge of such an one, but that he is a very mortified Christian? yea, but God, who knoweth the heart, yea and possibly his conscience, sees abundance of pride, uncleanness, worldliness, unbelief, contempt of God and his ways, reigning and raging within, in all that strength and power which they have gotten to themselves by so long a continuance, without the least check from mortification.

Now it may be attributed to a Threefold cause, why a lust, that is unmortified, doth not always break forth into gross and scandalous sins.

(1.) To that quiet, reserved temper and disposition, that some men are of.

Their very nature is such, that they will do nothing violently and outrageously; and, therefore, they will not sin so. Some men are rude sinners, and boisterously wicked: others are of a more calm and retired spirit; and yet, possibly, as far from being mortified as the other. Take a true Christian, who hath often sweat and toiled in the mortifying of some particular prevailing lust and corruption to which his temper inclined him, as suppose passionateness or the like, and compare him to one of a smooth, sedate, and even temper, though altogether unac-

quainted with the great work of mortification; and how unlovely shall the passion of the mortified Christian appear, in comparison with the sedateness of the unmortified sinner! such is the great advantage which a man's natural inclination gives, either to the acting or suppressing of sin. And, therefore, take this rule, by the way, in examining thy mortification: Never reflect upon that seeming prevalency thou hast over those lusts, which are not strengthened and advantaged by the bent and tendency of thy natural inclination; for this will prove a very deceitful mark: rather look what success thou gainest over the sin of thy nature, be it what it will; or against those sins, which no natural temper can ever counterfeit the mortification of, such as unbelief, hardness of heart, impenitency, and such-like spiritual sins, which are common to all men of what temper and disposition soever: otherwise, to conclude that corruption is mortified and subdued, because thou breakest not forth into such sins to which perhaps thy natural inclination is not so strongly bent, is but a false and deceitful evidence.

(2) The not-breaking-out of unmortified corruption, may often be imputed to the absence of temptations, opportunities, and occasions of sinning, and such-like outward advantages; which, were they present, would certainly draw it forth into act.

Either the Devil is wanting to men's corruptions, in fitting them with suitable temptations; or else God's providence, in fitting them with a convenient opportunity: one or both of which, is the true reason why we see no more wickedness committed in the world (though it doth now too fearfully abound) and not the weakening or abating of the power and rage of it by mortification. When the Prophet told Hazael what cruelties he should act upon the Jews; what, saith he, *Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?* While he was in his private estate, he could not think his nature had been so cruel: but, when he was advanced to the kingdom of Syria, and had subdued the Israelites; then, the temptations of a conqueror assault him, and he shews that cruelty which before lay lurking and dormant. And so it was with Peter, in denying his Lord and Master. Now look inward a little: you pretend, perhaps, to be mortified persons; and why? "Oh! not any one sin, besides common failings, hath broken from me so long time." Hath there not? Tell me; were not temptations wanting, to provoke and draw out thy corruptions? were not opportunities wanting, to let out thy corruptions? If they were, this

thy not sinning proceeds not from a mortified heart, but from a negligent devil, or a gracious God. That man gets a good opinion of himself at too easy a rate, who thinks himself mortified for not sinning when he is not tempted.

(3) It may be imputed to a powerful restraint, laid upon the eruptions of lust.

This hinders them from breaking out into act; but, yet, this doth not mortify nor weaken them. I do not now speak of that almighty restraint, that God, in his ordinary providence, lays upon the lusts of men; by which, indeed, he mortifies them, even as he mortified Jeroboam's hand, which he stretched out against the Prophet, by taking the power of sinning from them: but of that restraint, which men themselves lay upon their lusts, who yet are altogether ignorant of and unexperienced in the spiritualness of this duty of mortification. Men may lay a check and curb upon their lusts: that whereas formerly they let themselves loose unto all manner of profaneness and impiety; they may now relinquish that excess of riot, and bind their corruptions within a narrower pale and compass, and thereby appear both to themselves and others to be much mortified and changed Christians.

This Restraint may proceed from a Twofold cause.

[1] From gross Hypocrisy and deep Dissimulation, for secular ends and advantages, with which the extravagancy of wickedness possibly would not consist.

And, truly, we may justly fear, that much of that seeming mortification, which is among professors, stands only upon this bottom. Certainly, that sinful liberty, which they allow themselves where it is not prejudicial to their worldly interests, is a very sad ground to suspect all other restraints that they impose upon themselves, to be from no higher a principle, than compliance with the genius and current of the times. Such men's cursed hypocrisy shall, in hell, bear the punishment of all those sins, that itself hindered from being committed: that is all the reward it shall have.

[2] This restraint may, likewise, proceed from the strength of Convictions, and the terrors of a Natural Conscience.

Wicked men, many times, dare not commit those sins, which yet notwithstanding their hearts and affections are bent upon: should they, conscience would hurl firebrands in their faces, and haunt them with fearful threatenings and outcries. And some there are, who, without question, do stand in as much dread of

an enraged conscience, as they do of hell itself. This keeps men in some awe and order, that they dare not commit sin, with so much impudence and greediness, as otherwise they would do; but, yet, this amounts not to a true mortification: this all proceeds from the power of conscience, forcibly reigning in corrupt nature; not from the power of grace, changing that nature. As it is with wild beasts kept up in a grate, they cannot ravin after their prey; but, still, their natures are ravenous: so it is with conscience: it many times coops up men, that they cannot ravin after their lusts, as were they free from such a restraint they would; but, still, their natures continue unsanctified, their sins unmortified, and their affections, desires, and delights eager after them, though they dare not commit them; yea and, possibly, (which is the usual effect of a forcible restraint) by so much the more violent, by how much the more debarred from them.

This is the Third thing.

4. *The relinquishment and forsaking of a sin, is not an evidence of a true mortification.*

I do not here mean only such a temporary forsaking of sin as theirs was in 2 Pet. ii. 20, who, having *escaped the pollutions of the world,* through lust, were *again entangled:* certain it is, that these men's corruptions were but for a time dissembled, and never mortified. But I take it for a perpetual relinquishment and an utter divorce, so that the soul never again returns to the commission of it, or at least not with any proportionable frequency and delight. Yet this forsaking of sin, may be without the mortification of it.

Take this, in Two cases.

(1) When men do change and barter their sins, then there is a forsaking of sin, but no mortifying of it.

Multitudes of lusts lie crowded together in the soul, and each of these must have its alternate reign; and, therefore, when one hath for a while swayed and been the master-lust, it gives place to another, and that to another, till the sinner hath run through the bead-roll of them. And, therefore, the Apostle, Tit. iii. 3. speaks of serving divers lusts and pleasures: divers, in their turns and successions. This deceives many: they find an old tyrannical lust, that hath kept them under long and laborious thraldom, begin to grow weak and feeble, and hereupon they conclude it is mortified in them; but, alas! they do not observe some other lust reigning in its stead: it doth but

give way to make room for another; so that, though the stream of corruption be diverted and turned out of one channel, yet it runs with as full a tide in another. Let not him, who, of a sensual person, is grown a worldling; of a profane person, a hypocrite; think that he hath mortified any one of these lusts. A changed man, indeed, he is; changed from one extreme to another, from sin to sin: but this change is far from mortification.

(2) When a lust rather forsakes the sinner, than he it; then there may be a perpetual separation, where there is no mortification.

There are sins, that are proper and peculiar to such an estate and season of a man's life, upon the alteration of which they vanish and disappear: the sins of youth drop off from declining age, as incongruous and misbecoming: the man doth, as it were, outgrow them. Now if he reflect back, to take a view of the numberless vanities and follies he hath left, how deadened his heart and affections are to those things which before he delighted in, this may possibly make him think himself a very mortified man; when, alas! he hath not so much forsaken his sins, as they him: so long as his natural vigour could relish the temptation, and so long as it comports with his state and condition; so long he served it, and lived in it. Let not such a man deceive himself: though now he hath forsaken it, yet he never mortified it: the sin deserted him, and fell off of its own accord: this fruit of the flesh was never beaten down by mortification, but, being full ripe, fell off of itself without violence.

That is the Fourth thing.

5. *Every victory and conquest gained over sin, is not a true mortification of it.*

I doubt not, but many unregenerate persons have yet had eminent successes in opposing their corruptions; so as to hinder them, even when they have been raging and impetuous, from breaking forth, either to the defiling or wounding of their consciences; nay, sometimes so far as sensibly to abate the power and force of them: but all this amounts not to a true mortification.

And that, upon a double account.

(1) Because all such conquests are achieved by principles altogether foreign and extraneous unto grace.

That hath no hand in the work: but natural conscience, acted by slavish fear or some other carnal consideration, manageth

all the fights and scuffles, that wicked men maintain against their lusts. And,

(2) Because, though by these victories lust seems to be weakened in its branches, yet it is much strengthened in its root.

If one sin be pulled down, it is that another may be advanced. All the conquests, that wicked men obtain, do not destroy the government, but only change the governors. Nay, indeed, it is only one contrary lust, that fights against the other; and, which soever of them is defeated, yet still the body of sin thrives.

That is the Last thing.

ii. Now, seeing there are so many things like true mortification in the world, it nearly concerns us to beware, lest we be deceived by them; and so flatter ourselves with a false evidence for life.

To prevent which, it will be necessary, to open to you this great duty of mortification POSITIVELY.

And in this, possibly, some useful progress may be made, when these Two things have been searched into.

Wherein it doth consist.

What things are indispensibly required thereunto.

1. For the first, I take *the Nature of Mortification* to consist in these Three things.

In weakening Sin's Root and Principle.

In suppressing its Risings and Motions. And,

In restraining its outward Actings and Eruptions.

It is the First of these, that makes the other two any parts of this true mortification. Let a man oppose himself, all his days, against the workings of corruption within, and the actings of it without; yet, unless the radical power and force of corruption be in some good measure abated, let him not think he hath mortified any one lust. It is a task utterly impossible to kill it, if it be not first wounded at the heart. It were easy to demonstrate the vanity and unsuccessfulness of all endeavours, to mortify these limbs and out-parts of the Old Man, unless his vitals be first perished, and his inward strength decayed.

For,

First. Hereby you can never arrive at any comfortable issue in the work. It is but like beating down leaves from a tree, which will certainly sprout forth again: the root is still remaining in the ground, full of sap and juice; and will supply every

branch of corruption with the same nourishment, and make it flourish into the same strength and verdure; which all your endeavours will but fruitlessly attempt to despoil it of.

And,

Secondly. Hereupon finding no better success, but that, after all, he sees himself deluded, and that lust is not mortified; still, as thick fogs and steams of it rise within him as ever; still, it is as unruly and boisterous as ever; and more to suppress and weaken it, in his way, cannot be done: hereupon, I say, he despairingly gives over all future contendings, and abandons himself to the power and violence of his corruptions; and those, which before he strove in vain to stop, he now spurs on and drives furiously towards perdition.

This is the fearful, and yet too frequent issue, of such endeavours, as have their beginnings merely from the convictions of natural conscience: they receive no encouragement nor recruit from the decay of corruption; and, therefore, usually expire, either in a loose formality, or in a professed dissoluteness. Very sad it is to consider how much pains and industry have been lost in struggling against sin, only upon this account; that, to all their endeavours, there hath been no foundation laid, in the radical and inward weakening of the habit and body of corruption.

This inward weakening of corruption is Twofold:

The First proceeds from that mortal and incurable wound, which the body of sin received in the first implantation of grace. Then was the head of this serpent crushed; and, whereas before it had the power and authority of a king and sovereign in the soul, in that very moment it was deposed, and hath ever since harassed it only as a rebel and traitor.

The Second proceeds from those redoubled strokes, with which mortified Christians follow their corruptions; whereby they every day and hour draw blood and spirits from them, and so by degrees waste and weaken them. The first, indeed, is not any part of that mortification, whereof I am now treating; but rather a necessary antecedent to it: and the latter would not be mortification, did it not presuppose the former; for therefore doth a man, by opposing the motions and actings of corruption in his daily conversation, weaken the habit of it, because of that first weakening which it received in conversion. The Apostle, speaking of this weakening of sin, calls it a crucifying of it with Christ: Rom. vi. 6. *Our old man is crucified with him,*

that the body of sin might be destroyed. Now look, how was Christ crucified? first he was hung upon the cross, and then pierced with a spear: so, truly, it is in the mortification of corruption: our first conversion unto God hangs it upon the cross, whence it shall never come down alive; and then our constant endeavours are as so many spears continually piercing it, till the body of this Old Man becomes all over one great wound, whence daily issue out the blood and spirit, the strength and vigour, and at length life itself. This is it, which makes the keeping under of the motions of corruption, and the keeping in of its eruptions, to be true mortification in the children of God; when yet the very same endeavours, in unregenerate men, are nothing so. Sin, in them, is upon the throne, and not upon the cross: and therefore they cannot wound, nor pierce it: they cannot weaken, nor destroy it.

"Yea," but may some say, "must there, in true mortification, be not only a striving against the motions and actings of corruption, but also the weakening of its root and principle? Alas! then I fear all my endeavours have been fruitless and in vain. Some success, indeed, I have gained against the eruptions of lust; but still I find the temptations of it as strong and violent as ever: I perceive no weakenings, no decays in it; but it rather grows more rebellious and headstrong every day than other; and, therefore, all, that I have done against them, hath not been true mortification."

This, no question, is the case of many a mortified Christian: and, therefore, for answer hereunto,

First. Consider: possibly thou mayest be herein mistaken, that thou thinkest that corruption moves stronger than before, when only thou takest more notice of its motions than thou didst before.

When the heart is made tender and soft by a long exercise of mortification, a less temptation troubles it more, than formerly a greater would. Every the least rising of corruption in the heart seems now a desperate and heinous thing; whereas, before, through the deadness and stupidity of conscience, it was made light of and scarce regarded. This seeming strength of sin is not a sign that sin is not dying; but rather a sign that thou art spiritually alive, because so very sensible of its motions. The stronger the opposition is, which grace makes against sin, the stronger also will sin seem to work, though indeed it never was weaker. If a strong-natured man fall into a little sickness and

distemper, it seems more violent and raging in him, than a greater would in another of a weak constitution; because the natural vigour conflicts more with the disease: he is unquiet and turbulent, and tosses to and fro, merely because the strength of nature is impatient till the sickness be removed. So is it here: if a gracious soul fall into any sinful distemper, what conflicts and agonies are there, as if he were in the very pangs of death! Doth this argue the strength of corruption? No: nothing less: it rather argues the strength of grace, which makes the soul to wrestle thus impatiently, till the corruption be overcome and removed. None so much complain of the strength and power of their sins, as those, in whom it is unto some good degree mortified; because they have that contrary principle of grace in them, which makes them sensible of the least risings and motions of it.

Secondly. Consider: corruption may act strongest in the soul, then, when it is in itself weakest. It may be very strong in acting, when it is but weak in being.

You know with what a great blaze a wasted candle goes out, and with what violent pangs and strugglings men use to depart this life: so, sometimes, a mortified lust makes such a blaze, as if it would set the whole soul on fire; when, indeed, it is but expiring: it so struggles, as if it would master grace; when, indeed, it is but its last pull and death-pang. What is said of Christ when hanging on the cross, Mark xv. 37. He *cried with a loud voice, and* then *gave up the ghost;* the same may I say of corruption hanging on the cross with a loud voice in a temptation, as if it were not only alive, but strong and vigorous: yea, but this loud voice is many times its last voice; and then it gives up the ghost, and draws its last breath crying. And,

Thirdly. Some accidental improvement may make a lust that is subdued and truly mortified, yet seem no way weakened; but rather much more active and vigorous than ever before.

Sometimes, the very crasis and temper of the body may so alter, as to cause a greater propenseness to such or such a corruption than formerly: and, sometimes, a man may lie in the way of more temptations than ever. Now, upon such advantages as these, corruption, though it be mortified, yet will be stirring: yea, and be stirring, it may be, more violently than ever it did while it was unmortified; for, though then it had more strength and power of its own, yet it had not such odds of grace, as through these external aids it hath gotten. And,

Fourthly. What is abated in the strength of lust's temptations, is many times eked out by the temptations of the Devil.

And these, though they are of different kinds, yet are so closely and so indiscernibly pieced together, that the soul, not knowing what must be imputed to the strength of its own corruption, and what to the violent assaults of the Devil, ascribes all to his lust, and then sadly looks upon himself as an unmortified sinner: and unmortified sin, when it moves and tempts only of its own accord, will not seem to be so raging and impetuous, as a mortified sin will, when it is blown up by the temptations and injections of Satan: and therefore Christians, not being able to distinguish, as indeed none sufficiently can, are necessarily troubled with many fears and doubts, whether or no corruption, which acts so strongly, be at all weakened in them. And, indeed, if the Devil helps any men's corruptions by his temptations, they are especially those, which mortification hath already dealt with and subdued. In wicked men, he sees lust able enough to subsist of itself, and to manage the affairs of its own dominions; and therefore leaves them to the plague of their own heart to destroy them: but, in the children of God, where this enemy is broken and conquered, he backs and enforces it; lends it auxiliaries of objects, and suggestions, and numberless temptations; leads it on to the combat; and, by many wiles and methods, enables it to molest, if not to foil the most conquering and mortified Christian: hereupon the soul, finding such a wonderful recruit of strength and vigour in corruption, presently concludes it is all its own, and that certainly it was never yet subdued, never weakened in him.

That is the last thing.

So then, although where true mortification is exercised, there corruption is weakened and doth decay; yet this decay is not always discernible.

And thus much shall suffice to open to you what Mortification is.

2. The next thing is, to shew you *what is of necessity required thereunto.*

You have already heard, that mortification consists of two parts, the weakening of the Habit, and the constant endeavour of repressing the Motions and restraining the Eruptions, of sin. Accordingly, two things are thereunto necessarily required:

A vital Principle of Grace, that may weaken and destroy the habit of sin. And

The Influences of the Spirit of God, that may draw forth this inward principle of grace, and act it unto the suppressing of these motions, and the restraining of these eruptions.

(1) Therefore, there cannot be any exercise of true mortification, where there is not a vital Principle and Habit of Grace, radically to weaken and destroy it.

It is not nature, it is not conscience, it is not education, it is not conviction, nor is it any other principle, but grace alone, that is a fit match for corruption. How can it with reason be supposed, that, where there is nothing else but sin, any thing should destroy the power of sin? What, though one lust quarrels with and contradicts another? and what, though conscience contradicts them both? yet the main body of lust is not concerned in these petty quarrels. Some lust or other must be chief in the soul, where grace is not advanced as the prevailing principle; and, whether this lust be set up and that pulled down, is not much material: still, the regality and tyranny of sin is equally maintained and upheld, by the one as by the other; and, till grace dissolves this government, and be laid as the axe to the root of the tree, all our endeavours after mortification will be but vain and fruitless attempts, which lust will easily baffle.

And hence, then, by way of consectary:

First. How necessary is it to our comfortable undertaking this great work of mortification, to see that the first grace of our conversion be true and saving!

Alas! where there never was conversion wrought, there never was mortification exercised. The killing of sin is not a work, that can be done by a dead, but by a living man. I should be loth to cast in doubts and scruples, that should more trouble than benefit you: yet give me leave to say, that, unless the evidence of the truth of your grace be in some good proportion cleared up to you, your hands must needs be faint and feeble in conflicting against your lusts: how know you, that all your strugglings and strivings are not from weak and insufficient principles, and consequently far short of mortification? I speak it, not that you should abate your endeavours; but to quicken you, to look after the truth and sincerity of grace; which when you have assured to yourselves, you may be likewise certain, that, though in all your conflicts you may not find a visible

decay of the strength of sin, yet it is in the root and principle of it insensibly weakened.

Secondly. See also what the sad and deplorable condition of wicked men is, who are strangers to the life of grace.

Without mortification, no life is to be expected: without grace, no mortification can be exercised: and what doth this, when it is cast up, amount to, less than the eternal damnation of such men? The war, which we are to wage against our lusts, admits of no other terms, but to kill or to be killed: either the blood of your dearest sins must be spilt, or the blood of your precious souls. Is it not now a sad thing for men, in such a merciless war, to be thrust naked upon the sharp swords of their enemies? so it is with sinners, who are many times by conscience or convictions thrust on to fight with armed and cruel lusts, and yet have neither weapons to wound them nor to defend themselves. What can be imagined more sad, than is the case of these men? on the one hand, conscience scourgeth them; on the other, sin wounds: conscience drives them on; corruption beats them back: and yet, in all these conflicts, never can they obtain so much success, as to subdue the least and weakest lust.

What should these men do? should they give over this opposition, such as it is; and sit still, under despair of mortification? No: let them still strive and struggle, and make what strength they can, and act as far against sin as natural conscience will carry them. Let not the doctrine which you have heard to day, of a carnal man's impotency to mortify any one sin, slacken your endeavours: still press upon it.

For,

First. Though all, that you can do without grace, will not amount to a true mortification; yet it may cause much outward reformation: though, hereby, you cannot kill corruption; yet you may mightily curb it.

It is true, this, when done, will not avail to save you; but yet, suppose the least, it will avail to mitigate your punishment, and abate the degrees of torment: and, certainly, that man never had a right apprehension of hell, who doth not account the striking off the least degree of wrath infinitely more worth, than all the pains and trouble of an endeavoured mortification. And,

Secondly. Though you cannot mortify corruption without

grace, yet, when you oppose it with the power you have, God may give you in the grace that you want.

While carnal, you cannot pray, nor perform any other spiritual duty in grace; yet you may and ought to do it for grace: so, here, though your struggling against sin be not mortification, without grace; yet ought you to persist in it, that it may be mortification, through grace. How know you but that conflict, which was begun between the flesh and the flesh, may end in a victory of the spirit over the flesh? Certainly, it is far more probable, that that man should obtain true mortification, who earnestly strives against his lusts; than he, who willingly yields himself up as a slave unto them.

That is the first thing. Without grace, no one lust can be mortified; and yet wicked men are not hereby to be discouraged in their endeavours.

(2) Another requisite unto mortification, is the Influence of the Spirit of God, drawing forth this inward grace, and acting it to the suppressing of sinful motions and sinful eruptions.

And, therefore, the text tells us, *If ye, through the Spirit, do mortify.* Though grace be wrought in the heart, yet it is not in our power to act it; but the same Spirit, that implanted it, alone must excite it: he must marshal it, and set it in array: he must head it, and lead it on; and, under his conduct, it will certainly prove victorious. I might here, at large, shew you what aid, force, and recruit the Spirit brings us in for our assistance in the work of mortification, that the Apostle should here attribute it unto him. But I shall only briefly touch at this point, and so proceed.

[1] The Spirit discovers the sin, that is to be mortified.

He drags it out of its lurking holes; strips it naked to the view of the soul; uncases its deceits; discloses its methods; shews the ugliness, deformity, and hellishness of it; tells the soul what a desperate and sworn enemy it is against its eternal happiness, and what an endless train of woes, and plagues, and torments it draws after it: and, hereby, he highly exasperates the heart to a resolution, that, since it is so opportunely delivered into its hands, it shall no more escape alive. Now this assistance unto mortification the Spirit lends us, as he is the Author of Conviction: John xvi. 8. *He* shall convince *the world of sin.*

[2] The Spirit doth inwardly and really, by the immediate working of his own power, gradually weaken and destroy the habit and principle of corruption.

He, with his own hands, wounds the Old Man, breaks the hard heart, takes out the stony heart, and gives a heart of flesh. He burns up and consumes all that dross and corruption, that lies in the heart; and is, therefore, compared unto fire: Mat. iii. 11. *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire;* that is, with the Holy Ghost working as fire, purifying and refining you as the fire doth metals; who is therefore called, Isai. iv. 4. *The Spirit of Judgment,* and *of Burning.* The Spirit of Judgment, that is, he judgeth between what is flesh and what is spirit in the heart; and separates them, the one from the other: and the Spirit of Burning; when they are so severed, he preys, as fire on stubble, upon that which is corrupt and fleshly, till he hath consumed it.

[3] The Spirit brings home and applies the efficacy of the cross and death of Jesus Christ unto the soul, in which there is contained a sin-mortifying virtue.

Our Old Man was crucified with him; and, therefore, it is mortified in us. The inscription on the cross might have been, not only *Jesus, the King of the Jews,* but "Satan, Prince of this World, and Sin, that Tyrant of the Heart, are all here crucified." I might here insist on that influence, that the death of Christ hath upon the death of sin, both as the meritorious and as the protatartical cause of it; but this I intend at large to speak of, under another head. Now what a liveless thing were a crucified Christ, if the Spirit did not act him and bring him from the cross; nay, bring him with the cross into the heart, and there conform it to the fellowship of his sufferings! Saith Christ, concerning the Spirit, John xvi. 15. *He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* Indeed, whatever power there is, either in the death, resurrection, or intercession of Christ, to any spiritual end, it becomes effectual, only by the declaration and application of it to the soul by the Spirit.

[4] The Spirit is both the Author and Finisher of the whole work of Sanctification in us.

We are said to be *sealed* by him *unto the day of redemption:* Eph. iv. 30. Now what are the effects of a seal?

1st. It gives firmness and stability to our spiritual estate.

Having received the seal of the Spirit, we are inviolable;

like that book in the Revelations, which none in heaven, or earth, or hell can break open.

2dly. It gives security and assurance concerning our eternal estate.

Receiving the earnest of the Spirit, we also receive our salvation ratified and confirmed to us as under God's hand and seal. But, besides this,

3dly. A seal imprints an image upon the wax, and receives the impression of it.

And, indeed, this is that, on which the two former depend. A seal adds no firmness nor assurance to a deed, unless some impression be thereby made. It is but an airy assurance, a void evidence, an insignificant charter for heaven, which hath not on it the print of the Spirit's Seal. Now the impress of this seal is the very image and superscription of God, which, when the heart is like wax made soft and pliable, is in a man's regeneration enstamped upon it, and in the continual progress of our sanctification conformed more perfectly to the similitude of God. This work of sanctification, which the Spirit begins and carries on, hath but two parts: as the one is a living unto holiness, so the other is a dying unto sin; so that, if the Holy Ghost be a sanctifying, he must also be a mortifying Spirit. The image of God bears but this double aspect: the one, towards grace, which is fresh, vigorous, and lively; the other, towards sin, which is pale, ghastly, and dying: and the same Spirit imprints both these at once upon the soul; and, therefore, the death of sin is to be ascribed to him, no less than the life of grace.

What abundant support and consolation may we hence reap! Are not your hearts ready to fail and sink within you, when you see such clusters of sinful thoughts swarming about you, such violent hurries and careers of sinful desires and sinful affections, such numberless monsters of callow and unfledged lusts, such a crowd of grown and noisome temptations able and well appointed for the battle, such snares laid for you without, such treachery hatched against you within? do not your hearts, I say, sink within you, when you consider that you must break through all these: not as men that run the gauntlet, to receive a scourge from one, and a wound from another; but as triumphant, as conquerors, routing, scattering, slaughtering these forces of hell, and, what is worse, of your own hearts? What strength can you make? will you muster up the poverty, the nakedness, the weakness, the languishment, the wounds of your souls, to

achieve this great enterprise by? or, will you bring forth and marshal your graces? Alas! do you think to obtain the conquest as the Jebusites presumed, by the blind and the lame, weak and imperfect things? and yet, besides these, what other auxiliaries have you? what other, besides these! yes, the Spirit of God himself is pleased to enrol and list himself in this warfare; and, though we are weak and have no might against that great company that comes up against us; yet *not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.* What are the deeds of the body to the power of the Spirit? what are principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses compared to that God, who is far above all principality and power, who is the Spirit of Holiness? Go forth boldly, therefore, and fight the Lord's battles against these uncircumcised, though gigantic lusts: the sons of Anak, with whom thou seemest to thyself but as a grasshopper, rush on thee; yet the sword of the Lord and of Gideon can destroy the whole host of them. Wilt thou shrink from this engagement, when thou hast so much the odds of thy corruptions? when the Spirit of God stands by to encourage thee, to help and assist thee? The Prophet tells the Israelites, Isai. xxxi. 3. that the Egyptians' horses were but *flesh, and not spirit,* and therefore their help was but vain. I may tell you, your enemies are but flesh, *fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;* but your helper is the Spirit, and therefore their opposition is in vain. Never yet was it known, that that soul, who engaged the Spirit of God in the quarrel, ever came off with less than a victory. Though thou hast formerly gone out in thine own strength, and thereby betrayed thine own weakness; and hast got nothing but many a deep wound, many a sad fall, many a sore bruise: yet now call in the Spirit to thine assistance: he can root out and destroy every prevailing lust: he can reinforce thy scattered graces: he can revive thy drooping and fainting soul: he can strengthen thy feeble knees, and thy weak hands, and make thee more than a conqueror. *Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?....He giveth power to the faint; and to them, that have no might, he increaseth strength.* Isai. xl. 28, 29.

Thus you see wherein true Mortification consists; in the habitual weakening of the principle of corruption, and in the actual curbing of its motions: and what is thereunto necessarily

required; the inward root of grace, and the influences of the Holy Spirit to draw it forth and act it.

VI. The next thing, that I shall proceed unto, is, to LAY DOWN SOME PARTICULARS, WHEREBY YOU MAY EXAMINE AND TRY YOUR MORTIFICATION, whether it be right and saving.

If you value eternal life itself, you will likewise value that light, though it be but in its first dawn and weakest glimmerings, that shall discover your interest in it. This interest stands upon nothing more sure than our mortification: *If ye mortify, ye shall live.* Yea, but we are in this work subject to mistakes and errors; so that it is not a more difficult thing rightly to exercise it, than it is to know when we do so. Will it not be sad and astonishing, when men, who have been professors of religion, Christians of no mean account both in their own as well as in the eyes of others; yet shall, at last, be dragged down to hell, and there be eternally murdered by those very sins, the mortification of which they made their best and clearest evidence for heaven? The trial, therefore, being of so vast concernment, I shall give it you in these following particulars.

i. LET THY CONTENDING AGAINST SIN BE WHAT IT WILL OR CAN, YET, IF IT BE NOT JOINED WITH A SINCERE ENDEAVOUR AFTER AN UNIVERSAL OBEDIENCE UNTO GOD IN THE PERFORMANCE OF DUTIES, IT IS NOT, NEITHER CAN IT BE, TRUE MORTIFICATION.

This is that, in which many deceive themselves. They find a perplexing lust within, that troubles their conscience and disturbs their peace: the exceeding guilt of it fills them with bitterness, dread, and horror; and still it will be thus with them, till they have beaten it down and subdued it. They vow, and pray, and watch, and strive against it: they cut off all occasions, that should draw it forth; all provisions, that should relieve and support it; and do whatsoever may be done towards the killing of it. Yea, but all this while they are negligent and careless in other duties, which are not of so immediate concernment to that particular lust: they do not strive to follow God in all his ways: if they think one duty will do it, they neglect all the rest. Let not such men think that they do indeed mortify any one corruption.

This is a very common distemper; and scarcely any thing is more ordinary, than for men to struggle against corruption, and

yet neglect duty. If vows, purposes, and resolutions be, in their apprehension, the most opposite means for the beating down of that sin that disquiets them, these they make, and possibly keep them: but, for other duties, as prayer, meditation, reading, the keeping alive of a holy and spiritual frame of heart, and such duties as should fill up the whole course and measure of Christianity, these they live in a wretched neglect, if not contempt of.

Let such men know, that, whatever their success in this way may seem to be, yet they never truly mortified any one corruption. He only is the mortified man, who labours and endeavours after universal obedience. It is not the vehement opposition, that you make against any particular lust, that argues you to be mortified Christians; but, rather, the universal and general frame and temper of your hearts towards holiness. And therefore saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. vii. 1. *Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, of the flesh and spirit:* there is true mortification: *Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness;* that is, let us mortify in ourselves all sin and corruption. But how must this be done? why, says the Apostle, *perfecting holiness in the fear of God;* that is, giving holiness all its parts, that it shall not be defective in any one duty: then, and not till then, will lust be to any purpose mortified, when a perfect holiness is aimed at and endeavoured, in the whole course of a man's life and conversation.

Now try yourselves by this. When you are troubled with a perplexing lust, be it what it will, which, for your own quiet, you must subdue, you use against it those means and helps, which you think are most directly destructive of it: this is well. Yea, but let me ask you, setting aside that corruption, is not the general frame and course of your lives estranged from communion with God; careless and neglectful of holy and spiritual duties; vain, earthly, sensual, carnal? If it be, however thou mayst prevail over that particular corruption, yet, conclude upon it, thou knowest not what true mortification means.

ii. THAT MORTIFICATION IS NOT TRUE NOR SAVING, THAT OPPOSETH ITSELF AGAINST CORRUPTION, ONLY WITH THE EXCEPTION AND RESERVATION OF ONE PARTICULAR SIN.

Never deceive yourselves: though you should have contested, even all your days, against all the lusts your hearts were ever conscious unto, except one, yet you never mortified any one.

One lust, that hath obtained a pass from you, to go to and fro unmolested, to deal and traffic with the heart undisturbed, will be as certain perdition to your souls, as if every lust, that lies lurking within, should rage forth into act.

In a man, it is true, there are some such parts, that if you wound him there, you need not wound him any where else: if you wound the heart, you need not strike the head. But this Old Man hath no such vitals: it is not sufficient to destroy him, that you wound him in any one part; but he must be made, as our natural condition is described, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, full of wounds and bruises. It is in vain to cry, with Naaman, *The Lord pardon thy servant in this*, or in that *thing*. Dost thou know what thou cravest? It is not this or that sin alone, that is unmortified, but all the rest are as unmortified as these: and, should God pardon these unto thee, yet those would as soon condemn thee.

Now try yourselves by this. When you go forth against your sins to battle, is there no one, that your eye spares, nor your heart pities? Doth the sword of mortification drink the heart-blood of every lust? When they fly for shelter into your very bosom, can you rend them from thence, and slay them before the Lord? When corruption cries out, "Oh, spare such a pleasing, delightful lust, such an advantageous and profitable sin," can you answer it, with a holy disdain, "Were it yet more pleasant, more profitable, yet die it must and shall?" Can you then cut off your right-hand, when it is lifted up to plead for mercy? can you then pluck out your right-eye, when it sheds tears to move your compassion? If so, this indeed is to exercise mortification aright. Corruption must, at last, needs fall dead at your feet, where there is no part nor member of it left unwounded. But if, in all thy dealings against corruption, there be any one sin that thou allowest and indulgest to thyself, how great soever thy wrestlings and contendings are against all other, thou never yet experimentally knewest what belongs to mortification. One allowed sin is vent enough for the body of corruption to take breath at; and, so long as thou permittest it this breathing-place, all endeavours to destroy it are utterly frustrate and in vain.

iii. If thou wouldst judge of the truth of thy mortification, then SEE WHAT THOSE ARGUMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS ARE, WHEREBY THOU DOST ACTUALLY DEAL AGAINST THY LUSTS.

Now these arguments belong but to two heads. Either they are legal, and such as are drawn only from a sad reflexion on the end and issue of sin; which is shame, death, hell and destruction: or, else, they are evangelical; taken from the nature of sin, as being a transgression and offence against a gracious Father, against a crucified and bleeding Saviour, against a patient and long-suffering Spirit, and many other like aggravations which work kindly and ingenuously upon the heart of a child of God.

Put it now to the question: when a temptation assaults thee, with what weapons dost thou resist it? what considerations dost thou over-awe thy heart with?

Dost thou only run down to hell, to fetch arguments against sin from thence? Canst thou no where else quench these fiery darts, but in the lake of fire and brimstone? Can nothing keep thee from sinning, but only the whip and the rack; wrath, vengeance, horrors, and such dreadful things, which while thy conscience thunders in thine ears, it makes thy soul a hell, and itself becomes thy tormentor? If this be all, know that thy affections are woefully entangled in the sin; and thou art fully resolved upon the commission of it, if there were no punishment to follow. Thou mayst, indeed, by this means be frighted and scared from sin, but never mortified to it.

But the evangelical considerations, which a child of God makes use of to mortify sin by, though they work not with that dread and terror, yet are they far more effectual. He sees sin, in its ugly nature; in that spot, stain, and defilement, that it would bring upon his soul: and this causeth in him a true hatred of it. He saith under a temptation, "What! shall I subject a noble and spiritual soul, made capable of enjoying the God of Heaven? shall I prostitute it to the filthy allurements of a base lust? shall I blot out and deface the image of God enstamped upon me; and degrade myself from the glory of his resemblance, to be conformable to the Devil? Can I commit this sin, which heretofore hath drawn blood from my Saviour, and now seeks to draw blood from my conscience? Was not this the very sin, that squeezed clotted blood from him, and was a full load for God himself to bear? did he die to free me from its condemnation; and shall I, upon every slight temptation, rush into the commission of it? Is there any thing so attractive in it, as to counterpoise the infinite and unsearchable love of Christ? No, O Lord! thy love constraineth me: I cannot do this thing, and

sin against so free, so rich, so infinite mercy and goodness." Thus a gracious heart argues against a temptation, and prevails unto a true mortification.

"But," may some say, "may we not make use of legal arguments, of considerations drawn from the wrath of God, the wages of sin, the everlasting damnation to which sinners are appointed, to oppose against a temptation to sin? Are these of no efficacy unto mortification?"

To this I answer:

First. You may and ought, in dealing against your lusts, to use such arguments as these. Why else doth our Saviour inculcate the fear of God upon his disciples, from the consideration of his wrath and power? *Fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell: yea, I say unto you Fear him:* and why doth the Apostle, here in the text, threaten the believing Romans with death if they live after the flesh, unless these considerations may be made use of even by gracious souls against their sins? It is no other than a loose notion, to think that the only incentive to obedience, and the only check and restraint of sin, is the consideration of the love of God. It is true, these gospel arguments are most prevailing and constraining: yet let not him, with whom the fear of God's wrath hath no sway to keep him from sinning, think himself a high attainer: it is rather a stupidity, till we are got past all desert of hell to be fearless of it.

Secondly. Though these arguments and legal considerations may, of themselves, prevail to keep us from the commission of sin; yet they cannot prevail to the mortification of it. Where there are not other considerations besides these working, these never bring off the heart, but only hold the hands from sin. Nay, if, when a temptation is stirring in the children of God themselves, they only answer it by these legal considerations, that they dare not commit it for fear of hell and wrath hereafter or of shame here; and there be no arguments drawn from the love of God and the relation which they stand in to him, from the death of Christ and the obligation which that lays upon them to obedience, from the deformity of the sin to which they are tempted, from the repugnancy and antipathy that is in their regenerate part against it; the abstaining from the commission of that sin is not mortification, but only restraint, even in the children of God themselves.

Thirdly. These legal arguments and considerations, may be of great use and moment in a subserviency unto the mortification of sin.

First. They may hold a temptation or a corruption at bay, till gospel considerations come in to beat it down. Usually, the very first rising of our hearts against a corruption is, from the dangerous consequences of it; from that wrath and vengeance, that are due to it, and will follow upon it: this stops the sin, and puts the soul to a demur; and, though this cannot destroy the corruption, yet it holds it so long, till the New Man calls in aid from gospel arguments to mortify it.

Secondly. These legal considerations, when mixed with gospel motives, make them work more strongly and more effectually unto mortification. The consideration of the infinite wrath of God heightens and aggrandises the infinite love of God in redeeming us from it, and so makes it far more enforcing unto mortification.

Fourthly. It is an ill sign, that that heart is very much unmortified, where a temptation or corruption can break through all gospel considerations used against it; and is stopped from breaking into act, only by legal arguments. When a temptation to sin assaults thee, thou runnest, it may be, to the love of God, to the death of Christ, to the ugly nature of sin, to the beautiful nature of holiness, to beat it down by these (the best and most effectual) considerations: if these do not prevail, but the lust and temptation still tumultuates, and is ready just to break forth into act, thy heart is all on a flame with it; and then, possibly, a thought of hell, of vengeance, of everlasting wrath, starts up suddenly and quashes and quenches this temptation, as water cast on a fire. If this be usual with you, your hearts are much unmortified, and your affections strongly engaged unto sin.

That is the Third trial.

iv. A TRULY MORTIFIED MAN SEES THE GREAT EVIL OF, AND CHIEFLY LABOURS AGAINST THOSE LUSTS, WHICH OTHERS, WHO ACT FROM ANY OTHER PRINCIPLE LOWER THAN TRUE GRACE, EITHER TAKE NO NOTICE OF, OR ELSE DO NOT OPPOSE.

And these are,

Inward Heart Sins, and
Spiritual Wickednesses.

This is a most sure and infallible character.

1. A mortified man *sets himself, especially against inward Heart Sins.*

Against the bubblings of sinful thoughts, and the uproars of sinful affections, and the bent of sinful desires; those lurking and invisible lusts, which though a hypocrite suffer, yea though he foster, yet may he have a very large testimonial to his saintship, to which almost all the world will be ready to set their hands. These, doth a truly mortified Christian principally complain of, and strive against; and in this, indeed, consists the very truth and sincerity of mortification. As the Apostle saith, Rom. ii. 28, 29. That is not *circumcision, which is outward in the flesh*.....but that, which is *of the heart, in the spirit:* so I may say, That is not mortification, which is outward in the flesh; but that, which is of the heart, in the spirit. A kind of dead palsy and numbness may seize upon the outward members of the body; when yet the heart beats strong and quick, and the brain works with sprightful and vigorous motions and conceptions: so, truly, is it in this case: the Old Man may sometimes be benumbed in his outward limbs, and deadened as to the executive part of sinning; when yet the head may work busily in moulding and shaping sinful objects, and the heart may eagerly beat and pant after them. It is usually the highest result and upshot of a wicked man's care and endeavour, to keep lust from boiling over, from raising smoke and ashes about him: and, if he can attain unto this, let the heart be brimful of sin, let the thoughts steep, soak, and stew in malicious, unclean, worldly contrivances and designs; yet these inward motions and ebullitions, he lamenteth not, he suppresseth not. Now, though possibly it might seem an easy task to mortify such little, naked, infant things as thoughts are, that flutter up and down in the soul; and that a slight stroke will serve to lay them dead: yet, certainly, that Christian, who, by experience, knows what it is to deal with his own heart, finds it infinitely more difficult to beat down one sinful thought from rising and tumultuating within, than it is to keep in many a sinful thought from breaking forth into act: so that here lies the very stress and hardship of mortification, in fighting against such shadows, such apparitions, such little entities as thoughts are.

Now there are these Three things, that make this so very difficult.

(1) Because the first bubblings of these sinful emanations from the fountain and spring-head of corruption, it is not in our power to hinder.

External actions fall under deliberation, and they usually are sifted by censure, and guided by advice and counsel; and this gives us advantage, either to let them loose or to restrain them, at our pleasure: but who deliberates of thoughts, or consults of first motions? These first-born actings of the soul fall not under any previous considerations, to examine or forbid them; and, therefore, it is not in our power to make them good or evil, holy or sinful, but, according as the habit and principle within is, so they spontaneously start up; holy thoughts from a gracious principle, and sinful thoughts from a corrupt one. Nay, those things that are the best and most effectual means for mortification, yet cannot keep down sinful thoughts: they will swarm and buzz about the soul, in praying, in hearing, in the most holy and spiritual duties that we can perform; and, when we should be wholly taken up in communion with God, the whole duty, it may be, is necessarily spent in fraying these away; and, when we should be intensely and exaltedly spiritual, all, that we can do, is but to keep our hearts from being long together sinful. It fares with us, as it fared with Abraham when sacrificing: Gen. xv. 11. the text tells us, *when the fowls came down upon the carcases* of the sacrifices, that *Abram drove them away.* These fowls are our sinful thoughts: they fly in the air, at random: we cannot hinder them from lighting; and, it may be, on our sacrifices too: all, that we can do, is to drive them away, that they may not devour, though they do and will pollute. The first rise of sinful thoughts, we cannot oppose; their continuance and abiding, we may: yea, we ought always to compose ourselves in such a frame, as that corruption may not occasionally be stirred in us; yet it is impossible, altogether to keep ourselves from the inward motions and estuations of it.

(2) Sinful thoughts lie unespied and undiscerned by ourselves.

How often do they steal away the heart insensibly, and carry it very far unto sinful objects unawares! so that, when we reflect back to see the workings of our thoughts, we wonder many times how and where they crept in: we find them very busy, but when they got in, we know not; no, nor how long they have continued: unless we keep a strict guard and a narrow watch upon our hearts, these subtle and deceitful lusts will undermine us, and get within and possess us, ere we can take

notice of them. This is the continual vexation of the best Christians, that, even in duties, a vain and impertinent thought runs away with their hearts; that the heat and warmth of their affections, the life, vigour, and spiritualness of their souls in communion with God, are lost oftentimes ere they perceive it: they, at last, perhaps, find out this thieving, deceitful thought, and mourn over it; but yet know not when or how it entered; no, nor can track it so much as by any footsteps. This lurking, deceitful abode of an unperceived thought is, or may be, the sad and just complaint of every soul among us. The Apostle cries out of it, Rom. vii. 21. *When I would do good, evil is present with me:* it is present: here I find it: but how or when it rose, that I know not. And, then,

(3) It is very difficult thoroughly to convince men of the great guilt and evil, which there is in sinful thoughts.

And this also makes it so difficult to mortify them: because they are but things of a small and minute being, therefore men think they carry in them but small guilt and little danger. Every man, that hath but a remnant of conscience left in him, will beware of gross, black, and grisly sins, which carry the brand of hell and damnation visibly stamped upon their foreheads; such, as he, who can without reluctancy commit, must needs own himself for the apparent offspring of the Devil: but for an invisible thought, a notion, an airy idea, a thing next nothing, this certainly can hurt no one: "By a malicious thought, I injure no man: by a covetous thought, I neither grind nor extort from any man: and what so great evil then can there be in this?" It is true, indeed, wert thou only to deal with men, whom thy thoughts touch not, there were no such great evil in them: but, when thou hast to do with an immaterial and spiritual God, before whom thy thoughts appear as substantial and considerable as thy outward acts; then know, that a thought, as slight and thin a being as it is, is yet a heinous provocation of his majesty, a wretched violation of his law, and will be (if not mortified) a fearful damnation and destruction to thine own soul. This doth lie at the bottom of all that neglect, of which men are generally guilty in opposing sinful thoughts: they think them (which indeed is as bad a thought as any other) harmless and indifferent things. As we use to call little infants, Innocent Babes, though indeed they are born into the world with a hell of sin in their natures; some men are apt to think the sinful thoughts, which they conceive

and with which they travail, to be innocent infant things, though indeed every one of them be no other than a firebrand of hell. Some thoughts we are wont to accuse and condemn, as being impertinent: the truth is, it is a name too slight and favourable: there is no such thing as an impertinent thought; no, there is not any thing in your whole lives of greater concernment, and weight, and moment than your thoughts: whatever they be, their influence reacheth no shorter than unto what an eternity of life or death extends to. Now if this persuasion did indeed take hold of men, were it possible, that they should thus indulge themselves in vain, frothy, idle, nay let me call them sinful and pernicious thoughts; thoughts, so effectually destructive? were it possible, that they should so closely brood on these cockatrice eggs, which bring forth nothing but serpents to sting them to eternal death? were it possible, that they should roll and toss a sin to and fro in the fancy; and, thereby, recompense the Devil and their own corruptions, for the squeamishness of conscience in hindering the commission of it? Certainly, herein men bewray great unacquaintedness with mortification, when as those sins that they dare not act, yet they dare with complacency and delight contemplate and feed upon in their own thoughts. Turn, therefore, your eyes inward: when the swarm of lusts is up, and much noise and buzzing is made by corruptions, by temptations, which yet some external principles will not suffer to break forth; where then do they flutter? do they settle in the heart? dost thou fire them there? do thy thoughts, like so many intellectual bees, fly abroad and suck sweetness out of every sinful object, to lay and hoard it up in the fancy? canst thou, for the satisfying of conscience, restrain the outward actings of sin; and yet, for the satisfying of corruption, tolerate and allow the inward workings of it? certain it is, thou never yet knewest what belongs to true and saving mortification; and it were happy for thee, if such an imaginary sinner might suffer only an imaginary death.

But a truly mortified Christian, as he is watchful to keep sin from breaking forth into outward act, so is he especially careful to resist and quell the sins of the inward man, the sins of the heart. And that,

[1] Because he knows that these are the sins, which are most of all contrary to grace, and do most of all weaken and waste it.

Heart sins lie, as so many worms, beating and gnawing the very root of grace; when as outward sins, any otherwise than

as they proceed from the heart, are but as caterpillars, that devour only the verdure and flourishing of grace. How can grace breathe or stir, in such a crowd of sinful thoughts and sinful affections, that oppress it? How can it grow and thrive, among such multitudes of weeds, that choke and starve it? There is no room for grace to live, at least not to act, till mortification pulls up and throws out of the heart all that trash which before filled it. And, then,

[2] He knows, likewise, that when the heart is brimful of corruption, the least jog of a temptation will make it run over. And, therefore,

[3] He looks upon it as the most easy and compendious way of mortification, to begin at the heart.

Thence it is, that all the outward sins of a man's life and conversation receive their supply. What saith Christ, Matt. xv. 19? *Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* Whence are the streams supplied, but from the fountain? and, if this be dried up, those must of necessity fail. Those corrupt streams, that flow forth too apparently in men's actions, proceed all from that bitter fountain, which continually bubbles up in the heart; and, as the exercise of mortification dries up this fountain, so the floods of ungodliness must needs run low, by consequence. This, therefore, is very rationally the great and main care of a mortified man, to keep his heart clean from sinful thoughts, sinful desires, and sinful motions and affections. And therefore God calls upon Jerusalem, Jer. iv. 14. *O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved:* that is, mortify the sins of thy heart, that thou mayest live. But what sins are these? it is intimated in the following words, *How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* How long? truly they are likely to lodge for ever within; and they are never like to lodge only within, where all endeavours of mortification are only external and outward. It is in vain to strive to keep sinful thoughts within, unless we endeavour also to destroy them within: they will else break forth, notwithstanding all the care that is used in restraint; and overrun the soul with the guilt of some scandalous, conscience-wounding sin, or other. In your strugglings, therefore, against sin, and in your endeavours for the mortifying of it, look what it is that you chiefly resist: do you not content yourselves that you have beaten corruption from the out-works

into the very fort; that, whereas before it sallied forth at pleasure, wasted and havocked your consciences, gashed and wounded your souls even to the very death, triumphed over you as conquered slaves and vassals, now it is pent up in a narrower room and compass? do you not think it enough that you lay a close siege unto it by conviction, conscience, legal terrors; and, by these, so shut it up, that though it may stir and tumultuate within, yet it cannot easily break forth to your disturbance? is not this restraint sufficient? but must you still pursue it even into the very heart; and, when it hath hid itself in a sinful thought, there stifle and kill it? This, indeed, is a sign for good, that this great work of mortification is not only begun by you, but also brought to some perfection. If I may be allowed so to express it, the very heart of sin lies in the sins of the heart: and, if we would indeed mortify it, it is there that we must both aim and strike.

That is the First part of this particular trial. He, who exerciseth mortification aright, doth principally set himself against inward and heart sins, which an unmortified man takes least notice of, and least resists.

2. A truly mortified man *is very careful and laborious in opposing and subduing Spiritual Sins and Wickednesses.*

"Spiritual sins!" you will say: "why, are there any such? Graces may well be termed spiritual, being the immediate effects of the Holy Spirit of God; but are sins become spiritual too?"

By Spiritual Sins, therefore, I mean, such as principally reside in the more refined and exalted part of man, in the very flower and top of his being; called, therefore, by the Apostle, Eph. iv. 23. *the spirit of* the *mind;* the mind itself is a spiritual part, but here the Apostle makes this mind double refined, and extracts a spirit out of a spirit. So that those sins, which are chiefly conversant about the mind, the spirit of a man, and have but little commerce and fellowship with that dull dreggy part the body, these are spiritual sins: such are pride, envy, hypocrisy, unbelief, hardness of heart, a slighting of the tenders of salvation made by Christ, a froward quenching of the good motions of the Holy Spirit.

These are spiritual sins; and these are the sins, which a child of God bends his strongest endeavours against in the work of mortification: and that, upon a Threefold account.

(1) Because these spiritual sins, though they are not of that gross scandal and infamy among men, yet they are sins of the deepest and blackest guilt and defilement in themselves and in the sight of God.

And, therefore, when Christ would rake up the very bottom of hell, who lies there? not the swearer, not the drunkard, not the unclean person, not the worldling, nor any such gross and brutish sinners; but the hypocrite, that spiritual, that refined and exalted sinner: Matt. xxiv. 51. Could we see impenitency, unbelief, hardness of heart, with the same eyes that God sees them, they would appear more ugly and deformed, than those foul and notorious wickednesses, which cause an indelible shame and reproach upon the places where such live as are guilty of them: and that, because they deface the choicest part of the image of God; that, wherein the soul doth nearest resemble and transcribe its original. This, a gracious heart, in part, discovers: it sees somewhat of the loathsome nature of these spiritual sins, which before it did not; and, therefore, now so earnestly opposeth them. And,

(2) Because these spiritual sins are the most dangerous and destructive of all others.

I do not say that the gross outward acts of sin do not deserve hell: they do; yea, and a scorching portion of it too. Yet, I say, if any, who hath been a sinner, though to a very high degree of scandal, doth eternally perish, it is not because of those outward sins merely, but because of impenitency, of unbelief, of hardness of heart, of slighting and undervaluing Jesus Christ, and refusing the gracious terms of the Gospel. They are only these spiritual sins, that do shut men out of heaven, and shut them up in hell, and seal them unto everlasting condemnation. Gross sins do this meritoriously; but these alone do it eventually: these do certainly effect it, as being sins against the only remedy appointed. And, then,

(3) Because they are sins, which, of all other, are most like unto the sins of the Devil.

What are the sins of the Devil? not intemperance and luxury; those swinish and brutish lusts, wherein sensualists wallow: these are not suited to the immaterial nature of the Devil; and are so far below him, that he can neither act nor relish them. But intellectual sins, that are strained and clarified from such feculency, as pride, malice, hatred of God and goodness,

stoutness and stubbornness of heart against God; these are the sins, which this great and wretched spirit doth, with an implacable rage and spite, eternally commit: and, accordingly as wicked men are hellishly improved in these sins, so do they nearer resemble the Devil. And therefore a child of God is, of all others, especially watchful over and industrious against these spiritual sins.

Now try yourselves by this. You rush not, possibly, into the same excess of riot with other men: you resist temptations, and beat down motions and inclinations to outward, gross, self-condemning sins. But did you ever see, did you ever strive against the pride, the hypocrisy, the unbelief and hardness of your hearts? do you know what it is to maintain a war against these spiritual sins? can you abhor and resist a temptation to slight Christ, or to grieve his Spirit, as well as to any outward scandalous sin? If so, this is a good sign, that you do indeed rightly exercise mortification. But, if you are only cleansed from the pollutions of the flesh, and not also from the pollutions of the spirit; if, while you war and strive against fleshly lusts, these spiritual and gospel sins are harboured and nestled in your hearts, know assuredly, that, whatsoever seeming victories and conquests you may obtain over them, yet they are not mortified.

v. Another mark for trial may be this: IF SIN BE MORTIFIED AND DEAD IN YOU, THEN YOU ALSO ARE MORTIFIED AND DEAD UNTO SIN.

"This," you will say, "is very certain: but how shall we know whether we be dead to sin?"

In answer unto this, I shall give you these Two particulars to try it by.

1. *When there is little or no suitableness betwixt sin and thy soul*, then art thou dead unto it.

Thou seest no beauty, no desirableness; thou tastest no sweetness, findest no delight in it: this is to be dead to it; and, accordingly as the degrees of this are, so art thou dying unto sin. When the appetite fails, and the stomach nauseates that food which before pleased it; this is a sign that the man is sick, and, it may be, dying: so, when that appetite, which before was greedy of sin, and swallowed it down as a sweet morsel, comes not only to leave it, but to loath it; this is a good sign that the man is sin-sick: sin is, in him, decaying and dying. I

am crucified to the world, and the world to me, says the Apostle: Gal. vi. 14: so is a mortified Christian crucified unto sin, and sin to him. What delight or pleasure can any object bring to a crucified man? Truly, when the soul is once crucified unto sin, every sinful object is like that draught of gall and vinegar offered to Christ upon the cross: it hath nothing in it but sharpness and bitterness. Now try thyself by this: Is there no more agreeableness between sin and thy soul, than there is between a sick and dying man and the things of this life? canst thou reject those temptations, with indignation; which before thou closedst with, with eagerness? doth thy appetite, thy will and affection, loath and nauseate those sins, which formerly thou swallowedst down with delight and greediness? This, indeed, is a sign that thou art mortified and dead to thy sins. But, if still thou findest as much sweetness and deliciousness in sin as ever, if thou hidest and rollest it under thy tongue as a sweet morsel, if still it be agreeable and most pleasing to thee, thou mayest indeed be dead; dead, not unto sin, but dead in sins and trespasses.

2. If thou art mortified and dead unto sin, *thou art then enlivened and quickened unto holiness.*

What saith the Apostle, Rom. vi. 11? *Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin; but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ.* To be alive unto holiness, what is that? it is to be lively in holiness; to have the heart and affections quickened to it, to be carried out strongly and vigorously in it: this is to be alive. Certainly, a lumpish, dull, heavy professor, who can hardly make a shift to jog on in a form of religion, who performs every thing that belongs to holiness without life, and spirit, and vivacity, must be very much unmortified: he is not yet dead to his sins, otherwise he would be more quick and lively in his graces. It is impossible, that any man can be thus twice dead: what! dead to sin, and yet dead to holiness too! no, the death of sin is the life of grace: and, therefore, where you find the one strong and active, you may conclude the other is weak and languishing.

Now if the Old Man be indeed crucified within you, these particulars of examination do, as it were, shew you the print of the nails, and of the spear that wounded it; and they bid you thrust your hands into its side, that you may be more certain of its death, and in that certainty rejoice. It were happy for us, if, without self-flattery, we could from these things draw an

evidence of our mortification: but, it is to be feared, that they serve rather to shew us what a strange thing it is in the world; yea, how much a stranger even in Israel. How few do at all resist the swing and career of corruption! of those that do, how few do it from a right principle, and by right means! If, perhaps, some few such there be (as certainly some such there are, though but a few) yet even their strugglings and wrestlings against corruption are so impertinent and trifling, that, did they not presume them to flow from an inward principle of grace, they could not but be ashamed either to think or call them Mortification. The generality and common huddle of the world do so securely live after the flesh, as if they were always to live in the flesh; or, as if they were already resolved rather to be cast into hell with their Old Man whole and entire, than to enter into heaven halt and maimed. Yea, the very best Christians do so live in the flesh, as being too well content that the flesh should also live, move, and act in them: they will not be so unhospitable as to destroy that inmate of corruption, though that lurk in them only to destroy them.

I shall not now lay Motives and Arguments before you, to press upon you this great duty: the text hath given us the most effectual and brief compendium: If ye mortify, ye shall live; if not, ye shall die. Life and death are this day set before you: and what could be spoken so much, in so little? Certainly, that man may conclude himself to be already dead, whom the consideration of life and death doth not move nor persuade. "The fleshly liver, he shall die." Is that all? do we not see the most mortified Christians die too? doth not the original curse take hold of them both, and tumble them alike into the dust? would not wicked men be content, would they not wish, after they have been sated and glutted with sinning, to die away, and to lie for ever in a forgotten darkness? what then is there in this dying, that should be of such force unto mortification? "The mortified Christian, he shall live." Is that all? what! to live still mortifying, still contending and fighting against his corruptions, still sighing and groaning under them in the anguish and bitterness of his soul! is there any such encouraging promise in this, that he shall still live struggling and combating against that, which makes him weary of his life, and even to long and pant after death? are these such prevailing motives to mortification? "No: the sensualist shall die; but he shall die a never-dying

life of death. The mortified person shall live; but he shall live a life, wherein there shall be no more need of mortification, because no more remainders of corruption." Then all tears shall be wiped out of our eyes, and all sins wiped out of our hearts. Now is the time of our warfare, and every battle that we fight is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood: then shall we for ever triumph, and sing an eternal song of victory, clothed in garments made white with the blood of the Lamb. Now we are at a perpetual discord with ourselves; thoughts bandying against thoughts; affections against affections; will against will; and all within us in an uproar and tumult: but then an eternal peace and calm shall fill our souls: not a thought shall whisper a rebellion: the whole tide and current of our wills and affections, with a full and undisturbed stream, shall run into that boundless ocean of all felicity, even God himself. But I must, though loth, leave the prosecution of this argument.

VII. And, now, let me suppose that the great question you would all ask is, What you should do to mortify corruption, and how you should strive against it so as to obtain conquest and victory over it. For DIRECTION, therefore, in this great work, let me propound unto you these following RULES, each of which if rightly wielded, is enough to pierce into the very bowels of corruption.

i. Labour to get A FULL AND CLEAR SIGHT AND DISCOVERY OF THAT SIN ESPECIALLY, WHICH IS MOST PERPLEXING AND MOST UNMORTIFIED.

He, that would subdue his enemy, must first find him out, and consider where his strength lies, what advantages he hath got against him, the manner of his warring, &c. and accordingly prepare for resistance. This must be the policy of every Christian: he must keep spies and good intelligence in his enemy's camp.

Two things he must especially know, if he would subdue his lusts.

Wherein their great Strength lies, and what Advantages they have against him.

He must always consider the Ground and Cause of the Quarrel: as, the Guilt, which it would bring upon him; and, the Danger, which it would bring him into, if committed.

This will serve to kindle a holy anger and indignation against sin, without which this great work of mortification can never go on prosperously.

1. I say, seriously consider *wherein the Strength and Prevalency of thy Corruption lies, from whence it hath its greatest Advantage against thee.*

This will shew thee how thou shouldst particularly apply thyself to the mortification of it. If it hath more than ordinary strength and power in thee, thy endeavours to mortify it must also be more than ordinary. If you ask, "What are those Advantages, that do give so great a prevalency unto a corruption?" I answer,

(1) Customariness and frequent relapses into the same sins; especially if they have been against strong convictions, against binding vows and promises, and manifold dealings of God both in judgment and in mercy.

Though I am far from that desperate, rabbinical conceit of the Jews, who hold the fourth relapse into the same sin unpardonable; grounding themselves upon Amos i. where God threatens Damascus, Edom, and Ammon, that *for three transgressions, and for four*, he would not turn away their punishment; yet, certainly, if a particular lust, be it what it will, pride, malice, uncleanness, or covetousness, breaks forth frequently into act, forces all thy guards, bears down all considerations that stand in the way to oppose it; I will not say thy case is desperate, but yet it is very dangerous, and a sad symptom of a stubborn unruly lust that will not be mortified without extraordinary pains and care. Dost thou find any such old, cankering distemper within thee, ripened by long continuance and habituated by custom, that hath often choked conscience, stifled convictions, out-stood many dispensations of God? know that the very age and grey hairs of such a lust claim a command and authority over the soul, and that it is a task next to an impossibility to subdue it. Jer. xiii. 23. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* It is very hard to dislodge a lust, that pleads prescription for itself: it hath had possession of the heart, time out of mind: can you ever remember when it had not? and therefore struggles as for its lawful right, and will not be ejected. And this is by so much the more dangerous, if it breaks out to the defiling and wounding of conscience, after deep humiliation, bitter repentance, serious resolutions, tempo-

rary reformation: if it prevail against all these, what is there in the soul that can resist it? Every spiritual distemper is dangerous, but relapses are commonly mortal and deadly: and are too clear evidences, that, when the soul was at its best estate, its wound was healed but slightly, only skinned over; while the core of corruption lay deep within, rankling and festering till it brake out more incurably.

If this be the case and condition of any here, it is possible, that as yet grace may be still in you; but it is impossible, that it should there remain, unless you use extraordinary diligence for the quelling and subduing of this unruly lust, that hath so often broken loose.

Now, to help you in this, as indeed all helps against a corruption so deeply rooted are too few, consider these following particulars.

[1] Think with yourselves, if your natures be changed, your customs also must be changed.

It is a most loathsome and monstrous mixture, to have a new nature and yet old sins. Every principle will act suitably to itself. If grace be indeed in you, it will not lie sluggish and dormant: no, it is an active, vigorous, and ethereal being: it will certainly change the course and custom of your lives: it will make strange innovations; antiquating old customs, and bringing in new. Now urge this against a customary corruption: "How can I think my nature is changed, if still my life and actions be the same? I am not now the man I was; and it is most irrational, that I, regenerate, that I, sanctified and renewed, should observe the customs and usages of myself unregenerate, carnal, and profane." And,

[2] Consider, that customary and ordinary sins will call for, either extraordinary wrath, or at least more than customary repentance.

Certainly, redoubled sins will be punished with more than a single hell. If they be pardoned, it will cost many a shower of repentant tears. Peter's thrice denial of his Master makes him weep bitterly.

[3] Customary sins carry in them a high contempt against God himself.

To sin through surprisal, inadvertency, or infirmity, is incident to all men; but, to sin the same sin frequently, to make a custom of it, must needs argue that such an one slights and

despises God himself: he would else fear to provoke him the second time, by the same sin. And,

[4] Consider, custom in sinning is the ready way to final hardness and impenitency.

It is this, that turns the heart to iron, and the brow to brass; makes men resolved to sin, and impudent in sinning. It is this, that hoodwinks the understanding, blunts the edge of the sharpest convictions, sears the conscience, and brings a thick insensibleness upon that tender faculty. This makes the grossest and vilest wickedness familiar to the soul; so that, many times, sins of the horridest and blackest guilt are rushed into without either fear or regard. And,

[5] Custom in sin will grow to a nature of sinning, if not timely prevented by a severe mortification.

It will so insinuate into the affections, and wind and twist itself about every faculty of the soul, that what at first was but use, will in process become nature. You see, then, what a great necessity there is mightily to labour and strive against these customary sins, which are as a twisted cord very hardly broken. If a corruption hath once settled into a custom, it is not an ordinary endeavour that can then remove it.

That is the First thing.

(2) As a customary, so a peculiar sin requires a peculiar mortification.

It is in vain to use common and ordinary attempts against a proper sin. And therefore David doth exult and glory in this as a great achievement, Psal. xviii. 23. *I kept myself from mine iniquity: Mine iniquity;* not *mine* by election or approbation, as one picked out from the rest to reserve for himself; no, but *mine* by a too constant and violent bent and inclination of my corrupt heart.

[1] Now, certain it is, that every one hath his peculiar sin: a sin, that he may truly call his own, that is fast rivetted and deep rooted; yea, deeper rooted in his soul, than others are. I shall not now enquire whether these proper and peculiar sins arise, either from the crasis and temper of the body, or from a man's education, or from his profession and calling: whencesoever they proceed, if we would go on vigorously in the work of mortification, these are the sins which we must especially single out and deal against.

"Yea, but," you will say, "how shall I know which is my peculiar sin, that so I may set myself against it to mortify it?"

To this I answer: Were it as easy to subdue it, as it is to discover it, a great part of the difficulty of Christianity would soon be at an end. It is a sin, which cannot long lie hid: it will betray itself, if not to the observation of others, yet at least to the observation of a man's own conscience. If conscience should ask you one by one, "What is thine, and thine, and thine iniquity?" every one would silently whisper to himself, "Oh! pride is mine:" "Hypocrisy is mine:" "Covetousness and worldliness is mine:" "Uncleanness is mine:" and who among us is there that could not give an answer?

Yet, for farther satisfaction, take these particulars.

1st. That sin, which doth most of all employ and busy thy thoughts, that is thy most unmortified and peculiar sin.

Thoughts are purveyors for lust, which range abroad and bring in provision for it. Observe upon what objects they pitch: mark how they work. Do thy thoughts lie continually sucking at the breasts of pleasure? are they still drenched and bathed in carnal delights? Voluptuousness is thy peculiar sin. Do thy thoughts continually delve and dig in the earth, and return to thee laden only with thick clay? Covetousness is thy peculiar sin. Do they soar and tower up to honours, dignities, preferments; and still fill thee with designs and forecasts how to raise thyself to them? Pride and ambition are thy sins. And so, of the rest.

2dly. The unmortified and peculiar sin is always most impatient of contradiction and opposition.

(1st) It cannot bear a reproof from others.

Let never so much be thundered against other sins, this makes no stir nor tumult: but, if the reproof fall upon his sin, you then touch the very apple of his eye; you then search him to the very quick: and this will cause some commotion and disturbance within. Hence it is, that many, who come to the word of God, sit very quiet under many a reproof and many a threatening, because they think these all fall beside them: but, if the bow drawn at a venture wound them under the fifth rib, if it strike their peculiar sin, oh! what mustering up of carnal reasonings and carnal evasions is there to shift it off! All this stir and bustle doth but plainly shew where the sore is. That is a galled conscience, which will not endure to be wrung by a reproof. And,

(2dly) As it cannot bear a reproof; so it cannot brook a denial, when it tempts and solicits.

Of all lusts, this tempts oftenest and most eagerly. Other

corruptions are modest, compared to this; and will often desist, upon a peremptory denial: but this peculiar sin grows wild and outrageous: it will have its course, or the soul shall have no quiet: so that conscience is never harder put to it, than to stand it out against the importunity of this sin.

3dly. That corruption, which every little occasion stirs up and sets on work with more than a proportionable violence, that is the most unmortified and peculiar sin.

By more than a proportionable violence, I mean, when the object, temptation, or occasion is but slight and inconsiderable; and yet the lust, that is thereby moved, acts strongly and impetuously. And, therefore, the Apostle, Heb. xii. 1. calls it *the sin, which doth so easily beset us:* it stands always ready and prepared, upon the least hint of a temptation, to assault us. Now look what corruption it is, that doth most frequently interpose, that every little occasion stirs up and inflames to a greater height and rage than a strong temptation would another; be it passion, be it pride, or any other; this is the most unmortified and peculiar sin.

These may suffice, though others may be added, to discover what is our proper and peculiar sin; the lust, that is most natural and congenial to us.

Now since these sins have such a great advantage against us more than others have, they must therefore be more especially opposed than others. *This kind*, to use our Saviour's words, *goeth not forth, but by prayer and fasting*, and the most earnest endeavours of that soul, who is deeply afflicted with their power and prevalency.

[2] I shall only here offer two or three considerations, that may possibly prove subservient to the mortifying of these peculiar sins.

1st. Consider: it is no excuse or extenuation of thy sin, nor do thou look upon it as such, that it is natural to thee; that it is the sin of thy temper, complexion, or profession: but, rather, account this a heinous aggravation, that makes thy sin out of measure sinful.

Some are so absurdly profane, as to make the naturalness of a sin an argument to lessen the guilt of it: they are naturally passionate and peevish, naturally high-minded and ambitious, naturally voluptuous and sensual; and they cannot help it: it is fixed and rooted in their temper and constitution of body; and, therefore, it is no wonder if it sometimes break forth in their

lives, unless they could put off the outward man as well as the Old Man. Is this, thinkest thou, an excuse? tell me, is not a toad therefore more loathsome and ugly, because its very nature and temper is venomous? And dost thou think it a good excuse for thy sins, that thou art naturally subject to them? thou art therefore more loathsome in the sight of God, whose infinite holiness stands at as great an antipathy to a corrupt nature as to a sinful life. And, therefore, we find David, Psal. li. 5. aggravating his actual sins from this consideration, that he was *shapen in iniquity*, and conceived *in sin*. Certainly, original sin is no excuse, but rather an aggravation of actual; and the violent propension of a man's nature to one sin more than another, is but an especial expression of original corruption.

2dly. Avoid, especially, those occasions, that have an especial tendency in them to draw forth thy peculiar lust.

This, as it must be observed in the mortification of every sin, so must it be most carefully heeded in thy dealing against thy proper sin; because it will take advantage from every slight and trivial occasion to break forth and shew itself in act: it watcheth all opportunities; and a very little spark will suffice to kindle this tinder. Thou complainest that thou canst not subdue such a corruption: it will rise and tumultuate in thee: it will still break from thee. Canst thou ever expect it will be otherwise, while thou heedlessly exposest thyself to so many occasions, on which thy corruption will take hold? Oh! how easy and comfortable might Christians make this great work of mortification, if they would herein be watchful! Corruption would not stir; or if it did, might soon be quelled, did not you yourselves entice it out by giving it such fair opportunities to exert itself. What saith the Wise Man, Prov. vi. 27? *Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burnt?* No; it is impossible: yet, truly, it is as possible for a man, that carries the prepared fuel of corruption in his heart, not to have it kindled and inflamed by his venturous running into occasions of sinning. You do but hereby provoke and dare corruption, which alas! is too apt to stir of itself. Certainly, he, who will venture on a near occasion of sinning, will venture on the sin itself; and, if he be all his days vexed and perplexed by it, it is the fault of his own carelessness.

3dly. Consider this: that proper and peculiar sins do deserve and call for proper and peculiar punishments.

Why shouldst thou think, while any unmortified lust is thine

own, that the punishment of it should not be thine own also? Is it reason, that the sin should be peculiarly thine, and yet the punishment of it Christ's? No; Christ never came into the world to take off the guilt of that sin by justification, from which he doth not in some measure take off the bent and propension of the heart by sanctification. And,

4thly. Consider: if you are saints, you yourselves are not your own: and shall any sin then be your peculiar sin?

1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. *Ye are not your own: but ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your* bodies, *and in your* spirits, *which are God's.* And shall we ourselves be God's, and yet any sin be ours? What is this less, than, by a kind of practical blasphemy, to make our sins God's also? Such-like considerations as these, should be continually present with us, when we go forth against our proper sins. It is not ordinary endeavours, that will suffice to mortify these: they are so rooted in and interwoven with the very principles of our nature, that they are the very last sins, which will quit their hold; and that, not without much difficulty and hardship.

Thus I have done with the First Branch of this Direction: To take notice of those sins, which have the greatest advantage and prevalency against us, which are customary and peculiar sins: and I have given you some particulars, to help you in the mortifying of them.

2. The other branch of this direction is, *to be continually pondering and weighing the Ground and Cause of the quarrel.*

This will exceedingly animate your utmost endeavours unto mortification. It is the cause, which enspirits soldiers: tell them, that they are to fight for estates, liberties, and lives; that whatever is dear to them is laid at stake, and pawned upon their valour; this will sharpen their courage, yea and their swords too, and make every stroke laid on by such considerations fatal as death. What can be more effectually pressed upon the spiritual soldier, to heighten and inflame his courage? tell him but the cause he engageth for, and he must be either very much a coward, or else very treacherous against his own soul, that doth not resolve to stand it out to the utmost. It is for an everlasting kingdom, a crown of glory, a precious and immortal soul; for eternal life, for God himself, you are to fight: and will you sit still, and see all these lost and taken from you? There is not a corruption or temptation that assaults you, but seeks to deprive you of heaven and happiness, and would spill the dearest blood

of your souls. A Christian's all, his nearest soul, his dearest God, the rich and unconceivable glory promised him, the few precious graces bestowed on him to bear his charges till he hath attained it, are all here staked down: this is the prize you are to contend for: if you can suffer all these to be taken from you, and think them not worth the striving for, you are beyond the reach of a provocation. Let the Devil and your own lusts come armed against you, with all the strength and rage of hell; yet, if you can but then keep up lively and distinct considerations of the vast and important concernment which depends upon the issue of the conflict, it is impossible that they should ever prevail upon you to the commission of any deliberate sin. Whenever, therefore, you are tempted, and find unmortified corruption very violent, think seriously with yourselves, what it is that you are solicited to do: is it not to provoke your God, to betray yourselves? is it not, to defile, nay to destroy your souls? "Now, sin and Satan are very earnest to have me run myself into perdition: fain they would persuade me to forfeit heaven, and plunge myself deep into hell: they entice, they impel, they swell and tumultuate; but, if I yield, what becomes of all my hopes, of my crown of happiness, and of my own soul? It is happiness, which is the quarrel: and shall that be less dear to me, than my destruction is to Satan? Hath he cause to be so active and violent for my ruin, and have I no cause to be industrious and vigilant for my salvation? Shall I sell away all the great and glorious things of eternity, at the cheap and low price of a momentary sin?" Do but actually ponder and weigh these considerations, when a corruption moves and acts in you; set them before you; say them to yourselves, and run them over in your thoughts; and let me be bold to say, Sin then, if you can.

(1) There are Two considerations especially, which will be of mighty influence to the suppressing of a corruption while it is tempting and stirring, and are the most available helps to mortification of all other.

[1] A serious consideration of the great Guilt, that sin will bring upon us.

It must be the very first work of that Christian, who will successfully attempt the work of mortification, to charge a prevailing lust home with the full guilt of it. I confess it is a ghastly sight, a spectacle full of dread and horror, to view sin in its proper colours: but it is far better for thee to look sin in the face,

when it tempts; than for sin to stare thy conscience in the face, when it terrifies.

Carry always about you those two glasses, both of the Law and Gospel, which may represent sin aright to you.

When a glossing, flattering temptation shews it fair and beautiful, look upon your sin: see whether it can hold up its face against the Law, when the sovereignty, holiness, severity, and piercing power and energy of it come all in against it. *By the Law*, says the Apostle, *is the knowledge of sin:* Rom. iii. 20. Awe thy conscience with the authority of God, stamped and imprinted upon his Law. "Hath God, the Great Sovereign, forbidden this by a Law, and shall not I strive against it? Not to fight against this sin, were to be found a fighter against God." Provoke thyself against it, from the holiness of God, revealed in his Law? "Shall I commit that, which, for its deformity and ugliness, a Holy God hath forbidden in a Holy Law?" The Law hath in it, First: Such a bright and clear light, that sin cannot escape the discovery of it: it will make every spot in the soul visible; and those sins, which, through those false lights that Satan sets up, appear comely and well featured, when the light of the Law shines into the conscience will then appear but one great misshapen blot. And, Secondly: It hath in it such an absolute command and authority, that sin cannot resist nor escape the power of it. It comes into the conscience in the name of God: and makes as great a trembling in the heart, when set home in the condemning power of it; as it did in the Israelites, when delivered in that dreadful pomp from Mount Sinai. Is this holy, close, searching, authoritative Law to be broken, think you, at the will and pleasure of every temptation? Must we in every passion, with Moses, at every corrupt motion and sinful inclination, break these two tables in pieces? Nay, indeed, is it possible, that, while in a temptation you are applying the Law, you should then break it? No, certainly that man is near to a most desperate hardness, who, while he is looking upon the holiness, authority, and divinity of the Law, while he is letting in the convincing light of it to discover the guilt of sin unto him, while he is discharging the dreadful threatenings of it against his sin, yet can then commit it; I say, he is near unto a final, judicial hardness.

When you have now awhile contemplated the face of sin in the Law, remove it to the Gospel. If the Law break the heart with terror, the Gospel will melt it with love. "What! to sin

not only against the authority of a God, but also against the love of a father; that parent love, from which proceeds all the good I enjoy or expect; that pardoning love, justifying, adopting, and saving love! Can I spurn against those bowels, that yearn and roll towards me? Can I sin against that grace and mercy, which, should I sin against them, would yet still tender me a pardon? Can I be prodigal and lavishing of that blood, of which Christ was so free himself? Shall I despise it or trample it under foot, because it flows in so full a stream? Shall I quench and sadden the Holy Comforter; and return him grief, for all the ravishing consolations I have been filled with from him? Is this the filial disposition, the child-like ingenuity of a son, of a saint?" These, O Christian, are considerations, which must needs silence the most importunate corruptions and temptations, that they shall have nothing more to mutter. It is the Gospel, by which alone the guilt of sin is taken away, that doth thus aggravate that guilt to such an excess, as proves a security from the committing of it. Tell me: did you ever know a temptation prevail over you, did you ever commit a sin in your whole lives, while such considerations as these were fresh and vigorous upon your hearts? Nay, I know it is impossible; the grace of God teacheth us otherwise; yea, it not only teacheth us, but enforceth and constraineth us otherwise. A temptation must first thrust these considerations out of the heart, ere it can prevail.

This, therefore, is the first means of beating down a corruption, by the consideration of its Guilt, comparing it both with the Law and the Gospel. What better weapon can we have to fight with against corruption, than *the sword of the Spirit; which*, Eph. vi. 17. the Apostle tells us, *is the word of God?* and, Heb. iv. 12. he tells us, this word is a *two-edged sword:* the Law is one edge, and the Gospel another; and both these are powerful, sharp, and piercing; to the suppressing and mortifying of corruption, going to the very inwards and heart thereof.

[2] Another thing, that hath great influence to the mortifying of sin, is, a serious consideration of the great danger, which it will bring us into.

1st. It were sad and dreadful, and enough to cause a trembling in us, if I should only mention unto you the danger of an Enraged and Distracted Conscience, which God may let loose

upon you in all its horrors and affrights, when you let loose yourselves unto the commission of any known sin.

2dly. The danger, if not of an enraged conscience, yet of a Seared Conscience, which is worse: the danger of a judiciary curse and tradition, to be delivered up unto and sealed unto sin; that neither reproofs, nor convictions, nor judgments, nor mercies should ever more take hold, or make any impression upon you.

If I should name no more, were not here enough to stop the course of a prevailing lust? If yet you have any tenderness left in your hearts; any sense remaining in your consciences, together with their peace; would you rather hazard the loss of these, than not gratify a corruption? Say to it, "What sin is there, which can bring me in so much delight in the commission of it, as God may pour in terrors afterwards? May not God make my conscience a hell incarnate; and empty the vials of his wrath into this vessel, whilst it is yet an earthly vessel? And shall I ever let a hell break into my soul, by letting a lust break forth?" Urge against a temptation that irrefragable argument, which all the methods and sophisms of the Old Serpent shall never be able to dissolve to all eternity: "If I yield, either my conscience will be sensible of the sin, or not: if it be sensible, what is there in the sin, that can recompense this trouble of conscience? if it be not sensible, what is there in this sin, that can recompense the stupidity and deadness of conscience?" Still, either way, the danger is so great, that the Devil hath scarce impudence enough importunately to urge a temptation upon that soul, which shall urge this consideration upon itself.

3dly. But, besides these, there is another danger; and that, indeed, which swallows up all the rest: and that is the danger of Eternal Damnation. I have before shewed you how such a legal consideration as this is, may be, and is a fit means for mortification. Now bring and marshal even this against your lusts. Think you, that a temptation can outface hell itself, and dare everlasting burnings? can it stand before a torrent of fire and brimstone? No, certainly this is the hardness and obdurateness of those only, who feel hell's torments, not to be deterred from sin for fear of them. Now rise up mightily against thy lusts, even from this consideration: shew them what they deserve, no less than damnation; from which, if any, who

give way to them at any time, are rescued, it is only by the sovereign and unaccountable mercy of God. And, thus, while Satan casts fire, do thou cast firebrands. This is to make hell his second torture, that, as God makes use of it for his punishment, so thou for his defeat and disappointment.

(2) For the right managing of this direction, for indeed much care and circumspection must here be had, take these following particulars.

[1] Take heed, lest, through any deceitfulness of thy heart, thou excuse and lessen thy sin, when thou shouldst be dealing against it by a vigorous mortification.

To take off any thing from your apprehensions of the guilt of sin, is to add to the power and strength of the temptation. And, therefore, take it for a sure rule, That that sin, in which thou dost not now see that black and horrid guilt which formerly thou hast done, hath more power over thee, and is more unmortified in thee, than ever formerly it was. It is the common method of Satan, in the height and fury of a temptation, to persuade the heart, either that it is no sin, or else a small and venial one. If this deceit prevail and take place, the work of mortification can never go on vigorously. Certain it is, that, where the guilt of any sin is apprehended to be but small, there the endeavours against it will be but weak. And,

[2] Beware of weakening and enervating arguments drawn from the desert and danger of a prevailing lust, by relieving thyself with thoughts of the goodness and safety of thy spiritual condition.

This is a most desperate deceit of the heart, and a ready way to undo thousands of souls. When you have made head against a temptation, by arguments drawn from the wrath of God due to it, and that eternal vengeance which will follow, have you never found your corrupt hearts replying upon you, "Yea, but I am delivered from the wrath to come: I am ransomed from that vengeance: my spiritual and eternal state is secured by the immutable promise of God, and the immortal seed of grace; and, therefore, though I do commit this sin, yet my soul shall live?" This is the common fallacy of the Devil, thus to make presumptuous applications of mercy, pardon, and free grace, to patronize the allowance of sin. If you thus argue, certain it is that you can never make good work of mortification. It is impossible to persuade that man from sin by the

terrors of the Lord, who looks upon whatsoever is spoken of that kind, as not appertaining to him.

And, therefore, consider,

1st. To encourage thyself in sin, upon hopes of thy being in a state of grace, is so rotten and unworthy a principle, as is scarce consistent with grace.

What is this, but to make use of grace against itself, against the God of Grace; a mere turning of it into wantonness, and sinning that it might abound? which, of all things in the world, is the most opposite and repugnant to the truly noble and ingenuous nature of a gracious heart. And,

2dly. Consider: If thou shouldst be in a state of grace, and stand accepted with God, yet thou canst never know thyself so to be; nay, thou hast all the reason in the world to judge the contrary, if this consideration embolden thee to sin.

What though the perseverance of the saints unto glory be certain; yet, are they to persevere thereunto, whatsoever sins they commit? We find no such promise in the whole tenor of the covenant. It is, therefore, more unreasonable and absurd, to conclude from thy grace that thou mayest sin without danger; than to conclude, because thou makest use of such an encouragement to sin, therefore thou hast no grace. And,

3dly. Though thou knowest thyself, by the highest pitch of assurance attainable, to be delivered from the wrath to come: yet still this wrath is the due desert of thy sin; yea, and will be the certain punishment of it, unless it be mortified in thee.

If ye, ye elect, ye sanctified and justified ones, *if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.* We may and ought, therefore, to denounce death and hell to the most assured saint, if he doth not mortify: for, though God hath decreed to save all his elect, yet he never decreed to save any of them but through mortification. The vanity of those men is, in these our days, sufficiently discovered, who would not have believers take notice, nor make application to themselves of any thing, that sounds threatening and terrible in the Scripture, as being unsuitable to their free and evangelical spirit. Let such know, that, in letting go such harsh and severe considerations, they lose a great advantage which they might have against their lusts. The holiest on earth, when God threatens sin, ought to tremble: and, whatsoever judgment they pass upon their persons, though they know themselves to be regenerate and elect; yet this is the judgment

which they ought to pass upon their actions, that, if they be sinful, they are also damnable.

So that, whatever thy condition be, yet, whenever corruption tempts and troubles thee, oppose against its prevalency and seduction these affrighting considerations of wrath, hell, and vengeance. Thus follow and ply it: thus heap coals of fire upon its head: throw a hell between thee and thy lusts. This, if any thing, will stop thee. But, if thou canst frequently wade through these unto it; if thou canst commit it, even while the thoughts of future wrath are hot and scorching, while everlasting burnings are flaming and flashing about thee; this argues a wretched obstinacy in sin, and is the sad symptom of a most dangerous, if not desperate condition.

And thus I have done with the First Direction unto Mortification. We must be well acquainted, and have a thorough insight into our sins; both to know whence they have their great strength, and also to know what the great guilt and danger of them is.

ii. Another direction, in brief, shall be this: IF YOU WOULD EFFECTUALLY MORTIFY CORRUPTION, THEN ARM YOURSELVES AGAINST IT WITH STRONG RESOLUTIONS; WITH RESOLUTIONS, FREE FROM LIMITATIONS, FREE FROM ANY SECRET RESERVATIONS.

The Apostle hath given us many a tried piece of Christian armour, Eph. vi. There we have *the shield of faith, the sword of the Spirit, the breast-plate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation*, and a complete panoply. But what are these, without resolution to use them? The shield may rust against the wall, and the sword in the sheath: grace may lie sluggish and inactive in the soul, while lust tempts, seduces, and captivates, unless holy resolution rouse it, arm it, and lead it forth to the conflict. Wherefore is it, that so many complain that their lusts and corruptions are invincible? that they cannot stand before them? what is the reason, that they are so often ensnared and so often captivated, but because they do not put on the resolutions of Men or Christians? they are not resolved to conquer: they do not fortify or steel their hearts with absolute and peremptory resolves, that, notwithstanding all the advantages any corruption hath gained against them, though it hath already frequently prevailed over them, though it daily and hourly tempt, entice, impel, yet they will beat it down and trample on it. Men are not thus firmly resolved, but waver and stagger in their purposes; and thereby give Satan hope and encouragement, while

they thus fluctuate, to assault and prevail over them. Were they once fully resolved, they would not yield; and Satan, who can do nothing against them without their own consent, would have but small encouragement to continue tempting: he would then say, "It is in vain, to lay siege to that soul: his resolutions have fortified him, and made him impregnable: not a fiery dart will stick, but rebounds back as from a rock of adamant, and makes no impressions: he is grown obstinate against my temptations, and will hearken to none of my suggestions: he will not stand so much as to consider what a temptation can say for itself, but peremptorily refuseth and rejecteth all: there is no hope left for me to prevail with such a soul." What David saith of his enemies, Psal. cxviii. 10, 11. *All nations compassed me about: but, in the name of the Lord, will I destroy them. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but, in the name of the Lord, I will destroy them;* the same must we say concerning our corruptions: though they beset us round and compass us about, though they swarm about us like bees; yet, in the name of the Lord, in the aid and assistance of the Holy Spirit, we will destroy them. You know what particular corruption it is, that doth most of all perplex and prevail over you: now take up fixed resolutions for the mortifying of that sin: "Oh! never more will I give way to such a temptation: never more will I hearken to the flatteries and enticements of such a lust: never more shall this break my peace, wound my conscience, displease my God: now will I be revenged on it, and pour out the heart-blood of it before the Lord." Such absolute resolutions will be of great influence in the work of mortification. Yea, and though it may seem to be an old-fashioned, antiquated prescript; yet would it approve itself to be of singular use and advantage, if we strengthened such resolutions against sin by laying upon ourselves some binding vows and engagements against them: see how strongly David binds himself by an oath, Psal. cxix. 106. *I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.* David was resolved to keep the Law of God; but, lest that resolution should prove too weak, he strengthens it with an oath, *I have sworn, that I will keep them:* yea, and as if this oath were not security enough, he backs it with another resolution, *I have sworn, and I will perform it.* So do thou, against thy sins: resolve and vow against them: enforce one by the other: lift up thy hands unto God, that, in the strength of Christ and the aid of

the Spirit, thou wilt never more yield to such a temptation, give way to such a corruption, commit such a sin. This, were it more practised among Christians, would mightily promote the great work of mortification.

"But," you will say, "what benefit can there be in this? Alas! my corruptions are so violent and outrageous, that they break through far greater engagements than my own resolutions are: neither Law nor Gospel can oppose them: they rush through commands, admonitions, threatenings, promises; and set all at nought: and shall I think, then, that such weak and insignificant things as purposes and resolutions are of any moment?"

Be it so, that the rage of thy lusts hath broken through all those greater engagements, and hath borne down before it whatsoever either Law or Gospel should say to the contrary; yet now bring against it thy purposes and resolutions. Though there may be, and is, an obligation of greater authority from other considerations; yet nothing carries in it an obligation of greater efficacy than these do. There is that temper in every man's nature, that, though he struggle against an engagement which the authority of another imposeth on him; yet he looks upon a voluntary engagement which he imposeth on himself, as most binding, sacred, and inviolable. Certainly, did you but thus bind yourselves, and in a serious manner call God to witness and assist your resolutions, you would find that those corruptions, which have broken through all other considerations, would have a stop put to them by this.

iii. Another direction is this: RESIST STRONGLY THE FIRST MOTIONS AND FIRST RISINGS OF THY CORRUPTIONS.

Crush them while they are in their infancy, before they get to a head, and gather strength against thee. It is folly to stay till thy enemies are grown up: no; take the offspring and progeny of lust, while they are little; and deal with them, as God threatens Babel, dash those *little ones against the stones.*

Consider,

1. *That there is not the least and most inconsiderable sinful motion, which riseth in thy soul, but it tends to the very utmost guilt, of which that kind of sin is capable.*

Thou art deceived, if thou thinkest it will still be a weak, faint, languishing conception: no; corruption will lay in provision for it and nourish it, till that, which was at first but as a

grain of mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds, grow up and shoot forth great branches, that the prince of the air may lodge in them. Thou mayest easier set bounds to the flowing of the sea, and in a tempest command a wave in the midst of its swelling to stand fixed and not break, than to stop the course of a growing lust, and to say to it, "Hitherto only shalt thou come and no farther; so far as thoughts, so far as delight and complacency, but never so far as act:" it is impossible. The cloud, that at first was but a hand's breadth, soon grew into a general tempest. Truly, a lust, that at first seems no more, will, if not presently scattered, soon raise a storm and tempest in the soul: and what Assurance-Office will then secure him from making shipwreck of a good conscience? These small and beginning lusts, though they may seem harmless and innocent, yet, if let alone, will stop no where short of the highest pitch of wickedness, and the lowest place of hell: an irreverend thought of God, would stop no where short of professed atheism and flat denying of God: a hard thought against the people and the ways of God, would stop no where short of implacable hatred and bloody persecution: an envious, malicious thought, would run and seed up into murder. Ask these thoughts, therefore, whither it is they tend; what period, what issue they would have: would they not end in blasphemy, in atheism, in uncleanness, in oppression, in murder, in the foulest and most unnatural sins imaginable? Nay, there is no such little sinful thought, but that it would, if permitted, end in that unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost. And, therefore, with the same indignation and abhorrency, that you would rise against explicit and downright temptations to these sins; with the very same indignation and abhorrency, rise also against the very first stirrings and motions of thy corruptions: look upon them, as if they would accomplish their very utmost effect, as if they were ready to bring upon thee all that guilt which they seminally contain in them. And this will be a good means to mortification.

2. Consider: *Thus to oppose the very first risings of corruption, will make the work of mortification more easy and delightful.*

It is hard and difficult to purge out the dregs of a corruption, which hath lain long settling in the heart. It will, by continuance, wind itself into the affections, bribe and entangle them; and this will make the work, not only more difficult, but more irksome and grievous. The farther the stream runs from the fountain, the stronger, and the more rapid and irresistible is its

course: so, truly, is it with lust: that, which at first was but the weak bubbling up of corruption, easily opposed and withstood, if it run along in the heart undisturbed, will swell to such a torrent, as nothing can stand against it. Every corruption hath a corroding malignity; and, though at first the wound appear but slight, yet, if neglected, it will bring the soul into the same sad condition that David was in, when he cried out, Psal. xxxviii. 5. *My wounds stink and are corrupt*, by reason *of my foolishness.* Oh! it is indeed a foolishness that will cost us bitter repentance, to dandle sinful thoughts; to trifle and dally with sinful motions and sinful desires: though they are but the first breathings of corruption, the first sproutings and buddings-forth of the root of bitterness; though now we see no such great guilt nor danger in them: yet, when these shall have exulcerated the whole soul, and made it all over one running issue of corruption, we shall then sadly complain of our gross folly, in slighting the first workings and stirrings of it. As ever you would make good work, then, of mortification, watch carefully against these and suppress them: observe where a sinful thought, where a sinful desire, doth but begin to heave and lift in thy heart; and beat it down, while it is yet an embryo and an unshaped birth.

iv. Another direction shall be this: SET BEFORE YOU, AND CONTINUALLY KEEP ALIVE ALL THOSE CONSIDERATIONS, THAT MAY ENCOURAGE YOUR HEARTS AND STRENGTHEN YOUR HANDS, IN THE CARRYING ON OF THIS GREAT WORK.

Many such encouragements might be propounded. As,

1. *Always keep alive a sense of God's presence with you, that he eyes and beholds you.*

This apprehension, if continually kept up in its life and vigour, will have a mighty influence into the work of mortification.

Consider,

(1) God eyes thee, to observe how thou managest thy great quarrel against corruption.

As soon as thou becamest a Christian, thou becamest a champion: thou enteredst into the list, and threwest out a bold challenge and defiance to all the powers of hell, and the lusts of thine own heart. Not only men and angels, but God himself also looks on, to see how thou wilt make good the combat. And wilt not thou strive and struggle to the utmost, when God himself

is a spectator? wilt thou not shew thy skill, and thy courage, and thy resolution then? Nay, consider: God is not only a spectator, but is deeply concerned in the issue of the combat: his battles thou fightest, his cause thou maintainest; and, if thou art conquered and captivated, he is dishonoured as well as thou endangered: if thou art victorious, God the Father hath the glory of the efficacy of electing grace; Jesus Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, hath the glory of the efficacy of redeeming grace; and the Holy Spirit hath the glory of the efficacy of his sanctifying and strengthening grace; all which are, as it were, engaged and pawned upon thy mortification. Do but, therefore, think with yourselves, when a temptation assaults you, "Now God eyes me, to see how I will behave myself against this temptation: he eyes me, to crown me, if victorious: and shall I be any otherwise but victorious, while God looks on? shall I suffer myself to be foiled in his sight, whose cause I now maintain? No; God himself shall now see, what himself hath given me power and ability to do." Did Christians thus consider the presence and eye of God with and upon them, they would go forth more resolutely unto the work of mortification.

(2) Consider, the eye of Jesus Christ is upon thee, not only to observe, but to relieve thee, and to pity thee: while thou wrestlest, not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers here on earth, he in heaven pities thee; his compassions roll towards thee; he hath a fellow-feeling of thy miseries and infirmities.

It is a most comfortable place, Heb. iv. 15. *We have not a High Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.* And that other place, Heb. ii. 18. *In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.* Oh what abundant comfort may we draw from these two breasts of consolation! Alas! a poor Christian, whom corruption within disquiets, and temptations without buffet; who is so close beset, as to be at the very point of yielding; let him look upwards, and eye that Christ by faith, who eyes him with compassion. Thou thinkest thyself deserted, and left to break through the hosts of thy spiritual enemies as thou canst; none to own thee, none to stand by thee: yea, Jesus Christ stands by thee: he knows thy weakness: he sees the power of thy lusts: in all thy temptations,

he is tempted: and he, who knows no corruption in himself, yet feels the stirrings and the strong workings of corruption in the hearts of his; and he will succour and relieve them.

What an encouragement is this! Is there any soul, that would refuse to war against his corruptions under such a Leader and Captain, who gives not only a command to fight, but might to subdue; who not only looks on the agonies and conflicts of his with compassion, but relieves and succours them with power?

That is the First encouraging Consideration: consider yourselves as always in the presence and under the eye of God, to observe, to support you.

2. Consider for your encouragement, *the certainty of success in the work of mortification.*

This consideration, if duly pondered, is of itself able to outface all difficulties. A Christian's victories have nothing of chance in them: it is not to be ascribed to the fortune of the day, when he prevails: success is chained to his endeavours; and, unless he betray his own soul, and will himself be vanquished, he cannot but conquer. And would you wish a greater advantage, than to have success at your pleasure? Victory itself was never yet listed under any but a Christian's command: other conquerors have found it very fickle and unconstant; but, herein is the Christian more than a conqueror, because always sure of conquest, if himself pleaseth. This, indeed, will cost much pains: it will make the heart pant, and the soul run down with sweat: success is certain, but not without your utmost strugglings and earnest endeavours: let not lazy Christians ever think they shall be more than conquerors, while they use only drowsy and yawning desires; and wish that such a lust were weakened, that such a corruption were mortified and subdued, but never rouze up their graces against them: it is no wonder that we see them so often foiled and captivated. Believe it, certainty of success is not entailed upon those weak velleities and effeminate wishes, that are so frequent in the mouths of many: "Oh, that I were freed from the power of such a lust! Oh, that such a temptation might never more assault me! Oh, that I might live as free from sin as the angels do in heaven!" Truly, these are but sleepy and gaping desires, neither strong enough to lift the Old Man up to the cross, nor sharp enough to pierce him to the heart: corruption, though it be thus cursed, will live long: if this were all you could do, truly God had called you forth to a very unequal combat, even to deliver you into the hands of your lusts. Hath

he bestowed his grace and his Spirit upon you, for this? was it only to make the triumph of your corruptions the more conspicuous, and your defeats the more shameful? was it that you should sit still, and, by a wretched sloth, betray both yourselves and them? No, certainly: they were given you to conquer; and there is no corruption but they would conquer, if you yourselves would. It doth ill become a Christian to whine and shrink at the sight of that numerous host of corruptions, which encamp against him: be but conscious of thy own strength; nay, rather of the strength of God engaged for thee. Dost thou not see more for thee, than against thee? There is not one of these, but thou mayest look upon as a dead lust, delivered into thy hand for the slaughter; and, if thou sufferest it to escape alive, God may say to thee as Ahab to Benhadad, *Because thou hast let go out of thy hand* a lust that *I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy life shall go for* the life of it. Corruption, then, is in your own power: it is delivered up to you, to be mortified: though it be in your hearts to tempt and trouble you, yet it is in your hands to slaughter it.

Consider but Three things.

(1) Corruption, be it never so strong and violent, cannot prevail over you, without first asking and waiting for the consent of your own wills.

All its victories are but precarious and beggarly achievements; gotten rather by insinuation, flattery, and importunity, than by clear force. It must solicit the affections, cozen the understanding, and ask leave of the will, ere it prevail. And, therefore, the Apostle saith, Rom. vi. 13. *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin;* implying, that if they do become instruments to sin, they are voluntarily yielded up unto it. Believe it, there is no force, nor violence offered you: you are not compelled to sin: all, that a temptation can do, is, to persuade you: it cannot constrain you to sin, whether you will or no. When corruption storms most and swells highest, when Satan assaults you fiercest; yet, after all, you are free and at your own dispose, especially if sanctified; and there is no deliberate temptation unto sin, but you may resist it if you will: if you can but find in your hearts to deny a corruption, you do mortify that corruption. Now would you wish to deal with better enemies than these, that must ask us leave, before they can hurt us; that must entreat and petition us to be wounded, to be captivated, to be abused by them? Truly such

are our own lusts: as terrible and as dreadful as they seem to us, yet indeed they are the most contemptible, slight, impotent adversaries in the world, were we but true to our own souls. But it is this, that gives corruption all its power: you will sin: you will yield to temptations: you will betray your souls: and then you cry out of the power of lusts; "Oh! their irresistible violence! I cannot stand against them: they will break in upon me: they will prevail: they will be obeyed, and I cannot help it." They will, and thou canst not help it! for shame, O Christian: if thou wilt, thou canst help it. Didst thou ever sin, but that thou wert willing to it? Though there may be some renitency and reluctancy from grace; in respect of which the Apostle tells us, that he did what he would not do; yea, what he hated: Rom. vii. 19. yet there is also a voluntariness in every sin: thou yieldest thyself to it; and givest it leave to wound thy conscience, to ruin thy soul, and thou wilt have it so. This is the strength of corruption: men will be conquered and captivated by it. Never tell me your corruptions are such as you cannot subdue: there is no such corruption: the most prevailing, the most tumultuating may be mortified by you, if you yourselves will. In a temptation, therefore, always think of this: "Why should I yield? what reason is there? what excuse can I have? I am not yet necessitated: I am not compelled to sin: my provision is not yet all spent: my heart is impregnable, unless I desert or dismantle it. I may, if I will, still stand it out, and be certain of the conquest. Shall I wilfully give up my soul, my darling, to the devourer? Shall I myself open these everlasting gates, at which Satan now knocks indeed, but which he cannot force? I can choose whether this temptation shall ever prevail: an absolute denial, a peremptory No, would now silence it." Certainly, did you but actually dwell upon this thought in a temptation, it would shame you from gratifying many a corruption that now you do. And, then,

(2) Consider the prevailing nature of grace.

It is from this, that your endeavours after mortification are accompanied with certainty of success. Grace is an immortal seed, that will certainly sprout up and flower into glory: it is a living fountain, that will certainly flow and bubble up into everlasting life: it is a ray of heavenly light, that will scatter and triumph over darkness, and wax brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. It is immortal, in a seed; victorious, in a spark; triumphant, in its dawning. It hath a kind of omni-

potency in it. Phil. iv. 13. *I can do all things, through Christ* strengthening *me;* strengthening me, by his prevailing grace. And no wonder, since it is a particle of the divine nature itself: 2 Pet. i. 4. that *ye might be partakers of the divine nature.* It is an indelible flourish of the divine essence, which sets the gloss of the divine attributes upon the soul, and makes it of kin to God himself. Yea, take grace when it is at the weakest; when this dawn is clouded, when this spark is twinkling, when this seed seems unspirited; yet, then, it is victorious and triumphant: *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but* always *mighty through God:* 2 Cor. x. 4. What an over-match is this for corruption, to set grace against sin! it is to set God against Satan, heaven against hell, spirit against flesh. Will you desire greater advantage than this? Can you wish for greater encouragement? Oh! how faint-hearted must they needs be, whom certainty of prevailing cannot animate to contend. Who would not fight, that hath such odds? "Am I certain to prevail? Have I that principle in me, which will go forth conquering unto conquer? Will it assuredly crown my soul with victory, and shall I not bring it to the trial? Here is a corruption, which molests me: shall I suffer it to captivate me, while yet I have that divine auxiliary within, which, if brought forth, would certainly overcome it? Nay, I must detain this grace in unrighteousness, I must depress it, I must keep it under by violence, if I do not prevail by it. Nay, if I strive not against my lusts, I must strive against my graces: and, what! shall I take as much pains to commit a sin, as would serve to subdue it?" O Christians! it is the greatest shame in the world, for you to be overcome and worsted: you, who have such an active, victorious principle; a principle, which you yourselves must much wrong and injure, if it doth not always conquer; a principle, which riseth with a natural and spontaneous force and impetus against corruption, and if but owned, if but cherished, nay if not resisted and opposed, will certainly subdue it. What shall we think, when we see such as you foiled, but that there is treachery within? you conspire against your own grace: you keep it under: you check and curb that, which would, with a sprightly and ethereal impulse, rush upon and beat down the strongest lusts that oppose it.

(3) Consider: the greatest strength and power of corruption is already destroyed, before you are put upon the mortification of it.

It hath already lost its reigning power in you, and now it retains only its molesting power: it hath already lost the power of a king, and now it only retains the power of a rebel: your Old Man is already crucified; it now wants nothing but piercing: it is, with Absalom, hung up; and wants nothing but to be thrust through. So tender is our God of us, that he will not venture us against corruption, while it is in its full strength: alas! while corruption is entire and unbroken, we are unable to grapple with it: he himself, therefore, crushes the head of this serpent, and breaks the teeth of this lion; and, when it is thus weakened, he calls upon us to destroy it. God might, if he had so pleased, at once have made a full end of corruption; and, in our regeneration, as perfectly have freed us from it, as we shall be hereafter in heaven: no, but he would not so take the whole work out of our hands: we must exercise our courage, and our resolution against it; and, therefore, he so far weakened it, that it might not destroy us, though still it be left so strong and powerful as to molest and trouble us.

So that you see, in these Three things, success is assured to your endeavours: you cannot say corruption is unmatchable in its strength, irresistible in its violence, that we cannot stand before it; no, you shall certainly prevail and overcome it, if you will but encounter it: and what an encouragement is this!

3. Another encouraging consideration is this: *The longer thou continuest mortifying, the weaker will corruption grow, and the easier thou wilt find this great work to be.*

Would you be freed from the continual vexing importunity of corruption? It now haunts and dogs you; and clamours to be gratified in this and in that sin; and you can find no rest from it: beware how you go about to satisfy it; for, believe it, that doth but the more enrage it. Solomon's insatiables are moderate, in respect of this: it still cries *Give, give;* and, the more you give it, the louder still and the more eagerly it cries. Have you not found, that, after yielding to this importunity, corruption hath been more fierce than ever before? it is an impudent craver, that knows neither bounds nor modesty. You may as well quench fire with oil, as satisfy corruption with sinning: no; if you would, in any measure, be free from this perpetual trouble, use it frowardly; deny, reject it: spurn this body of sin and death: this, at last, will discountenance and discourage it from tempting: it will, at last, leave following thee, as one inexorable. Trust the experience of the children of God, in this particular: they

will tell thee, that such and such a prevailing lust, which did use perpetually to perplex and disquiet them, which they feared they should never master, yet, by often vexing, crossing, and contradicting it, they have at length tamed; it being brought under command, and made subject to grace: and that though, indeed, there would remain still some grudgings of the distemper; yet it hath been less frequent and less violent in its working. Conclude upon it, that this thou also mayest attain unto. Doth any imperious lust perplex and trouble thee? believe it, through the daily exercise of mortification thou wilt so tire it out and spend it, that, though it may murmur and repine sometimes, and grudge that it is not satisfied; yet it shall seldom prevail to disturb thy communion with God, and never so far prevail as to destroy thy peace and comfort. Then,

4. Consider, that *there is, in the exercise of mortification, though it be so sharp and severe a duty, an inward secret satisfaction of soul, that doth more than recompense all the pains and difficulty.*

There is a hidden complacency, even in cutting off right-hands, and plucking out right-eyes. There is a double nature in every child of God; the divine nature, and the corrupt nature: and that, which is a torment to the one, is a pleasure to the other. The divine nature takes as much pleasure in mortifying a corruption, as the corrupt nature doth in gratifying it. I wonder, therefore, how rational Christians are to be deterred from the work of mortification, by the harshness and painfulness of the work. If you have no nature in you but corrupt, how are you Christians? If you have, think you it is not as painful and as harsh to your new nature, that you yield to a lust; as it is to your corrupt nature, that you oppose and mortify it? Yes, the new nature groans, and sighs, and mourns in secret, when you sin against it: but it leaps for joy, it springs and exults in the heart, when you disappoint a temptation, and prevail against corruptions: it smiles upon you, when you return red from the slaughter. I appeal to experience: tell me, have you not found more ravishing joy and pleasure in that still insinuating soft delight, that spills itself silently through the soul, while you have been vigorously struggling against your corruptions, than ever you found in yielding to them? Though the contest be troublesome, yet what a calm follows when grace obtains the victory; not a ruffle, not a wrinkle upon the face of the soul! Oh! how sweetly doth it then enjoy both itself and its God! it twines about him, closely embraceth him, claspeth hands with

him; and then follow those unexpressible mutual congratulations for the success: "Oh! my soul, enter thou into this joy." If lust prevail, the pleasure may blaze high; but it is impure, dreggy, mixed, and hath in it more of the sting than the honey, besides those many thousand stings it leaves behind in the conscience. Now baffle a corruption, by that very argument, that it doth chiefly make use of. What is that, which lust useth to plead, when it tempts? is it not pleasure? this is its most taking bait: when, therefore, it tells thee thou shalt have so much pleasure in it, it will bring thee in such an overflowing measure of satisfaction and delight; then answer it; "I can have better satisfaction and more sincere delight, in mortifying it: that will bring me in pure, spiritual, clarified joy: and shall I forego this, for the muddy, impure, short blaze of sinful pleasure?" Thus encourage thyself unto this great duty.

5. Consider, for thy encouragement, that *this work of mortification is but for a short time; for a few stormy winter days, that will soon be blown over.*

Though it must be a constant work, while it lasts; yet it is not to last long. Death, at last, will come in for our relief. Look how the scorched traveller longs for a shade to rest in, so doth a truly mortified Christian long to repose himself in the shadow of death: there he shall lie free from the scorchings of temptations, and the heat and swelter of corruption. It will not, it cannot be long, ere it shall be sung over us, "Your *warfare is accomplished.*" Though now we are kicking against the prickles, yet we shall shortly be crowned with roses. Our comfort is, that not a corruption shall enter into heaven with us, there to tempt or molest us. And, therefore, we should not faint nor be weary: though our work be sharp, yet it is but short, and our rest is everlasting.

Now be continually arming and strengthening yourselves with such encouraging considerations as these. You will find them to be of very great moment and influence, in the carrying on of the work of mortification.

That is the Fourth Direction.

v. Another direction shall be this: IF YOU WOULD MORTIFY YOUR CORRUPTIONS, THEN LABOUR TO IMPROVE THE DEATH OF CHRIST UNTO THE DEATH OF SIN.

There is virtue in the blood of Christ, to staunch the bloody

issue of corruption: he was wounded and crucified for sin, and sin was wounded and crucified with him. And thus Christ doth, by a holy kind of revenge, repay his death upon the Old Man, that put him to death. And therefore says the Apostle, Rom. vi. 6. *Our Old Man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed:* and, in the former verses, he speaks of being *baptized into the death of Christ, and of being planted together in the likeness of his death:* all which intimates the death of sin, to be inflicted by the death of Christ. Look, as Moses healed the bitterness of the waters of Marah, by casting a tree into them; so, truly, that bitter fountain of corruption, which always sends forth bitter streams, is healed by the tree of the cross. Make it, therefore, your daily exercise, to bring the cross of Christ into your hearts, to nail and fasten your lusts unto it; and you shall quickly find them languish and expire.

If you ask what influence the death of Christ hath into the death of sin, I answer, it hath mighty influence, especially these Two ways:

As it is the meritorious cause of mortification: and
As it is the moving cause thereto.

1. *The death and cross of Christ is the Meritorious Cause of mortification.*

Then was the death of sin procured and purchased. We should always have lived vassals and bond-slaves to our lusts, still subject to them and kept under by them, but that Christ by dying, hath redeemed us from their power, and hath laid in store for us that grace whereby we are enabled to resist and prevail. Believe it, there is not a victory, that you obtain, but it cost blood; not your own indeed, but the precious blood of Jesus Christ. What a privilege hath a Christian in this! He conflicts, and conquers, and triumphs at the expence of another's blood. There is not a temptation which you resist, nor a corruption which you subdue, but the grace, that enables you thereunto, is the purchase of your Saviour's death. By death, he destroyed him, that had the power of death. By faith, therefore, draw continual supplies from the death of Christ: tell him, how rebellious and headstrong thy corruptions are grown, what tumults and uproars they make in thy heart: tell him, it was one end and intent of his death, that they might be destroyed in thee: beg of him relief and strength against them: plead with him, that, since he hath procured the death of sin at so

high and dear a rate as his own blood, he would not suffer it to live unmortified in thee. Christ, by his sufferings, hath procured grace sufficient to make us more than conquerors: now it is the skill and art of faith, to derive from this full treasury supplies for mortification.

2. *The death of Christ hath a mighty influence into our mortification, as it is the Moving Cause unto it.*

Certainly, if you do but seriously reflect upon the death of Christ; and consider that all the pains, wrath, and curse which he then underwent, were to free you from your sins; it cannot but embitter your hearts against it: "What! shall I suffer sin in me, which would not suffer Christ to live in the world? Was he crucified for it, and shall not I be crucified unto it?" Oh! say concerning thy corruptions, "It was this and that base lust of mine, which killed my Saviour: it was this and that sin, which squeezed so much gall and wormwood into the bitter cup of his sufferings: I see them stained with his blood: they look guilty of his death: and shall I lodge in my heart the bloody murderers of my Saviour? No; their blood certainly shall go for his." This consideration, had I time to press it upon you, would be of great moment unto the exercise of mortification.

Thus I have, at large, handled to you this great and important Duty of Mortification. It is not that, which concerns only some particular Christians: it is not that, which is to be exercised only at some particular and especial seasons: it is not that, which conduceth only to the ornament and flourish of a Christian? No; it is that, which is the very life and power of Christianity, without which, whatsoever profession you glitter in, and dazzle the eyes of the world with, it is but empty and hypocritical. If any of these truths have taken hold upon your consciences, beware how you shift them off, lest, with them, you together shift off eternal life, and judge yourselves unworthy of it. I know it is indeed a hard duty, and I have endeavoured to arm you against that prejudice: but pray tell me, is it not more hard to perish? is it not more hard to lie in hell for ever? though it be pleasing to flesh and blood to live in sin, and to give corruption scope to act unopposed and unresisted; oh! but think, will it be pleasing to flesh and blood to lie for ever scorching in eternal burnings? Never flatter yourselves: you or your sins must die: *If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.* If, after all that hath been spoken, you will yet indulge your lusts,

and yield to temptations, and give yourselves over to the swing of your corruptions; believe it, these sermons will rise up and witness against you at the Last Day, and leave you without excuse. You have been told what the duty is; how necessary; the way and means how you should perform it: and oh, that these things might never be objected against you for your condemnation! Oh, that they might become effectual to promote that great work in you, till that promise be fulfilled to you in the text, *If ye mortify, ye shall live.*

END OF THIRD VOLUME.

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