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A HOLY LIFE
THE BEAUTY OF CHRISTIANITY

by John Bunyan

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A HOLY LIFE
THE BEAUTY OF CHRISTIANITY

BY

JOHN BUNYAN

*“Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.”
2 Timothy 2:19*

*“And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God.”
2 Thessalonians 3:5.*

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THE AUTHOR TO THE READER

When I write of justification before God, from the dreadful curse of the law, then I must speak of nothing but grace, Christ, the promise, and faith. But when I speak of our justification before men, then I must join to these, good works. For grace, Christ, and faith, are things invisible, and so not to be seen by another, otherwise than through a life that becomes so blessed a gospel as has declared unto us the remission of our sins for the sake of Jesus Christ. He then that would have forgiveness of sins, and so be delivered from the curse of God, must believe in the righteousness and blood of Christ: but he that would show to his neighbors that he hath truly received this mercy of God, must do it by good works; for all things else, to them, is but talk. As for example; a tree is known to be what it is, namely, whether of this or that kind, by its fruit. A tree, it is without fruit; but so long as it so abideth, there is ministered occasion to doubt what manner of tree it is.

A professor is a professor, though he hath no good works; but that, as such, he is truly godly, he is “foolish” that so concludeth. Matthew 7:17, 18; James 2:18. Not that works make a man good; for the fruit maketh not a good tree; it is the principle, that is, Faith, that makes a man good, and his works that show him to be so. Matthew 7:16; Luke 6:44.

What then? Why, all professors that have not good works flowing from their faith, are naught; are bramble bushes; are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned,” Hebrews 6:8. For professors by their fruitlessness declare, that they are not of the planting of God; not the wheat, but tares, and “children of the wicked one.” Matthew 13:37, 38.

Not that Faith needeth good works as a help to justification before God. For in this matter, Faith will be ignorant of all good works, except those done by the person of Christ. Here then the good man “worketh not, but believeth,” (Romans 4:3, 4, 5) for he is not now to carry to God, but to receive at his hand the matter of his justification by faith. Nor is the matter of his justification before God aught else but the good deeds of another man, namely, Jesus Christ.

But is there, therefore, no need at all of good works, because a man is justified before God without them? or can that be called a justifying faith, that has not for its fruit, good works? Job 22:2, 3; James 2:20, 26. Verily good works are necessary, though God need them not, nor is that faith, as to justification with God, worth a rush, that abideth alone, or without them.

There is therefore a twofold faith of Christ in the world, and as to the notion of justifying righteousness, they both concur and agree, but as to the manner of application, there they vastly differ.

The one, namely, “the non-saving faith, standeth in speculation and naked knowledge of Christ, and so abideth idle: but the other truly sees, and receives him, and so becometh fruitful.” John 1:12; Hebrews 11:13; Romans 10:16. And hence the true justifying faith, is said to receive, to embrace, to obey the Son of God, as tendered in the gospel: by which expressions is showed both the nature of justifying faith, in its actings in point of justification, and also the cause of its being full of good works in the world. A gift is not made mine by my seeing it, or because I know the nature of the thing so given: but then it is mine if I receive and embrace it; yea, and as to the point in hand, if I yield myself up to stand and fall by it. Now he that shall, not only see, but receive, not only know, but embrace the Son of God, to be justified by him, cannot but bring forth good works; because Christ who is now received and embraced by faith, leavens and seasons the spirit of this sinner (through his faith) to the making of him capable so to do. Acts 15:9; 1 Chronicles 26:18, 19; Hebrews 11:11. Faith made Sarah receive strength to conceive seed, and we are sanctified through faith, which is in Christ. For faith hath joined Christ and the soul together, and being so joined, the soul is one spirit with him: not essentially; but in agreement, and oneness of design. Besides, when Christ is truly received and embraced to the justifying of the sinner, in that man’s heart he dwells by his word and Spirit, through the same faith also. Now Christ, by his Spirit and Word, must needs season the soul he thus dwells in. So then the soul being seasoned, it seasoneth the body; and body and soul, season the life and conversation.

We know it is not the seeing, but taking of a potion, that maketh it work as it should; nor is the blood of Christ a purge to this or that conscience,

except received by faith. Hebrews 9:14. Shall that then be counted right believing in Christ unto justification, that amounts to no more than to an idle speculation, or naked knowledge of him? Shall that knowledge of him, I say, be counted such, as only causes the soul to behold, but moveth it not to good works? No, verily. 2 Corinthians 3:18. For the true beholding of Jesus to justification and life, changes from glory to glory.

Nor can that man that hath so believed, as that by his faith he hath received and embraced Christ for life before God, be destitute of good works. For, as I said, the Word and Spirit come also by this faith, and dwell in the heart and conscience. Now, shall a soul where the Word and Spirit of Christ dwell, be a soul without good works? Yea, shall a soul that has received the love, the mercy, the kindness, grace and salvation of God through the sorrows, tears, groans, cross and cruel death of Christ, be yet a fruitless tree! — God forbid. The faith is as the salt which the prophet cast into the spring of bitter water; it makes the soul good and serviceable for ever. 2 Kings 2:19-22.

If the receiving of a temporal gift naturally tends to making us move our cap and knee, and binds us to be the servant of the giver, shall we think that faith will leave him who by it has received Christ, to be as unconcerned as a stock or stone; or that its utmost excellency is to provoke the soul to a lip-labor, and to give Christ a few fair words for his pains and grace, and so wrap up the business? No, no; the love of Christ constraineth us thus to judge that it is but reasonable, since he gave his all for us, that we should give our all for him. 2 Corinthians 5:14.

Let no man then deceive himself, (as he may and will if he takes not heed) with true notions, but examine himself concerning his faith, first; Whether he hath any? and if some, Whether of that kind that will turn to account in the day when God shall judge the world.

I told you before that there is a twofold faith, and now I will tell you that there are two sorts of good works; and a man may be shrewdly guessed at with reference to his faith, even by the work that he chooseth to be conversant in.

There are works that cost nothing, and works that are chargeable. And observe it, the unsound faith will choose to itself the most easy works it

can find. For example, there are reading, praying, hearing of sermons, baptism, breaking of bread, church fellowship, preaching, and the like; and there be mortification of lusts, charity, simplicity, openheartedness, with a liberal hand to the poor, and their like also. Now the unsound faith picks and chooses, and takes and leaves, but the true faith does not so.

There are a great many professors now that have nothing to distinguish them from the worst of men, but their praying, reading, hearing of sermons, baptism, church-fellowship, and breaking of bread. Separate them but from these, and every where else they are as black as others, even in their whole life and conversation. Thus they have chosen to them the most easy things to do them; but love not to be conscientiously found in the practice of the other; a certain sign their faith is naught, and that these things, even the things they are conversant in, are things attended to of them, not for the ends for which God has appointed them, but to beguile and undo themselves withal.

Praying, hearing, reading; for what are these things ordained, but that we might by the godly use of them attain to more of the knowledge of God, and be strengthened by his grace to serve him better according to his moral law? Baptism, fellowship, and the Lord's supper, are ordained for these ends also. But there is a vast difference between using these things, and using them for these ends. A man may pray, yea pray for such things, had he them, as would make him better in morals, without desire to be better in morals, or love to the things he prays for. A man may read and hear, not to learn to do, though to know; yea he may be dead to doing moral goodness, and yet be great for reading and hearing all his days. The people then among all professors that are zealous of good works are the peculiar ones to Christ. Titus 2:14. What has a man done that is baptized, if he pursues not the ends for which that appointment was ordained? The like I say of fellowship, of breaking of bread, etc. For all these things we should use to support our faith, to mortify the flesh, and strengthen us to walk in newness of life by the rule of the moral law. Nor can that man be esteemed holy, whose life is tainted with immoralities, let him be what he can in all things else. I am of that man's mind, as to practical righteousness, who said to Christ, upon this very question,

“Well, master, thou hast said the truth; for to love the Lord our God with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength; and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.”
Mark 12:28, 33.

To love my neighbor as myself, to do as I would be done unto, this is the law and the prophets. And he that is altogether a stranger to these things, how dwelleth the love of God in him? or how will he manifest to another, that his faith will save him?

Satan is afraid that men should hear of justification by Christ, lest they should embrace it. But yet if he can prevail with them to keep fingers off, though they do hear and look on, and practice lesser things, he can the better bear it; yea he will labor to make such professors bold to conclude they shall by that kind of faith enjoy him, though by that they cannot embrace him, nor lay hold of him. For he knows that how far soever a man engages in a profession of Christ with a faith that looks on, but cannot receive nor embrace him, that faith will leave him to nothing but mistakes and disappointments at last.

The gospel comes to some in word only, and the faith of such stands but in a verbal sound: but the Apostle was resolved not to know or take notice of such a faith. 1 Thessalonians 1:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 4:18, 19, 20. “For the kingdom of God (saith he) is not in word, but in power.” He whose faith stands only in saying, ‘I believe,’ has his works in bare words also, and as virtual is the one as the other, and both insignificant enough.

“If a brother or a sister be naked, or destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, ‘Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled;’ notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.” James 2:16, 17.

This faith, therefore, Satan can allow, because it is somewhat of kin to his own. Ver. 19.

Besides, what greater contempt can be cast upon Christ than is cast upon him by such wordy professors? These are the men that by practice say, ‘the gospel is but an empty sound.’ Yea, the more they profess, the louder

they proclaim it thus to be, to his disgrace; while they, notwithstanding their profession of faith, hold and maintain their league with the devil and sin.

The Son of God was manifest that he might destroy the works of the devil; but these men profess his faith, and yet keep those works alive in the world. 1 John 3. Shall these pass for such as believe to the saving of the soul? For a man to be content with this kind of faith, and to look to go to salvation by it, what to God is a greater provocation?

The devil laugheth here, for he knows he has not lost his vassal by such a faith as this; but that rather he hath made use of the gospel, that glorious word of life, to secure his captive, through his presumption of the right faith, the faster in his shackles.

It is marvellous to me to see sin so high amidst the swarms of professors that are found in every corner of this land. Nor can any other reason be given for it, but because the gospel has lost its wonted virtue, or because professors want faith therein. But do you think it is because of the first? No, the word of our God, shall stand in its strength for ever. The faith of such, therefore, is not right. They have for shields of gold, made themselves shields of brass; or instead of the primitive faith, which was of the operation of God, they have got to themselves a faith that stands by the power, and in the wisdom of man. 2 Chronicles 12:9, 10; Colossians 2:12; 1 Corinthians 2:4, 5.

And to say no more to this; for what is God so angry with this land, but for the sin of the professors that dwell therein, while they have polluted his name with their gifts, and with their idols? God, I say, has been provoked most bitterly by us, while we have profaned his name, making use of his name, his word and ordinances to serve ourselves. "O Lord, what wilt thou do to this land?" We are every one looking for something; even for something that carrieth terror and dread in the sound of its wings as it comes, though we know not the form nor visage thereof. One cries out, another has his hands upon his loins, and a third is made with the sight of his eyes, and with what his ears to hear. And as their faith hath served them about justification, so it now serves them about repentance and reformation: it can do nothing here neither; for though, as was said, men cry out, and are with their hands upon their loins for fear; yet where

is the church, the house, the man that stands in the gap for the land, to turn away this wrath by repentance, and amendment of life. “Behold the Lord cometh forth out of his place, and will come down and tread upon the places of the earth, and the mountains shall be molten under him, and the valleys shall be cleft as wax before the fire, and as the waters that are poured down a steep place.” But what is the cause of all this?

“For the transgression of Jacob is all this,
and for the sin of the house of Israel.” Micah 1

It is frequently observed by them that can make observation, that all that God has done to us already has been ineffectual to cause that humility and reformation, by which his judgments must be turned away. Repentance is rare this day; and yet, without doubt, it is that without which things will grow worse and worse. As for them that hope that God will save his people, though but from temporal judgments, whether they repent and reform, or do otherwise, I must leave them and their opinions together: this I have found, that sometimes the repentance, even of the godly, has come too late to divert such judgments. And how some of the godly should be so indulged as to be saved from punishment without repentance, when the true and unfeigned repentance of others will not deliver them, leaves me I confess in a wilderness.

But that which is most of all to be lamented is, that sin, through custom, is become no sin. The “superfluity of naughtiness” is at this day become no sin with many. Surely this was the case with Israel, else how could they say, when the prophets so bitterly denounced God’s judgments against them,

“Because we are innocent, surely his anger shall turn from us.”
Jeremiah 2:35

When custom or bad example has taken away the conscience of sin, it is a sign that soul is in a dangerous lethargy; and yet this is the condition of the most that profess amongst us this day. But to leave this and to proceed.

As there is a twofold faith, two sorts of good works, and the like, so there is also a twofold love to Christ; the one standing or stopping in some passions of the mind and affections; the other is that which breaks through all difficulties to the holy commandment to do it. Of both these there is

mention made in the Scripture; and though all true love begins at the heart, yet that love is but little set by that breaks not through to practice. How many are there in the world that seem to have the first, but how few show the second! Mark 10:17. The young man in the gospel did by his running, kneeling, crying, enquiring and entreating of Christ, to show him the way to life, show that he had inward love to Christ and his own salvation, but yet it was not a love that was strong as death, cruel as the grave, and hotter than the coals of juniper. Cant. 8:6. It was a love that stopped in mind and affection, but could not break out into practice. This kind of love, if it be let alone, and not pressed to proceed till it comes into a laborious practicing of the commandment, will love as long as you will, namely, as long as mouth and tongue can wag; but yet you shall not by all your skill drive this love farther than the mouth.

“For with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.” Ezekiel 33:31

Nor may this love be counted for that of the right kind, because it is in the heart; for the heart knows how to dissemble about love, as much as about other matters. This is feigned love, or love that pretends to dear affections for Christ, but can bestow no cost upon him. Of this kind of love the world is full at this day, especially the professors of this age; but as I said, of this the Lord Jesus makes little or no account, for that it hath in it an essential defectiveness.

Christ and his servants, therefore, thus describe the love that is true and of the right kind, and that with reference to himself and church.

First, with reference to Himself.

“If a man love me (saith he) he will keep my words.”
John 14:21, 23, 24

And again, “He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.” And “He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.” And, “The word which you hear is not mine, but the Father’s which sent me.” Behold you now, where Christ placeth a sign of love; it is not in word nor in tongue, not in great and seemingly affectionate gestures, but in a practical walking in the law of the Lord. Hence such, and such only, are called the undefiled in the way. (You know who says “I am the way.”)

“Blessed (saith David) are the undefiled in the way,
who walk in the law of the Lord.” Psalm 119:1

But here again the hypocrite will give us the slip by betaking himself to exterior matters, as to his mint, anise, and cummin, (Matthew 23:23), still neglecting the more weighty matters of the law, namely, judgment, mercy, faith; or else the significative ordinances, still neglecting to do to all men as he would they should do to him. But let such know that God never ordained significative ordinances, such as baptism, the Lord’s supper, or the like, for the sake of water, or of bread and wine; nor yet because he takes any delight that we are dipped in water, or eat that bread; but they were ordained to minister to us by the aptness of the elements, (through our sincere partaking of them), further knowledge of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and of our death and resurrection by him to newness of life. Wherefore, he that eateth and believeth not, and he that is baptized, and is not dead to sin, and walketh not in newness of life, neither keepeth these ordinances nor pleaseth God. Now to be dead to sin, is to be dead to those things forbidden in the moral law. For sin is the transgression of that; and it availeth not to vaunt that I am a saint and under this or that significative ordinance, if I live in the transgression of the law. 1 John 3:4. For I am convicted of the law as a transgressor, and so concluded to be one that loveth not Christ, though I make a noise of my obedience to Christ, and of my partaking of his significative ordinances. The Jews of old made a great noise with their significative ordinances, while they lived in the breach of the moral law; but their practice of significative ordinances could not save them from the judgment and displeasure of their God. They could frequent the temple, keep their feasts, slay their sacrifices, and be mighty apt about all their significative things. But they loved idols, and lived in the breach of the second table of the law. Wherefore God cast them out of his presence. Hark what the prophet saith of them, Amos 4:4, 5: “Come to Bethel and transgress, at Gilgal multiply transgressions, and bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes after three years: And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim and publish the free-will offerings: For this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God.” Thus, as I said, the hypocrite gives us the slip; for when he heareth that love is in the keeping of the commandments of God, then he betakes him to the more external

parts of worship, and neglecteth the more weighty matters, to the provoking of the God of Israel.

Secondly, As love to God is showed by keeping his commandments; so love to my neighbor, is the keeping of the commandments of God likewise.

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God (in us, both to God and man), that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.” 1 John 5:2, 3

He that keepeth not God’s commandments loves neither God nor men.

Thus, then, we must learn to love one another. He that keepeth God’s commandment, doth to his brother what is right, for that is God’s commandment. He that keeps God’s commandment, doth to his brother even as he would be done unto himself, for that is God’s commandment. He that keeps God’s commandment, shutteth not up his bowels of compassion from him, for the contrary is his commandment. Further, he that keepeth God’s commandment, showeth his brother what he must do to honor the Christ that he professeth aright: therefore, he that keeps the commandment, loves his brother. Yea, the keeping of the commandment is loving the brethren.

But if all love, which we pretend to have one to another, were tried by this one text, how much of that that we call so, would be found to be nothing less? Preposterous are our spirits in all things, nor can they be guided right, but by the word and Spirit of God; the which, the good Lord grant unto us plentifully, that we may do that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Yea, and that there may, by them, be wrought sound repentance in us for all that hath been done by us amiss, lest he give Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers; for that they have sinned against him by not walking in his ways, and by not being obedient to his law. Isaiah 42:24.

Let me add, lest God doth not only punish us in the sight, and by the hand of the wicked; but embolden them to say, it was God that set them on; yea, lest they make these sins of ours, which we have not repented of, not only their by-word against us to after generations, but the argument, one to another, of their justification for all the evil that they shall be suffered

to do unto us: saying, when men shall ask them: “Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? (Deuteronomy 29:24, 25.) What meaneth the heat of this great anger? (1 Kings 9:8; Jeremiah 22:8.) Even because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, and walked not in his ways.

CHAPTER I.

THE TEXT OPENED.

*And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.
2 Timothy 2:9.*

Timothy, unto whom this epistle was written, was an Evangelist, that is, inferior to the Apostles and extraordinary Prophets, and above ordinary Pastors and Teachers. Chap. 4:5; Ephesians 4:11, And he, with the rest of those under his circumstances, was to go with the Apostles hither and thither, to be disposed of by them as they saw need, for the further edification of those who by the apostolical ministry were converted to the faith. And hence it is, that Titus was left at Crete, and that this Timothy was left at Ephesus. 1 Timothy 1:3. For they were to do a work for Christ in the world, which the Apostles were to begin, and leave upon their hand to finish.

Now when the Apostles departed from places, and had left these Evangelists in their stead, usually there did arise some bad spirits among those people, where these were left for the furtherance of the Faith. This is manifest by both the epistles to Timothy, and also by that to Titus. Wherefore Paul, upon whom these two Evangelists waited for the fulfilling of their ministry, writeth unto them while they abode where he left them, concerning those turbulent spirits which they met with, and to teach them how yet further they ought to behave themselves in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth. And to this purpose he gives them severally divers instructions, (as the judicious reader may easily understand), by which he encourageth them to the prosecution of that service, which for Christ they had to do for those people where he had left them; and also instructeth them how to carry it towards their disturbers, which last he doth, not only doctrinally, but also by showing them, by his example and practice, what he would have them do.

This done, he laboreth to comfort Timothy with the remembrance of the steadfastness of God's eternal decree of election, because grounded on his foreknowledge; saying, though Hymeneus and Philetus have erred from the faith, and, by their fall, have overthrown the faith of some; "yet the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." Now lest this last hint should still encourage some to be remiss, carnally secure, and foolish, (as I suppose this doctrine abused, had encouraged them to be before); therefore the Apostle immediately conjoineth to it this exhortation: "And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." Two truths strangely, but necessarily joined together, because so apt to be severed by the children of men; for many under the pretense of their being elected, neglect to pursue holiness; and many of them again that pretend to be for holiness, quite exclude the doctrine, and motives that election gives thereto. Wherefore the Apostle, that he might set men's notions as to these things right, joins these two together, signifying thereby, that as electing love doth instate a man in the blessing of eternal life, so holiness is the path thereto; and, that he that refuseth to depart from iniquity shall be damned, notwithstanding he may think himself secured from hell by the act of God's electing love. For election designeth men, not only to eternal glory, but to holiness of life, as a means thereto. Ephesians 1:4, 5. And the manner of this connection of truth is the more to be noted by us, because the Apostle seems to conjoin them in a holy heat of spirit, saying: "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." And, "Let every that" shall but so much as "name the name of Christ, depart from iniquity;" as if he would say, 'or, God will be revenged upon them for all their sins, notwithstanding, they appropriate unto themselves the benefits of election.'

In the text we have, I. An EXHORTATION. II. The EXTENSION of that exhortation. The exhortation is, That men depart from iniquity. The extension of it is, to them, al of them, every one of them that name the name of Christ. "And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity."

I. IN THE EXHORTATION THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS TO BE TAKEN NOTICE OF, BECAUSE INSINUATED BY THE APOSTLE.

The first is, that iniquity is a very dangerous and hurtful thing, as to the souls of sinners in general, so to them that name the name of Christ.

It is a very dangerous, and hurtful thing to men in general; for it is that which did captivate the world at the beginning, and that made it a bondslave to the devil. It has also done great hurt to mankind ever since.

To instance a few things:

- 1.** It is that which has stupified and besotted the powers of men's souls, and made them even next to a beast and brute in all matters supernatural and heavenly. 2 Peter 2:12. For as the beast minds nothing but his lusts and his belly, by nature, so man minds nothing but things earthly, sensual, and devilish, by reason of iniquity.
- 2.** It has blinded and darkened the powers of the soul, so that it can neither see where it is, nor which is the way out of this besotted condition. Ephesians 4:18.
- 3.** It has hardened the heart against God, and against all admonition and counsel in the things of the gospel of Christ. Romans 2:5.
- 4.** It has alienated the will, the mind, and affections, from the choice of the things that should save it, and wrought them over to a hearty delight in those things, that naturally tend to drown men in destruction and perdition. Colossians 1:21.
- 5.** It has made man odious in God's eyes, it has provoked the justice of God against him, and made him obnoxious to hell fire. Ezekiel 16:5.
- 6.** Yea, it so holds him, so binds him, so reserves him to this, that not he himself, nor yet all the angels of heaven, can deliver him from this deplorable condition. Proverbs 5:22.
- 7.** To say nothing of the pleasure and delight that it makes him take in that way to hell in which he walketh. Isaiah 66:3; Proverbs 7:22-25. Never went fat ox so gamesomely to the shambles, nor fool so merrily to the correction of the stocks, nor silly bird so wantonly to the hidden net, as iniquity makes men go down her steps to the pit of hell and damnation.

O it is amazing, it is astonishing to consider what hurt sin has done to man, and into how many dangers it has brought him; but let these few hints at this time suffice as to this.

I will now speak a word to the other particular, namely: that as iniquity is dangerous and hurtful to the souls of men in general, so it is to them that name the name of Christ. As to the naming of him, to that I shall speak by and by; but as this time take it thus: Them that religiously name his name. And I say iniquity is hurtful to them.

1. It plucks many a one of them from Christ and the religious profession of him. I have even seen, that men who have devoutly and religiously professed Jesus Christ, have been prevailed with, by iniquity, to cast him and the profession of his name quite off, and to turn their backs upon him. "Israel," saith the Prophet, "has cast off the thing that is good." Hosea 8:3. But why? "Of their silver and their gold they have made idols." The sin of idolatry drew their hearts from God; their love to that iniquity, made them turn their backs upon him. Wherefore God complains, that of forwardness to their iniquity, and through the prevalence thereof, they had cast him behind their back. Ezekiel 23:35.

2. As it plucks many a professor from Christ, so it keeps back many a one from an effectual closing with him. How many are there that religiously profess and make mention of the name of Christ, that yet of love to, and by the interest that iniquity hath in their affections, never close with him unto salvation, but are like to them, of whom you read in Paul to Timothy, that they are "ever learning and never come to the knowledge of the truth." 2 Timothy 3:1-7.

3. And concerning those that have indeed come to him, and that have effectually closed with him, and that name his name to good purpose; yet how hath iniquity hurt and abused many of them.

- (1.) It has prevailed with God to hide his face from them, a thing more bitter than death.
- (2.) It has prevailed with God to chastise, and to afflict them sorely, a thing in which he taketh no pleasure. Lamentations 3:33.

- (3.) It has provoked God to give them over to the hand of the enemy, if not to deliver them to the tormentors. Jeremiah 12:7. Matthew 18:34.
- (4.) It hath brought them to question their interest in Christ, and whether they ever had grace in their souls. Psalm 31:22.

4. And for those that have yet believed they were in his favor, this iniquity has driven them to fear that God would cast them away, and take all his good things from them. Psalm 51.

Yea, he that would know the hurt that iniquity hath done to them that name the name of Christ, let him consider the cries, the sighs, the tears, the bemoaning, the bewailings, the lamentations, the sorrows, the confessions, the repentings and griefs, wherewith they have been attended while they have complained that they have been put in the stocks, laid in the dungeon, had their bones broken, suffered the terrors of God, been distressed almost to destruction, and have been fed with gravel, gall, wormwood and with the water of astonishment, for days, yea, years together. Psalm 38:8; 31:10; 6:6; Jeremiah 31:18; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Psalm 106:3; 31:3, 4; Job 13:27; Psalm 88; Lamentations 3:4; 3:16; Jeremiah 8:14; 23:15; Psalm 60:3; Ezekiel 4:16. By all which, and many more which might be mentioned, it appears that iniquity is a dangerous and hurtful thing.

II. BUT I PROCEED, AND COME IN THE NEXT PLACE TO THE EXTENSION OF THE EXHORTATION.

Namely, that it reacheth to all those that name the name of Christ. “And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.” To handle this a little, and,

First, to show you what the Apostle here means by naming the name of Christ. He meaneth not an irreligious naming of that worthy name, nor those that name it irreligiously. This is evident, because he passed by their manner of naming it without the least reproof, the which he would not have done, had the fault been in their manner of naming the name of Christ. Now I say, if he intendeth not those that name the name of Christ irreligiously, then, though the exhortation (let every one) seems to extend itself to all, and all manner of persons, that any ways name the name of

Christ, yet it is limited to this, namely, them that rightly, religiously or according to the way of the professors of Christ, name his worthy name. And it must needs be so taken, and that for these reasons:

1. Because, as I said before, the Apostle taketh no notice of their manner of naming his name, so as to reprove any undecency or unseemliness in their naming him; wherefore, he alloweth of the manner of their naming him.
2. Because, the Apostle's design in this exhortation, is, that the naming of the name of Christ, might be accompanied with such a life of holiness, as might put an additional lustre upon that name whenever named in a religious way; but this cannot be applied to every manner of naming the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. For if a man shall name the name of Christ unduly, or irreligiously, though he shall never so much therewithal depart from iniquity, and he circumspect to the utmost in all civility and morality, yet he answers not the Apostle's end which he seeks by this his exhortation. For,

(1) Suppose a man should name the name of Christ vainly, idly, in vain, in mirth, wantonness, false or vain swearing, or the like, and shall back this his manner of naming the name of Christ, with all manner of justness and uprightness of life, would this answer the Apostle's end in this his exhortation? Verily no; for this manner of naming the name is worthy of reprehension. "Thou shalt not take my name in vain," that is, vainly make use thereof; and moral goodness attending the so naming of the name of Christ, will do more hurt than good. Exodus 20.

(2) There is a reproachful and scandalous naming of the name of Christ, such as the Jews and Pharisees did accustom themselves unto, as to call him Jesus the deceiver; Christ, in a way of scorn and contempt. Nor were these men quite destitute of that which put a lustre upon their opinions; for, said the Lord Christ himself unto them, "Ye indeed appear beautiful outward. Matthew 23.

(3) There is such a naming of the name of Christ, as to make it a cloak for false and dangerous errors; that men, by the use of that name, and the putting of it upon such errors and delusions, may put off their errors to others the better. "Many shall come in my name," namely, with their

delusions, presenting them, in my name, to the world, and shall put them off, in my name, to the destruction of the soul. Matthew 24:5. Now, can any imagine that the Apostle should extend his exhortation to such, that they, thus continuing to name the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity. To what end should such be comprehended in this exhortation of his? To no purpose at all: for the more an erroneous person, or a deceiver of souls, shall back his errors with a life that is morally good, the more mischievous, dangerous, and damnable, is that man and his delusions; wherefore such a one is not concerned in this exhortation.

(4) There is a naming of the name of Christ magically, and after the manner of exorcism, or conjuration; as we read in the Acts of the Apostles. The vagabond Jews, the exorcists, there say,

“We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.” Acts 19:13-15

Thus they called over them that had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus. But what if these should clothe this their devilish art and their devilish way, of using or naming the name of the Lord Jesus, with departing from iniquity, so as to commend their whole life to bystanders for such as is morally good; what advantage would Christ, or Paul, or the Gospel, get thereby? Verily none at all, but rather damage and reproach; as will soon appear to any man’s reason, if it be considered that goodness of life joined to badness of principles, is like the devil clothed in white, or Satan transformed into an angel of light. And Paul was grieved in his spirit, when the girl that had a spirit of divination, did acknowledge him to be the servant of the most high God, for he knew it would nothing help forward the Lord’s design, but be rather an hindrance thereto. For when witches and devils come once to commend, or make use of the name of Christ, Christ and Paul like it not; therefore, Paul’s exhortation, which here we are presented with by the text, is not extended to any of the four sorts aforenamed; but,

First. To those upon whom his name is called; they should depart from iniquity. I say those whom God has so far dignified, as to put the name of Christ upon them, (Acts 15:17), and I will add, that apply that name to themselves. And the reason is, because God is now concerned. Chap. 11:26. God has changed thy name from Pagan to Christian, and thou choosest to call thyself by that name, saying, “I belong to Christ.” Now

thou must depart from iniquity, for notice is taken of thee both by heaven and earth, that thou art become a disciple; and let every one that (so) nameth the name of Christ, or, that nameth it, (being himself by God and himself put under such circumstances as these), “depart from iniquity.” 1 Peter 4:16.

Secondly, It is spoken to those that name the name of Christ either in the public or private worship of God: being themselves professed worshippers of him: and the reason is, for that the ordinance as well as the name of God is holy, and “he will be sanctified in them that come nigh him.” Leviticus 10:3. He therefore that approacheth the presence of Christ in prayer, or any other divine appointment, must take heed of “regarding iniquity in his heart,” prayers, and will shut his eyes, and not take notice of such kind of worship or worshippers.

Thirdly, Those that the Apostle in this place exhorts to depart from iniquity, are such as have taken unto themselves the boldness to say, that they are in him, abide in him, and consequently are made partakers of the benefits that are in him.

“He that saith he abideth in him,
ought himself to walk even as he walked.” 1 John 2:6

And the reason is, because Christ is a fruitful root, and a free conveyer of sap into the branches; hence it is written, “That the trees of the Lord are full of sap.” Psalm 104:16. So then, he that nameth the name of Christ by way of applying to himself his benefits, and as counting that he is found of God in him, and so abideth, ought himself to walk even as he walked, that he may give proof of what he saith to be true, by bearing forth before men that similitude of righteousness, that is in his root and stem: for such as the stock or tree is, such let the branches be, but that cannot be known but by the fruit: “By their fruit ye shall know them.” Matthew 7:16. So then, he that thus shall name the name of Christ, let him depart from iniquity: yea, let every such man do so.

Fourthly, The exhortation is spoken to them that name Christ as their Sovereign Lord and King; let them depart from iniquity.

“The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver,
the Lord is our King; he will save us.” Isaiah 33:22

These are great words: and as they cannot be spoken by every one; so they ought not to be spoken lightly by them that can. Nor may he that claims so high a privilege, be but obedient, submissive, apt to learn, conscientiously to put in practice what he hath learnt of his Judge, his Lawgiver, and his King. Lest when some shall hear him say, that Christ by name is his Lawgiver and his King, (and shall yet observe him to do things evil, and to walk in ways that are not good), they should think evil, and speak so of his King; saying, ‘Learnt you this of Christ your King? or doth your King countenance you in ways that are so bad? or do you by thus and thus doing, submit to the laws of your King?’ Yea, your King, his name and gospel shall bear the burden of the evil, together with the shame thereof, if thou that namest the name of Christ, shalt not depart from iniquity.

Lastly, Whatever man he be that by his naming of the name of Christ shall intimate that he hath any reverence, or love to, or delight in that Christ, whose name he nameth, that man should depart from iniquity, not only for the reasons that are above mentioned, but for those that may be named afterwards.

CHAPTER 2.

SOME CHRISTIANS PROFESSORS DO NOT DEPART FROM INIQUITY.

But having thus far opened the word, and showed who, and what manner of man the Apostle had in his eye, in this his exhortation: I shall come in the next place to make some OBSERVATIONS upon the fact. As,

I. THAT IT IS INCIDENT TO MEN TO NAME THE NAME OF CHRIST RELIGIOUSLY, (THAT IS, RIGHTLY AS TO WORDS AND NOTIONS), AND NOT TO DEPART FROM INIQUITY.

This was the occasion of this exhortation, for Paul saw that there were some that did so: that is, that named the name of Christ well, as to words, but did not depart from iniquity. Some such he also found among them at Corinth, which made him say,

“Awake to righteousness, and sin not.” 1 Corinthians 15:34

He found such at Ephesus, and cries out to them most earnestly, saying,

“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead,”
Ephesians 5:14, 15;

for albeit they were professors of Christ, yet they lived too much like those that were dead in trespasses and sins. This he also found among the Hebrews; wherefore he saith to them,

“Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”
Hebrews 12:1, 2, 3

These professors were easily beset with sin, yea, it did hang upon them as weights to hinder them from making that profession of Christ, whose name they named, so beautiful as did become both him and them.

In my discourse upon this subject, I must endeavor to show you two things.

First, What Paul means when he saith, “depart from iniquity.”

Secondly, Why some that, as to words, rightly name the name of Christ, do not depart from iniquity.

The first of these doth need some explanation, because in some sense even the best of saints cannot depart from sin, or iniquity.

1. Because as to the being of it, it is seated and rooted in their flesh,¹ and hath its dwelling there. Yea, it hath, and so will have, an abiding there, so long as man in on this side that state of perfection which is not to be enjoyed while we are in the flesh. “For in me, that is, in my flesh,” sin dwells. Romans 7. Nor doth any thing else but sin dwell there: “for in me, that is, in my flesh (said Paul) dwells no good thing.” Therefore, the Apostle must not be understood as if he intended to insinuate that there was a possibility that the being of sin could be plucked up by the roots, and so cast clean away from us, as to the very nature thereof. No, that will abide with us, for it hath its dwelling in us.

2. And as they cannot depart from the nature of it as such; that is, as they cannot be rid of the being of sin, so neither can they depart from the motions, and stirrings of sin, no more than they can fly from the motions or stirrings of their natural senses, or of their natural reason. The motions of sin, which Paul also calls the lusts thereof, will be where the nature and being of sin is, because it is not dead. For that which liveth, what manner of life soever it hath, will have motion according to the manner of life which it hath: and sin being one of the most quick and brisk things that are, it will also have its motions and lusts accordingly. Hence Paul teaches, Romans 6:12; Galatians 5:17, it lusts and will lust, where it is, and dwells: though the very Spirit of God, and the utmost diligence of a Christian be also there to oppose it.

3. Again, as the being and motions of sin will be with us, so also will it in its endeavors. It will endeavor to overcome us, and to make us captives to itself, and to Satan; and these endeavors will be with us. Ephesians 6:12; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Hebrews 12:4. Nor can we so depart from iniquity, as to be utterly rid of all sense and feeling of what endeavors there are in sin and

iniquity to be Master and Lord, and reign. Sin will endeavor to defile the mind, to defile the conscience, to defile the life and conversation: and this endeavor, as endeavor, we cannot depart from; that is, cause that it should not be in our flesh: for there it will be, since sin in its being is there.

4. As the being, motions, and endeavors of sin will still abide in our flesh, so consequently will its polluting force be upon us; nor doth the Apostle mean, when he bids us depart from iniquity, that we should think that we can so be, or so do, in this life, as that our being or doing should not smell of the strong scent of sin.

“Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.”
Job 14:4

We are all an unclean thing, and therefore

“all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6

The scent, the smell, the rank and odious stink of sin abides upon, yea, and will abide upon us, when most spiritual here, and upon our most spiritual actions too, until they be taken away by Christ. Thus far therefore, we cannot be concerned in the exhortation. For should Paul exhort us to depart from the being, motion, endeavor, and polluting fumes and scent of sin: I mean so to depart from them, as that there shall no such thing have place, or motion, or striving, or scent in, or upon us: he would exhort us to that which is altogether impossible for us to perform, yea, to perform through that working of the Spirit of God when is to be with us, and in us here. Yea, he must exhort us to that which he could not perform himself. But such exhortations did not stand with the wisdom of an Apostle. Wherefore there is a certain meaning in this exhortation, from the which if we swerve, we shall both wrong the Apostle and ourselves.

Let us enquire, then, what Paul does mean when he bids them, “that name the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” And for our better understanding of him we must consider that there is an iniquity that is inherent in us, and an iniquity that is apart, and at a distance from us. Now if he means, as certainly he doth, that they that name the name of Christ should depart from that sin and iniquity that is in themselves; then though he cannot mean that we should separate that from our persons, for that is impossible, yet he would have us, take off and withdraw our minds and

affections therefrom. And he tells us that they that are Christ's do so. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Galatians 5:24. Sinful lusts and sinful motions, our minds and affections should depart from them. There are the affections and lusts of sin; and there are the affections, and lusts or desires of the soul; and again, there are the affections and lusts of the new man in saints. Now that is that the Apostle would have, namely that the affections and passions of our souls should not choose, but depart from the affections and lusts of our old man, and should be renewed and made willing to be led by the Holy Ghost from them.

"This I say, (says he), Walk in the Spirit,
and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." Verse 16

Wherefore, when he saith, "depart from iniquity;" if he means from our own inherent iniquity, then he must mean thus; 'take your mind and your affections off; carry your minds away from them, set your minds and affections upon other objects, and let your minds and affections be yielded up to the conduct of the word and Spirit of God.'

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,
that ye should obey it in the lust thereof." Romans 6:12.

Now a man, in mind and affections, may depart from that which yet will not depart from him; yea, a man in mind may depart from that which yet will dwell in him as long as he lives.

For instance, there are many diseases that cleave to men, from which, in their minds, they willingly depart. Yea, their greatest disquietment is, that so bad a distemper will abide by them; and might they but have their desire accomplished, they would be as far therefrom as the ends of the earth are asunder; and while they are found to continue together, the mind departs therefrom, and is gone either to God, or to physicians for help and deliverance from it.

And thus it is with the saint, and should be with every one that by way of profession nameth the name of Christ. He should depart from his indwelling sin, with his mind. Romans 7. Like Paul, "with his mind he should serve the law of God." 5:25.

And this is an excellent thing to do, and can be done by none but such as are possessed with an excellent spirit. Ah! to find a man that really departs from himself, and that draweth the affections of the soul, from the affections and lusts of his flesh, is a rare thing. Ezekiel 11:21. The hearts of the most of professors go after the objects of their detestable lusts, and after their inward abominations. But such ‘shall of the flesh reap corruption,’ notwithstanding they name the name of Christ. Galatians 6:8.

Sin is sweet to him that is nothing but “flesh,” or that can savor nothing but what is of the flesh. Job 20:12. Nor can it be that he that is such should depart from himself, his sweet self. Romans 8:5, 6, 7, 8. No, “they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;” wherefore “they that are in the flesh,” though they profess religion and name the name of Christ, “cannot please God.” For such, instead of walking in and after the Spirit, have put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces, to hinder their departing therefrom. Ezekiel 14:7, 8. Nor will all their inquiring of God, nor their seeking and praying to him, keep them from stumbling and falling, and splitting themselves in sunder upon the rocks and ruins that are provided for them, as a reward of the evil of their doings. Job 14:16. Yea, they shall suck the poison of asps, and the viper’s tongue shall slay them, notwithstanding all their profession.

Question: But some may say, ‘how shall I know that I do depart from the iniquity of my flesh, from the iniquity that is in me?’

Answer: I shall answer this question briefly, thus:

1. How is iniquity in thine eye, when severed from the guilt and punishment that attend it? It is, as separate from these, beauteous, ill-favored? I ask thee how it looks, and how thou likest it, suppose there were no guilt or punishment to attend thy love to, or commission of it. For, if in its own nature it be desirable to thy mind, and only therefore shunned for fear of the punishment that attends the commission of it, without doubt thou art none of them that do depart from it; all that thou dost is, thou shunnest the sin, not of abhorrence of the sin, but for fear of the punishment that attends it. Like the thief that yet refuseth to take away his neighbor’s horse, not from hatred of theft, but for fear of the gallows.

2. How dost thou like thyself, as considered possessed with a body of sin, and as feeling and finding that sin worketh in thy members? Does this yield thee inward pleasedness of mind, and a kind of secret sweetness, or how? For, to be sure, where a sanctified mind is, there is nothing more odious in itself, nor that makes a man so in his own eyes, as doth this sight, the sight of sin in him, of the working of lust in him. Job 42:6; Ezekiel 16:63; Romans 6:21. It is this that makes the good man ashamed, that makes him blush, and that makes him abhor himself.

3. How look thy duties in thine eyes? I mean thy duties which thou dost in the service of God. I say, how look the best of these, the most warm and spiritual of these, since not one of them can be performed, but they do catch the stain of sin, as coming from thee? Or art thou through the ignorance that is in thee as unacquainted with these things?

4. Why wouldst thou go to heaven? Is it because thou wouldst be saved from hell, or because thou wouldst be freed from sin? I say, wouldst thou go to heaven, because it is a place that is holy, or because it is a place remote from the pains of hell? I ask again, wherein dost thou think the blessedness of heaven consists? Is it in the holiness that is there, or in the freedom that is there from hell? There is not a man alive but would go to heaven, that he may be saved from hell: but how many would go thither that they might be saved from the pleasure of sin, from the inward pleasure of sin. Of that I will be silent, though surely they are those that are out of love with sin, and that do depart from iniquity.

Verily, my brethren, it is a great thing to depart from iniquity; it is a great thing to have my will, my mind, and my affections departing from it.

But *secondly*. As they that depart from iniquity, withdraw their minds and affections from the lust and motions of it, so they depart also from the occasions of it. There are occasions by which sin worketh to bring forth the fruits thereof, and some seek those occasions. Romans 13:14; 1 Timothy 5:4; Exodus 23:7; Proverbs 5:8; 2 Timothy 2:16. But he that hath set himself to depart from sin in himself, will not seek occasions from abroad to do evil. Such a man as will keep far from an evil matter, will not company with a person that pollutes and defiles, nor will he come near the door of the adulteress' house; he will shun profane and vain babbling, for fear of the ungodliness that attends it;

“he will walk with wise men that he may be wise, knowing that companion of fools shall be destroyed.” Proverbs 13:20.

Now there are occasions given and occasions taken, to sin against the Lord Jesus; but he that departeth from iniquity departeth from them both. He is not for giving any occasion to others to sin: he had rather wrong himself and put up with injuries done, than give occasion to others to do iniquity. And as he is for giving none, so neither is he for taking any. He is for partaking of no man’s sins, but for keeping of himself pure. 1 Timothy 5:22.

Thirdly, To depart from iniquity is to depart from it in those examples that are set before us thereto. Occasions and examples are sometimes the same; but there may be occasions to sin, where there are no examples thereto, and therefore in that they differ. And to depart from iniquity is to shun and depart from those examples, those beastly examples, that in every corner of the country present themselves to men.

Examples to drunkenness; examples to whoredom; examples to swearing, to lying, to stealing, to Sabbath-breaking, to pride, to covetousness, to deceit, to hypocrisy, and to what not, are now-a-days common among men, and he that is to seek in this matter, and that knows not how to be expertly base, may have patterns and examples thereto in every hole. But to depart from iniquity is to depart from sinful examples, to shut the eyes at them, to turn the back upon them, and to cry out to heaven for grace, to be kept in the path of life. And, “Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

Fourthly, To depart from iniquity, is to depart from the enticing to iniquity. There is that in iniquity that is of an enticing nature. Its pleasures, profits, honors, delights, and sweetnesses are enticing, and he that hankers after these is not departed, nor departing from iniquity. A man must be weaned from these things, and must find some things somewhere else, that are better than these, else he cannot depart from iniquity.

Question: But some may say, ‘I go from it, and it follows me. I reject it, and it returns upon me. I have fled it, nay a thousand times, and yet it offereth itself and its deceits to me again: what would you have me do?’

Answer: I would answer thus: Departing from iniquity is not a work of an hour, or a day, or a week, or a month, or a year. But it is a work that will last thee thy life time, and there is the greatness and difficulty of it. Were it to be done presently, or were the work to be quickly over, how many are there that would be found to have departed from iniquity. But because it is a work of continuance, and not worth any thing, unless men hold out to the end, therefore, it is that so few are found actors, or overcomers therein. Departing from iniquity, with many, is but like the falling out of two neighbors; they hate one another for awhile, and then renew their old friendship again.

But again, since to depart from iniquity is a work of time, of all thy time, no wonder if it dogs thee, and offereth to return upon thee again and again; for it is mischievous, and seeks nothing less than thy ruin. Wherefore, thou must, in the first place, take it for granted that thus it will be; and so cry the harder to God for the continuing of his presence and grace upon thee in this blessed work; that as thou hast begun to call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, and begun to depart from iniquity, so thou mayest have strength to do it to the last gasp of thy life.

And further, because departing from iniquity is a kind of warfare with it — for iniquity will hang in thy flesh what it can, and will not be easily kept under — therefore, no marvel if thou find it wearisome work, and that the thing that thou wouldest get rid of it so unwilling to let thee depart from it.

And since the work is so weighty, and that it makes thee to go groaning on, I will for thy help give thee here a few things to consider: And

- 1.** Remember that God sees thee, and has his eyes open upon thee, even then when temptation to sin is lying at thee to give it some entertainment. This was that that made Joseph depart from it, when solicited to embrace it by a very powerful argument. Genesis 39:6, 7.
- 2.** Remember that God's wrath burns against it, and that he will surely be revenged on it, and on all that give it entertainment. This made Job afraid to countenance it, and put him upon departing from it;

“for destruction from God was a terror to me,
and by reason of his highness I could not endure.” Job 31:23.

- 3.** Remember the mischiefs that it has done to those that have embraced it, and what distress it has brought upon others. This made the whole congregation of Israel tremble to think that any of their brethren should give countenance to it. Joshua 22:16, 17, 18.
 - 4.** Remember what Christ hath suffered by it, that he might deliver us from the power of it. This made Paul so heartily to depart from it, and with all Christians to do so as well as he. 2 Corinthians 5:14.
 - 5.** Remember that those that are now in hell-fire went thither because they loved iniquity, and would not depart from it. Psalm 9:17; 9:43-48.
 - 6.** Remember that a profession is not worth a pin, if they that make it do not depart from iniquity. James 2:16, 17.
 - 7.** Remember that they death-bed will be very uneasy to thee, if thy conscience at that day shall be clogged with the guilt of thy iniquity. Hosea 7:13, 14.
 - 8.** Remember that at the judgment-day Christ will say to those, “Depart from me,” that have not here departed from their sin and iniquity. Luke 13:27; Matthew 25:41.
- Lastly.*** Remember well, and think much upon what a blessed reward the Son of God will give unto them, at that day, that have joined to their profession of faith in him a holy and blessed conversation. Matthew 25:21.

CHAPTER 3.

WHY THE CHRISTIAN PROFESSION IS SO EXTENSIVELY DISGRACED.

Having thus briefly showed you these things, I shall come, in the next place, to show you,

II. WHY SOME THAT, AS TO WORDS, RIGHTLY NAME THE NAME OF CHRIST, DO NOT DEPART FROM INIQUITY.

That it is incident to men to name the name of Christ religiously, and not to depart from iniquity, I have proved already; and now I must show you why it is so, and the reasons are of three sorts.

First. Some profess him, yet have not saving faith in him, nor yet have received grace from him. That some profess him that have not faith in him, nor received grace from him, I will make appear first; and then that they do not depart from iniquity, shall be shown afterwards.

That the first is true, consider: Christ says to his (professed) disciples, “There are some of you that believe not.” And again, “For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.” John 6:46. Now if they believe not, they have none of his grace in them; for faith is the first and head grace, the beginning and leading grace; he, therefore, that is destitute of that, is empty of all the rest. Besides, other scriptures also confirm this truth. James calls some of the professors of Christ that were in his day, vain, or empty men (James 2:20), that is, men void of grace. And the Apostle suggesteth in the very words below the text, that as in God’s house there are golden and silver saints, so there are also earthy and wooden ones. 2 Timothy 2:20. “For in a great house,” as God’s is, “are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor,” — that is some for heaven, and some for hell. Romans 9:20-23.

Now they are these wooden and earthy professors, that he aimeth at in the text; that is, that they should depart from iniquity, or else their profession would do them no good; and these also that he despaireth of in the next words, saying, but, in this great house of God there will not only be golden and silver Christians, but wooden and earthy ones: “And if any man purge himself from these” men’s companies, and from these men’s vices, “he shall be a vessel to honor, sanctified, and meet for the Master’s use, and prepared to every good work.”

From all which it is gathered, that there are some that name the name of Christ in a way of profession, that have neither faith nor grace in them, and so consequently that do not depart from iniquity. For, these want that principle, that holy and blessed principle, that should induce them thereunto; namely the great and principal graces of the Spirit; and they are four:

1. As I have said, they want Faith, that heart-purifying grace; for the heart is purified by faith. Acts 15:9. I have showed you already that departing from iniquity must be with the mind and affections, or with the heart. But how can that be, where the heart is not sanctified and made holy? For an unsanctified mind cannot depart from iniquity, no more than the Ethiopian can change his skin. Jeremiah 13:23. For nothing can purify the heart but faith. Therefore nothing can make a professor depart from iniquity, where faith is wanting. So then, when men professedly name the name of Christ without having holy faith in him, they still abide by their iniquity; they depart not from their iniquity, but rather make of their profession a cloak for their iniquity — for their malice, and for their covetousness, and the like. 1. Thessalonians 2:15; 1 Peter 2:16. It is not profession, but faith, that bringeth God and the soul together; and as long as God and the soul are at a distance, whatever profession is made, there is not a departing, not a heart-departing from iniquity. Wherefore to these professors James writeth thus,

“Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you; cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.”

James 4:8.

Men, far from God, cannot think reverently of him, nor so speak and profess him, as standeth with the nature of gospel religion; wherefore God

saith, “draw near hither,” that is by faith, and again, “let them come near, then let them speak,” then let them profess. Isaiah 41:1. Without faith a man cannot please God, because he cannot without it stand before him in the spotless righteousness of Christ, nor yet depart from iniquity, and live a holy life. Hebrews 11:6.

There are three things in faith, that directly tend to make a man depart from iniquity,

- (1.) It apprehendeth the truth of the being, and greatness of God, and so it aweth the spirit of a man.
- (2.) It apprehendeth the love of this God in Christ, and so it conquereth and overcometh the spirit of a man.
- (3.) It apprehendeth the sweetness and blessedness of the nature of the Godhead, and thence persuadeth the soul to desire here communion with him, that it may be holy, and the enjoyment of him, when this world is ended, that it may be happy in and by him for ever.

But without faith these things cannot be apprehended, and therefore those that want it, whatever their profession is, will not depart from iniquity.

2. Repentance is another of the great and principal graces, which the Holy Ghost worketh in the heart. Wherefore, without this also there can be no departing from iniquity. It is in vain to expect it of any man, let his profession be never so stately and great, if he is a stranger to sound repentance. How many are there in our day, since the gospel is grown so common, that catch up a notion of good things, and from that notion make a profession of the name of Christ, get into churches, and obtain the title of a brother, a saint, a member of a gospel congregation, that have clean escaped repentance? I say they have caught up a notion of good things, and have through that adventured to name the name of Christ, quite forgetting to take repentance with them. Repentance should be, and is one of the first steps into true gospel profession, (Mark 1:15; Proverbs 3:7; 16:6), but some know nothing of it, until they come to the end of all, and their repentance will do them no good. Repentance is not but where the true fear of God is; yea, the fear of God is one ground of repentance. Repentance is the scouring grace, it is that which purges. Repentance is, as

I may call it, that bitter pill without the taking, and sound working of which, base and sinful humors will rest unstirred, unpurged, undriven out of the soul. Can repentance be where godly sorrow is not? or can repentance be where the fruits of repentance are not? O the seed of repentance, is thick sown by preachers, but it comes up but thinly! Mark 1:4, 5; Romans 6:12; Jeremiah 7:3, 5. Where shall the fruits of repentance be found? Confession of sin is one fruit of repentance; shame for sin is another fruit of repentance; restitution for cozening, cheating, defrauding, beguiling thy neighbor, is another fruit of repentance. Luke 19:5-8. Yea, if you would see the fruits of repentance as described by the Holy Ghost, and put together for the further conviction and shame of the impenitent professor, look into the second epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 7:9-11.

But this is a day that was never read of, a day wherein conversion is frequent without repentance; such a conversion as it is; and therefore doth the church of God now swarm with them, that religiously name the name of Christ, and yet depart not from iniquity.

Alas! all houses, all tables, all shops, have hanging up in them, the sign of the want of repentance. Ecclesiastes 7:27, 28. To say nothing of the talk, of the beds and the backs of most that profess, by which of these is it that one of a thousand for men; and for women, one of ten thousand do show that they have repentance? No marvel then that the name of Christ is so frequently mentioned there, where iniquity dwells, yea reigns, and that with the consent of the mind.

I would not be austere, but were wearing of gold, putting on of apparel, dressing up houses, decking of children, learning of compliments, boldness in women, lechery in men, wanton behavior, lascivious words, and tempting carriages, signs of repentance; then I must say, the fruits of repentance swarm in our land. But if these be none of the fruits of repentance, then, O, the multitude of professors, that religiously name the name of Christ, and do not depart from iniquity!¹ But,

3. Love is another of those great and principal graces, which the Holy Ghost worketh in the heart: wherefore let profession be never so high, yet if love be wanting there, to be sure such professors “depart not from iniquity.” 1 Corinthians 13. Hence all profession, and subjecting to profession, are counted nothing, where love is not. Love is counted a most

infallible sign that a man is in a state of salvation. He that loveth, dwells in God, is born of God, and knoweth him. 1 John 4:7, 16, 21. Love divideth itself, to God, and to my neighbor. Love to God, is, that we keep his sayings, his commandments, his laws. “If a man love me, (saith Christ), he will keep my words;” and “he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings.” John 14:23, 24. “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous.” 1 John 5:3. So then, that professor that hath not love, cannot depart from iniquity. For,

- (1.) Where no love is, men cannot be tender of the name of God; they are not afflicted because men keep not God’s law. Psalm 119:136; 1 Corinthians 13:5.
- (2.) Where no love is, men cannot deny themselves of that, which otherwise they might lawfully do, lest the weak should fall, and the world be destroyed. Romans 14:15; Psalm 97:10.
- (3.) Where love to God is, there is hatred against iniquity. “Ye that love the Lord, hate evil.”

A man cannot love God, that loves not holiness. He loves not holiness, that loves not God’s word; he loves not God’s word, that doth not do it. It is a common thing to find men partial in God’s law, setting much by small things, and neglecting the weightier matters, paying tithes of mint, and anise, and cummin, and neglecting the weightier matters. These turn the tables of God’s book up-side-down; making little laws, of great ones; and great ones, of little ones; counting half an hour’s bodily service, better than a moral life. Love! love is gone out of the country; love to the doctrine of the first table, love to the doctrine of the second table. O how many professors, in God’s eyes, are accounted of no more than ‘sounding brass’ for want of this ornament, love! 1 Corinthians 13.

To speak nothing of the first table, where is he that hath his love manifested by the second? Where are they that feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared? Where is Paul, that would not eat meat while the world standeth, lest he made his brother offend? 1 Corinthians 8:13. Where is Dorcas, with her garments she used to make for the widow, and for the fatherless? Acts 9:36, 39. Yea, where is that rich man that (to his power) durst say what Job does, as recorded in Job 30:25, and chap. 31:13, 32? Love! love is

gone, and now coveting, pinching, griping, and such things are in fashion: now iniquity abounds, instead of grace, in many that name the name of Christ. They want love, and therefore cannot depart from iniquity.

4. Hope is another of those great and principal graces, which the Holy Ghost worketh in the heart, and without which let a man be never so high in profession, and so open in naming the name of Christ, he cannot depart from iniquity. As was said before of Faith, so we say now of Hope. “And every one that hath this hope in Him, (Christ), purifieth himself even as He is pure.” 1 John 3:3. Here is that purifieth, it cleanseth a man; it makes him make the Lord Jesus his example, as well as his Savior. He purifieth himself “even as he is pure;” that is, in soul, in body, in spirit, in life and conversation. Hope of life eternal by Christ, makes a man purify himself in obeying the truth through the Spirit. Hope to be with Christ hereafter, will make me strive to be like him here. Hope of being with angels there, will make a man strive to live like an angel here. Alas! alas! there is a company of half-priests in the world, and they cannot, they dare not teach the people the whole counsel of God, because in so doing they will condemn themselves and their manner of living the world. Where is that minister now to be found that dare say to his people, ‘Look on me, and walk as you have me for an example?’ or that dare say, ‘What you see and hear to be in me, do and the God of peace shall be with you.’ Philippians 3:17. 4:9. These (primitive) men had hope, and hope purified them to an example, till they became patterns to others.

Is not this now far off from some professors in the world? Are they purified? Are they clean that name the name of Christ? Are they weaned from that milk, and drawn from the breasts? No, nor is their profession attended with grace; they name the name of Christ; well, but they do not depart from iniquity. Let a man believe a lie and according to the reality of his belief, such will his obedience be; let a man hope for that, for which he hath no ground to hope, yet his hope will work with him according to the power thereof. And yet we have a generation of men that profess the blessed gospel, which yieldeth the most substantial ground for faith and hope: yea, we have a company of men that will be naming the name of Christ, which is the sweetest, the most taking, and desirable name that is named among the sons of men, and for all that, this gospel, this worthy name, nor yet their naming it, doth make them depart from iniquity. But

what's the reason? Why, they have taken up a profession, but want the grace of Christ; the faith, the repentance, the love, and hope of the gospel. No marvel, then, if they abide among the wooden sort of professors: nor marvel then, though the iniquity of their heels still follows them, and that it droppeth from them wherever they go! — But so much for the first reason, why men do name the name of Christ, and yet do not depart from iniquity.

Secondly. The second reason, why some that name the name of Christ, depart not from iniquity, is, that though they rest not in bare notions, as those forementioned, yet they take up as they, short of the saving grace of God. There are bare notions; there are common workings; and there is a work that is saving, and that will do the soul good to eternity.

1. There are bare notions; and they that have them, are those unto whom the gospel comes in word only. 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 1 Corinthians 4:19, 20. Such religion stands in word only, and is not attended with a power suitable: that is, there goeth not along with the word, a power sufficient to subdue, and work over the heart to a cordial and gracious close with that word that comes to them. Yet such is the noise and sound of the word, that they are willing to become professors thereof; there is some kind of musicalness in it, especially, when well handled and fingered by a skillful preacher. And lo, saith God unto such preachers, when their auditory is made up of such kind of hearers, “And lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song (or as one that sings a song of loves) of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.” Ezekiel 33:30, 31, 32.

2. But then, besides those, there is another sort, and they go further than those. For to these the word came, not in word only, but also in power: though not in that or in such a power, as is sufficient (absolutely against all attempts whatsoever), to bring the soul to glory. Of these we read in several places; namely, that they have tasted of the powers of the world to come; but not so as to bring them safe to glory. Yet thus far they go.

(1.) They attain light or illumination, to see much of their state by nature with. Hebrews 6:4.

- (2.) This light standeth not in bare speculation, but lets fall upon the conscience, convincing arguments to the bowing and humbling of the spirit. 1 Kings 21:27, 28, 29.
- (3.) They submit to these convictions, and reform; and may for a time not only come out from them that live in error, but escape the pollutions of the world, by the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 2:18, 19, 20; Galatians 3:4; 4:20.
- (4.) yea, so powerful will this dispensation be, that it will prevail with them, to do and suffer many things for the vindication of the truth of that gospel which they profess. For
 - (1.) The word will be sweet unto them.
 - (2.) Christ, the gift of God, will be relished by them.
 - (3.) The powers of the world to come will be in them.
 - (4.) Some workings of the Holy Ghost will be in them. Hebrews 6:4, 5. 5. And joy, which is as oil to the wheels, will be with their souls. Luke 8:13.

Thus, I say, it is with some professors, who yet cannot be said to depart from iniquity, that is, for all ado, because the things that now are upon them, abide with them but awhile. “For awhile, they believe: they rejoice in the light for a season.” Luke 8:13; John 5:35; 2 Peter 2:21. So they clean escape from them, who live in error for a little, or awhile; and after that, return to their old course, and are again entangled with their iniquities and overcome. This is called, “A turning with the dog to his own vomit again, and with the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.” And some of these are set forth by this and such like sayings:

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest, and finding none. Then he saith I will return into my house, from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself 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.” Matthew 12:43-45.

Now the causes of this declension, returning, or falling away again unto iniquity, are many.

First. One is that this work, this work of power that they have been made partakers of, has not been thorough enough upon all the powers of their souls. Their understandings, their judgments and consciences have been dealt with, but the power of God has not been upon their wills and minds, and affections rightly to subdue them to the grace of the gospel. Psalm 110:3. Indeed there seems to be a subjection of the will, and an overruling of the mind, and affections also, else they could not for a time lay aside their iniquity, come off from the pollutions of the world, and for a season rejoice in the word and be pleased with the light thereof. But we may consider, that this may be, not that a sound work of God hath passed upon these powers of the soul, but that rather this was by reason of those reflex acts, that the understanding now enlightened, the judgment now informed, and the conscience now convinced, laid upon these other powers of the soul. And I the rather think it so, because willingness, mindfulness of, and affection for this gospel, lasted no longer than the light shined in their understandings, or than the things were relished by their judgment and conscience. So that when the light of their candle went out, and when the taste of this sugar-plumb was out of their mouth, their wills and affections, not being possessed with the fear of God, they returned again to their course, and went away as before with iniquity.

Nor do I, by any thing here discoursed, lay blame or fault at the door of God. For,

1. He is a free agent to do what he pleaseth, and may if he please refuse to give any thing; or if he gives something, why may he not give what he pleases also? He may give special grace to one, and that which is not so to another: he may open Balaam's eyes, and open Lydia's heart; he may give some but a taste, and cause some to eat abundantly. Numbers 24:3; Acts 16:14; Hebrews vi; Cant. 5:1. He may suffer some to fall away, and keep others by his power, through faith unto salvation.

2. Besides, God's withdrawing those common workings, if they were withdrawn without a cause given, (which yet I question), yet why may they not be withdrawn without from these, as well as from his own peculiar ones? He knows but little, that doth not know that God oftentimes

hides his face from his own, and also withdraws from them the light and great influences of the Holy Ghost: and turns them over at least in their own apprehensions to the ungodly, and to fallen angels, for their chastisement, or trial, or instruction, etc.

3. And why may not God, since these rebels had such working with them, as that their minds, by their understandings, — their will and affections, by their judgment and consciences, — were somewhat taken and allured, cause a withdrawing of these for trial, and to see if they would cry after him to return.

But we will let these things pass, and call you again to remembrance of what is in hand. We are now showing that there be them that name the name of Christ, “that yet depart not from iniquity,” and in showing the cause of their not so doing, one was that the gospel came to them in word only; and the other was that though it came to others in power, yet not in full power, or in that power, that effectually keepeth some to salvation. Upon this second reason I now am, and am showing how it comes to pass that they that are under the power of the things that we have afore discoursed, should notwithstanding that, return to their vomit again. One cause of this declension, or going back to iniquity, I have just now touched upon, and we have some more behind.

Secondly. Therefore, such persons upon the withdrawing of those influences that at present are mighty upon them, do forthwith forget, both what they had, and what work it made upon them. Straightway they forget what manner of men they were. It is said of Israel, “they sang his praises, but they soon forgot his word.” So these forget.

- 1.** They forget what light and what conviction they had.
- 2.** They forget what sorrow for sin they had.
- 3.** They forget what tastes of Christ and his word they had.
- 4.** They forget what joy and comfort they had.
- 5.** They forget how fair for heaven they were.
- 6.** And they forget how cleansed once they were.

“They have forgotten that they were purged from their old sins.”
2 Peter 1:9.

Now forgetfulness makes things that are past as nothings; and if so, then it can lay no obligations upon the mind, to engage it to the delight of them, and to the enjoying of them, no not in the thoughts of them, as if they were remembered by us. Forgetfulness is a very dangerous thing; it makes preaching vain, profession vain, faith vain, and all to no purpose. 1 Corinthians 15:1, 2. Such profession is but a dream, and the professors but as dreamers; all vanishes in the morning. This made Paul so to caution the Corinthians, that they forgot not the preaching; and the author of the Hebrews, so earnestly call them, in their backsliding, back to the remembrance of former days, and to the recollecting of what it was that then had made them so willingly endure their great fight of affliction. Hebrews 10:32, 33.

Forgetfulness, I say, makes things nothings; it makes us as if things had never been; and so takes away from the soul, one great means of stay, support, and encouragement. When holy David was dejected, the remembrance of the hill Hermon was his stay; when he was to go out against Goliath, the remembrance of the lion and the bear was his support; so we those that have had the power of the things of God upon them, can think of this; when they are withdrawn, it will, even the thinking of it, will have some kind of operation upon the soul. And therefore you shall find, that the recovering of a backslider, usually begins at the remembrance of former things.

“Remember therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works.” Revelation 2:5.

It is marvellous to see how some men are captivated with this forgetfulness. Those that sometimes have prayed, cried, groaned, and sighed for eternal life: those that sometimes thought no pains too much, no way too far, no hazards too great to run, for eternal life; those who sometimes were captivated with the word, and with the comforts and joy thereof, and that, had it been possible, could have pulled out their eyes, and have given them to a gospel minister, so dear and sweet were the good tidings which they brought to such. Galatians 4:14, 15. I say, it is marvellous to see how such men are captivated with the forgetfulness of

this. They are as if they never had been those men; they are as if they had never had such things; or, as if they had never thought about them. Yea, they are strange, and carry it strangely to all those that still are under the power of that word, and of that mighty hand, by which sometimes themselves were guided.

Should one say to some, ‘Art not thou the man that I once saw crying under a sermon, that I once heard cry out, What must I do to be saved? and, that some time ago, I heard speak well of the holy word of God?’ how, askew, will they look upon one! Or if they will acknowledge that such things were with them once, they do it more like images and rejected ghosts, than men. They look as if they were blasted, withered, cast out and dried to powder, and now fit for nothing, but to be cast into the fire, and burned. John 15. The godliness from which they are departed has left no trace, and the iniquity unto which again they have joined themselves, has so altered, so metamorphosed and changed their heart, and mind, and ways. This therefore is the second thing which shows, why some that have been under something of the power of things, are again with iniquity, entangled and overcome.

Thirdly. Another thing that frights these enlightened ones, that they continue not to depart from iniquity, is the persecution that always attends the word. For persecution always attends the word; that of the tongue, or that of the sword. Now these men that were once enlightened, though they cannot remember what they were themselves, yet Satan helps them think that their neighbors remember what they were; and having now lost the savor, the sense of what they once had, and sinned away that Spirit that brought it to them, they grow weak; yea, are above all men the most unable to stand up, to abide the shock and trial, that for their profession is coming upon them. Wherefore, by and by they are offended; that is, with their own profession; and call themselves an hundred fools, for being so heedless, so witless, and unwary, as to mind God’s holy things in such a time and day. Matthew 4:16, 17; Luke 8:13. Then they bethink with themselves, how to make an honorable retreat, which they suppose they usually do, by finding fault, first with their own unadvisedness, and of the over-persuasiveness of others; they also now begin to say, Farewell to conscience, yea, to God and heaven and all; and join in confederacy with the world again. Thus are they “in fear, where no

fear is;” and “the sound of a shaken leaf doth chase them.” And there are four things are the cause of this.

First, That, notwithstanding the former power that attended the word to their hearts, their hearts did still abide so hard as a rock; there was no true and sound breaking, nor softening in that: wherefore there the word wanted “depth of earth,” as our Lord is pleased to call it; and anon when the sun was up, that which remained was presently scorched, and so withered away.

Secondly, Notwithstanding what they had sometimes enjoyed, yet the grace of the fear of God was wanting in them; (Ecclesiastes 7:16-18); so wanting, that what should hinder but that they should return, to go as they came, and leave Christ, the gospel, and the people of God to shift as well as they can for themselves.

Thirdly, All that they enjoyed did not estrange their heart from their lusts, though, when they were in the power of holy things, they were deader to them than formerly; I say than formerly. Psalm 78:30, 36, 37. And it is even with such, as with them, who are for a time taken off from what yet they love, by some new employ in which they are engaged. Saul went out to look for David to kill him, but when he came at Naioth, in Ramah, the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied. 1 Samuel 19:18, 24. But this lasted but for a while. Saul soon returned again to his old envy against the holy man.

Fourthly, It comes upon them even of judgment and wrath; for since they so soon give way to sin, and forget, God suffereth them to fall into the fear of men, and to force their hearts to comply with bad things, even as Judas and Demas did; till they are swallowed up of that gulf, into which the ungodly descend. “As for such as turn aside unto their own crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.” Psalm cxxv. 5.

When once God is angry with a people, he can deal with them; he can give them up to those lusts in judgment, that they will not be separated from by mercy. Yea, he can make a way for his anger to overtake them that have made a way, by the deceits of their hearts, to go a whoring from under him.

And these are the causes why those that were once enlightened, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, return with the god to his own vomit again; and so, though they have named or do name the name of Christ, yet they depart not from iniquity.

Thirdly. A third reason, why they that name the name of Christ do not depart from iniquity, may be, because grace is weak, and corruption strong. I speak now of them that are truly gracious: for as those that never had nothing but notion, did never at all depart from iniquity; and as those that never had saving grace, though common workings were with them, do but a little depart from iniquity; so those that yet have the grace of God in them in truth, do not, as they should, depart from iniquity. Wherefore the exhortation is as much to them, as it is to any body else; and let them that name the name of Christ, with gracious lips, depart from iniquity. For though there is a great difference betwixt these, and the two sorts that I mentioned before, these having the true principles of holiness in them, but the other nothing thereof; yet they, even they, also have need of this exhortation: for they do not, as they should, depart from iniquity. Their graces, as I said, are weak, and that is the reason thereof.

That these do not depart from iniquity as they should, is clear,

- 1.** Because their highest acts of holiness, are tainted therewith, and made imperfect thereby. Isaiah 64:6; Psalm 143:2; Hebrews 13:15; Matthew 6:12. This is manifest, because they still are afraid to show themselves before God in their own works, and because they betake them for acceptation with God, to the priestly office of Christ, and pray by him, “forgive us our trespasses.”
- 2.** This is clear also, because we are, while in this world, no where by the word, said to have attained to the mark and point of absolute perfection; but are bid to grow, to follow on, to press forward, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. 2 Peter 3:18; Hebrews 6:12; Philippians 3:12-14; 2 Corinthians 7:1. Yea, the best of us all, even the apostles and prophets, have not only made it manifest by their imperfections, that as yet they have not departed from iniquity as they should; but they have confessed, and denied not, that they were yet in the pursuit of righteousness, and had not already attained.

3. This is clear also, because the righteousness, by the which the best of saints are justified in the sight of God, is a righteousness of another, not their own; the righteousness of another man; for there is not any upon earth that doeth good and sins not. And what need we pray, “forgive us our trespasses,” approach God in the perfections of another, and be bid to perfect holiness, if we had already attained, or were already perfect, or were so departed from iniquity as we should?

4. Alas, the complaints of God concerning this matter, do sufficiently testify the truth of what I say. When God came to his people in Egypt, and bid them forsake the idols of Egypt, they did not. But “they rebelled against me,” says he, and would not hearken unto me; they did not, every man, cast away the abominations of his eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt.” Well, he saved them out of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness, and said to them there, Obey my laws, and my commandments; “but the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness, they walked not in my statutes, they despised my judgments. Well, then, he had them from the wilderness to Canaan, and then said to them, Keep my laws. Ezekiel 20. But when he had brought them into the land, then they also polluted themselves, and sinned against him as before.

Again, such was their proneness to evil that, when God brought them out of captivity, both they and every thing that they did, was unclean. Haggai 2:14.

To be short, what says Paul in the seventh to the Romans? What says James in the third chapter of his epistle? chap. 3:2. And what says John in his first epistle, and first chapter? 1 John 1:9. Do they not all confess, though themselves were Apostles, and so for grace and gifts beyond any that breathe in this world, that sin and iniquity was yet with them: and so consequently, that there was not as yet that departing by them therefrom, as there should.

And the reason, as I have said, is, because grace is weak, weak in the best and strongest of the saints of God. Hence the greatest saints use to complain, when much assaulted with corruptions, or attended with very hard service for God, of their weakness and insufficiency as to a completeness of doing the will of God.

Moses, when God did but bid him nourish and succor Israel in the wilderness, and carry them in his bosom, as the nursing-father beareth the sucking child, was stricken with such fear of miscarrying, through the weakness of his graces and the power of his corruptions, that he cried to God, saying,

“I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, and let me not see my wretchedness.” Numbers 11:11-15.

Job, when he was, for a proof of his integrity, to be exercised a while with some of the judgments of God, cries out, in a sense of his weakness to bear them, and to go through as he should, “Is my strength the strength of stones, or is my flesh brass?” And again,

“Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me? Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? And wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?” Job 6:12; 7:12; 13:24, 25.

So Daniel, when he was but to stand and talk with the angel, how weak did he find himself! “There remained,” saith he, “no strength in me; and, O my Lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my Lord, talk with this my Lord? For as for me, straightway there remaineth no strength in me, neither is breath left in me.” Daniel 10. Some may say, but this is natural weakness. But I ask, how come nature to be so weak, but through sin? the remains whereof abiding still upon the best of saints, make them, notwithstanding their graces, unable to do any thing as they should.

Paul, a man of men, who had so much grace, revelation of grace and communion with Christ, that sometimes he knew not whether he was in or out of the body, yet you find him making bitter complaint of the weakness of his grace, and of the power of his corruptions. “I am carnal, (saith he), and what I hate, that do I. How to perform that which is good I find not; when I would do good, evil is present with me. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members. O wretched man that I am,” etc. What complaints, what confessions, what bewailings of

weakness are here? And what need was there of any of this, if Paul could, as he would, have departed from iniquity?

I have instanced in these four men, because as to failings and miscarriages they are as free (by what the holy record saith) as any four of whose lives you shall read in all the Bible; but you see they were too weak to do, and depart from iniquity as they would.

Grace may be said to be weak, either when a lower or less degree thereof, is compared with a higher and greater degree of the same; or it may be said to be weak when, in what degree of it you will, it shall be engaged by, or engage itself against sin, etc.

1. There are degrees of grace in the world; some have less, and some bigger measures thereof; and according to the measure of grace received, so is a Christian capable of action. He that has little, acts but weakly; he that has much, acts more strongly; and he of the saints that has most, acteth best of all: but yet none of these three can act so as they should and would, and, consequently, do not so depart from iniquity as is their duty. Witness those four that I mentioned but now, for they are among the first rate of saints, yet you see what they did, and hear what they said.

2. Sin is a mighty enemy; it is also installed in our flesh, and has moreover that in it which suiteth with whatever is sensual in us. The flesh relisheth it well, though the spirit of the Christian is against it.

Sin is an active beast, and will not admit that the soul should attempt to put forth itself in any good thing, without opposition and contradiction. "When I should do good, evil is present with me."

Sin is of a polluting and defiling nature, and what grace soever it toucheth it staineth, and in staining makes it weaker, than were it not so defiled it would be. Besides, not a grace, nor an act of grace in the soul, can escape untouched. Unbelief stands ready to annoy Faith in the grace, as well as in the act of faith. Hardness of heart will not let Love so affectionately, and sympathisingly act as it should. Sense and Reason being polluted, will not let Hope be so steadfastly fixed upon unseen things as it should. pride will not let us be so humble as we ought, nor Self so self-denying. Passion often interrupts our patience, and angry motions our meekness. By these and more that might be named it appears, that sin is in us, opposeth our

graces, and hindereth them from acting as they should; and because this sin has part of ourself in its possession, therefore, though our more noble part be utterly against it, yet we depart not from it as we should.

God chargeth Moses with rash and unadvised words, and so he doth Job also. Numbers 20:12; Psalm 106:32; Job 38:2; 42:6. Daniel did wear unwillingly the name of an idol God, and Paul freely confesseth himself infirm. Daniel 4:8; Romans 7:24.

Nor may what hath now been said be applied only to those that are weak in faith, and so in every other grace; for the strongest grace, when acted as well as we can, cannot cause that we depart from iniquity as we should.

- 1.** Because the strongest grace cannot act without opposition from the world, or from Satan.
- 2.** Because we that are the actors are lame, infirm, and made weak by sin that dwells in us.
- 3.** Because grace and a state of grace is not that wherein the perfections designed for us doth lie, for that is in another world. For

- (1.) This is a place to act faith in.
- (2.) This is a place to labor and travail in.
- (3.) This is a place to fight and wrestle in.
- (4.) This is a place to be tried in. And therefore this is no place of perfection, and consequently no place, where God's people can depart from iniquity as they should.

Now there is a twofold way of departing from iniquity.

- (1.) One is when the mind is set against it, and withdrawn from the love and liking of it.
- (2.) The other is when the practice of it is shunned by the whole man.

The first of these ways, the saints (though they truly do depart from iniquity), yet depart not from it as they should. For,

- 1.** Their understanding sees not the utmost baseness that is in it.
- 2.** Their judgment is not informed about the vileness of it to perfection.

3. The conscience has not yet been convinced of all the evil that is in it.
Then,

- (1.) How should the soul abhor it as it should?
- (2.) How should the desires depart from it with that fervency as they should?
- (3.) And the will and affections so turn away from it as they should?

Secondly, As to the shunning of the acts of sin, there we also come wonderfully short.

We shun not the sins of others as we should. This is made to appear,

- 1.** For we shun not the company of base men as we should.
- 2.** Nor shun or refuse to imitate them in their evil, as we should. How easily are good men persuaded to comply with bad men's ways! Yea, Jehosaphat himself said to Ahab that base one; "Behold, I am as thou art, my people as they people, my horses as thy horses." 1 Kings 22:4. Joseph could learn in Pharaoh's court, to swear by Pharaoh's life. Genesis 42:15, 16. Peter also, when dissembling was in fashion among the people, could learn to dissemble likewise. Galatians 2:11-14.

Again, We shun not our own sins, or the sins of our own company as we should.

Christians learn to be proud one of another, to be covetous one of another, to be treacherous and false one of another, to be cowardly in God's matters one of another, to be remiss and negligent in Christian duties one of another.

Besides, If I should go about to show here, how Christians will hide iniquity, as David, (2 Samuel 12:12), how they will excuse it, as did Aaron, (Exodus 32:22-24), how they will plead for it, as did the men of the city of Joash for Baal, (Judges 6:29-31), and the like, I might soon make it abundantly appear, that Christians do not depart from iniquity as they should. And therefore the exhortation stands good, and of use to the best of saints on earth, "that they, and every of them, should depart from iniquity." Yea, the observation also that they do not do it as they should,

doth still stand good against us. “For in many things we all offend?” James 3:2.

Wherefore, as it is true in those that have nothing but notion, and as it is true in those that are wrought upon but not effectually, so it is true, upon those that are truly gracious. Observation proves it, fears of damnation prove it, the outcry of the world proves it, and the confession of the best men proves it.

CHAPTER 4.

REASONS WHY ALL CHRISTIAN PROFESSORS SHOULD BE HOLY.

I come now to another observation with which I present you, and that is this, namely, “that EVERY ONE THAT IN A WAY OF PROFESSION AND RELIGION NAMES THE NAME OF CHRIST, SHOULD DEPART FROM INIQUITY.” I say, that every one that in a way of profession and religion, nameth the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity. This truth needs more practice than proof. For I think there are none that have either Scripture or reason by them, but will freely consent to this.

Nor is there any thing ambiguous in the observation that we need now to stand upon the explaining of. For,

What iniquity is, who knows not?

That is cleaves to the beset, who knows not?

That it is disgraceful to profession, who knows not? And, therefore, that it ought to be departed from, who knows not?

But because the motives in particular may not be so much considered as they ought, and because it is Satan’s design to tempt us to be unholy, and to keep iniquity and the professing man together; therefore I will in this place spend some arguments upon you that profess, and in a way of profession do name the name of Christ, that you depart from iniquity; both in the inward thought, and in the outward practice of it. And those arguments shall be of four sorts, some respecting Christ, some his Father, some ourselves, and some the world.

I. ARGUMENTS THAT RESPECT CHRIST.

First, The Christ, whom you profess, whose name you name, and whose disciples you pretend to be, is holy. Hebrews 7:26. “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” This is natural to our discourse: for if Christ be holy, and if we

profess him, and in professing him, declare that we are his disciples, we ought therefore to depart from iniquity, that we may show the truth of our profession to the world.

Secondly, They that thus name the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity, because this Christ, whose name we name, is loving. Those that have a loving master, a master that is continually extending his love unto his servants, should be forward in doing his will, that thereby they may show their sense, and acception of the love of their master. Why this is his will, “that we depart from iniquity,” that we throw sin away; that we fly “every appearance of evil.” 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

Thirdly, They that thus name the name of Christ should depart from iniquity, because of the honor and reputation of the Lord. It is a disparagement to Christ, that any of his servants, and that any that name his name, should yet abide by, and continue with iniquity.

“A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a Father, where is mine honor? and if I be a Master, where is my fear? said the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name; and ye say, wherein have we despised thy name?”
Malachi 1:6.

Fourthly, They that name the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity, because of his name, that his name may not be evil spoken of by men. For our holiness puts a lustre and a beauty upon the name of Christ, and our not departing from iniquity draws a cloud upon it. Wherefore we ought to depart from iniquity, that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified, and not reproached through us.

Fifthly, They that name the name of Christ should depart from iniquity, because of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which they profess, may not be evil spoken of by our neighbors. The gospel is called holy, therefore let them be holy that profess it. 2 Peter 2:21. The which they can by no means be, if they depart not from iniquity. Men cannot serve the designs of the gospel, and their own worldly and fleshly designs. But they that profess the name of Christ, should be tender of his gospel, that they keep that in good esteem

and reputation in the world. The which they can by no means do, unless they depart from iniquity.

Sixthly, They that name the name of Christ should depart from iniquity, because the very profession of that name is holy. The profession, is an holy profession. “Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord:” the vessels, that is, the profession, for by that, is as it were, carried about the name, and gospel of Jesus Christ. We must therefore lay aside all iniquity, and superfluity of naughtiness, and do as persons professing godliness, as professing a profession, of which Christ is the priest, the High-priest. 1 Timothy 2:10; Hebrews 3:1. It is a reproach to any man to be but a bungler at his profession, to be but a sloven in his profession. And it is the honor of a man to be excellent in the managing of his profession. Christians should be excellent in the management of their profession, and should make that which is good in itself, good to the church and to the world, by a sweet and cleanly managing of it.

Seventhly, They that profess the name of Christ, or that name it religiously, should to their utmost depart from iniquity, because of the Church of Christ which is holy. He that religiously professeth the name of Christ, has put himself into the Church of Christ, though not into a particular one, yet into the universal one. Now, that is holy. “What agreement then hath the temple of God with idols?” aye, or any pillar, or post, or pin, or member of that temple. 2 Corinthians 6:16. One black sheep is quickly espied among five hundred white ones, and one mangle one will soon infect many. One also among the saints, that is not clean, is a blemish to the rest, and, as Solomon says, “one sinner destroyeth much good.” Ecclesiastes 9:18.

Eighthly, They that profess the name of Christ, or that name that name religiously, should depart from iniquity, because of the ordinances of Christ, for they are holy. Men of old before they went in to meddle with holy things, were to wash their hands and their feet in a vessel prepared for that purpose. Exodus 30:17-21. Now since they that name that name religiously do also meddle with Christ’s appointments, they must also wash and be clean. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, if you mean to meddle with Christ in his appointments; wash, lest God cut you off for you not departing from iniquity.

Ninthly, They that name the name of Christ religiously, should depart from iniquity, because of Christ's observers. There are many that keep their eye upon Christ, and that watch for an opportunity to speak against him, even through the sides of those that profess him.

“Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel: and for a sign that shall be spoken against.” Luke 2:34.

Some take occasion to speak against him because of the meanness of his person; here some again speak against him, because of the plainness of his doctrine; also some speak against him, because of the meanness of his followers; and some speak against him, because of the evil deeds of some that profess him. But if he that gives just occasion of offense to the least of saints had better be drowned in the sea with a mill-stone about his neck: what think you, shall his judgment be, who, through his mingling his profession of Christ's name with a wicked life, shall tempt or provoke men to speak against Christ?

II. I COME NOW TO THOSE ARGUMENTS THAT RESPECT GOD THE FATHER.

First, Then, they that profess the name of Christ should depart from iniquity because of God the Father; because God the Father has made Christ to be to us what he is; to wit, the Apostle and High-priest of our profession. “He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father, which hath sent him.” 1 Corinthians 1:30; John 5:23; 15:8. Nor can the Father be honored by us, but by our departing from iniquity. All our talk and profession of Christ, adds no glory to his Father, who has made him our King, and Priest, and Prophet, if it be not joined to a holy conversation. Wherefore, if you profess the name of Christ, and would hold the word in hand, that you have believed in him, depart from iniquity, for the Father's sake that hath sent him.

Secondly, As it is the Father which hath made Christ to us what he is; so it is the Father who hath called us to partake of Christ and all his benefits. Wherefore we must depart from iniquity, that profess the name of Christ, that we may glorify him for his call. 1 Corinthians 1:9; Hebrews 3:14. He has called us “into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ;” that is, to partake of all that good that is in him as Mediator, and to be done by him

for those that trust in him. Nor had we ever come out of a cursed and condemned condition to Christ, for life and blessedness, but by the call of the Father; “for it is not of works, but of him that calleth.” Romans 9:10, 11. Now since he has called us to this privilege, (even us whom he has called), and left others in their sins to perish by his judgments, it is meet, we should depart from iniquity. Especially since the call by which he called us, is heavenly, and holy, and because he has not only called us to glory, but to virtue. Hebrews 3:1; 2 Peter 1:2, 3.

Thirdly, We that religiously name the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity, because God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded us so to do.

“Wherefore girt up the loins of your minds, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance; but as he that has called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation: because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.”
1 Peter 1:13-16.

Fourthly, They that religiously name the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity, that they may answer the end for which they are called to profess his name: The Father has therefore called them to profess his name, that they might be “trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.” Dost thou then profess the name of Christ? Bring forth those fruits that become that holy profession, that you may be called trees of righteousness, and that God may be glorified for, and by your professed subjection to the gospel of his Son. Isaiah 61:3.

Fifthly, They that name (as afore) the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, should depart from iniquity, that they may show to the world the nature and power of those graces, which God the Father has bestowed upon them that do religiously name the name of Christ. And the rather, because, he that religiously nameth that name, declareth even by his so naming him, that he has received grace of the Father, to enable him so to do. Now he cannot declare this by deeds, unless he depart from iniquity: and his declaring it by words alone signifies little to God or man. Titus 1:16.

Sixthly, We therefore that religiously name the name of Christ should also depart from iniquity, because the Spirit of the Father will else be grieved. Ephesians 4:30. The countenancing of iniquity, the not departing therefrom, will grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by which you are sealed to the day of redemption: and that is a sin of a higher nature than men commonly are aware of. He that grieveth the Spirit of God shall smart for it here, or in hell, or both. And that Spirit that sometimes did illuminate, teach and instruct them, can keep silence, can cause darkness, can withdraw itself, and suffer the soul to sin more and more; and his last is the very judgment of judgments. He that grieves the Spirit, quenches it, and he that quenches it, vexes it; and he that vexes it, sets it against himself, and tempts it to hasten destruction upon himself. 1 Thessalonians 5:19. Wherefore take heed, professors, I say take heed, you that religiously name the name of Christ, that you meddle not with iniquity, that you, tempt not the Spirit of the Lord to do such things against you whose beginnings are dreadful, and whose end is working of judgments is unsearchable. Isaiah 63:10; Acts 5:9. A man knows not whither he is going, nor where he shall stop, that is but entering into temptation; nor whether he shall ever turn back, or go out at the gap that is right before him. He that has begun to grieve the Holy Ghost, may be suffered to go on until he has sinned that sin which is called the sin against the Holy Ghost. And if God shall once give thee up to that, then thou art in an iron cage, out of which there is neither deliverance nor redemption. Let every one, therefore, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity, upon this second consideration.

III. IN THE NEXT PLACE, I COME NOW TO THOSE ARGUMENTS THAT DO RESPECT THYSELF.

First, Those that religiously name the name of Christ should, must depart from iniquity, because else our profession of him is but a lie.

“If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie.” 1 John 1:6.

And “walk in darkness;” that is, walk in iniquity, and depart not from a life that is according to the course of this world. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in

him.” chap. 2:4. The truth that he professes to know, and that he saith he hath experience of, is not in him. Every man that nameth the name of Christ, is not therefore a man of God, nor is the word in every man’s mouth, truth; though he makes profession of that worthy name. 1 Kings 17:24. It is then truth in him, when his mouth and his life shall agree. Revelation 2:2, 9; 3:9. Men may say they are apostles, and be liars: they may say, they are Jews, that is Christians, and lie, and be liars, and lie in so saying. Now this is the highest kind of lying, and certainly must therefore work the saddest sort of effects. Thus man’s best things are lies. His very saying, ‘I know him,’ ‘I have fellowship with,’ ‘I am a Jew,’ ‘a Christian,’ is a lie. His life giveth his mouth the lie: and all knowing men are sure he lies. 1. He lies unto God: he speaks lies in the presence, and to the very face of God. Now this is a daring thing: “I know their lies,” saith he: and shall he not recompence for this? See Acts 5:4; Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15; and take heed. I speak to you that religiously, name the name of Christ, and yet do not depart from iniquity.

2. He lies unto men; every knowing man; every man that is able to judge of the tree by the fruit, knows that that man is a liar, and that his whole profession as to himself is a lie, if he doth not depart from iniquity. Thus Paul called the “slow bellies,” the unsound professors among the Cretians, liars. They were so in his eyes, for that their profession of the name of Christ was not seconded with such a life as became a people professing godliness. Titus 1:12-16. They did not depart from iniquity. — But again,

3. Such a man is a liar to his own soul. Whatever such an one promiseth to himself, his soul will find it a lie. There be many in the world that profess the name of Christ, and consequently promise their soul the enjoyment of that good, that indeed is wrapt up in him, but they will certainly be mistaken hereabout, and with the greatest terror, will find it so, when they shall hear that direful sentence, “Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” Luke 13:27. Christ is resolved that the loose-lived professor “shall not stand in the judgment, nor any such sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” They have lied to God, to men, and to themselves; but Jesus then will not lie unto them: he will plainly tell them that he hath not known them, and that they shall not abide in his presence. But,

Secondly, Those that religiously name the name of Christ should depart from iniquity, else, as they are liars in their profession, so they are self-deceivers. I told you but now such lie to themselves, and so consequently deceive themselves. “But be ye doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving your ownelves.” James 1:22. It is a sad thing for a man, in, and about eternal things, to prove a deceiver of others; but for a man to deceive himself, his ownself, of eternal life, this is saddest of all: yet there is in man a propenseness so to do. Hence the apostle Paul says, “be not deceived,” and “let no man deceive himself.” And says, James 1:26, “If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.” These words (“but deceiveth his own heart”) I have much mused about: for they seem to me to be spoken to show how bold and prodigiously desperate some men are, who yet religiously name the name of Christ: desperate, I say, at self-deceiving. He “deceiveth his own heart”; he otherways persuadeth it, than of its ownself it would go. Ordinarily men are said to be deceived by their hearts; but here’s a man that is sad to deceive his own heart, flattering it off from the scent and dread of those convictions, that by the word sometimes it hath been under; persuading it that there needs no such strictness of life be added to a profession of faith in Christ, as by the gospel is called for: or that, since Christ has died for us, and rose again, and since salvation is alone in him, we need not be so concerned, or be so strict to matter how we live. This man is a self-deceiver: he deceives his own heart.

Self-deceiving, and that about spiritual, and eternal things, especially when men do it willingly, is one of the most unnatural, unreasonable, and unaccountable actions in the world.

- 1.** It is one of the most unnatural actions. For here a man seeks his own ruin, and privily lurks for his own life. Proverbs 1:18. We all cry out against him that murders his children, his wife, or his own body, and condemn him to be one of those that has forgot the rules, and love of nature. But behold, the man under consideration is engaged in such designs as will terminate in his own destruction. He deceiveth his own soul.
- 2.** This is also the most unreasonable act. There can no cause, nor crumb of cause that has the least spark or drachm of reason, or of any thing that

looks like reason, be shown why a man should deceive himself, and bereave his soul of eternal life. Therefore,

3. Such men are usually passed over with astonishment and silence.

“Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this! and be ye horribly afraid, for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” Jeremiah 2:11, 12, 13.

But above all, as to this head, this is the most amazing place, where it is said, that the self-deceiver makes his self-deceiving his sport: “sporting themselves with their own deceivings.” 2 Peter 2:13. These are a people far gone, to be sure, that are arrived to such a height of negligence, carelessness, wantonness, and desperateness of spirit, as to take pleasure in, and make a sport of, that which will assuredly deceive them for ever. But this is the fruit of professing Christ, and not departing from iniquity. The wisdom and judgment of God are such, as to give such over to the sporting of themselves in their own deceivings.

Thirdly, those that religiously name the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity, because of the scandal that will else assuredly come upon religion, and the things of religion through them. Upon this head I may begin to write, with a sigh; for never more of this kind than now. There is no place where the professors of religion are, that is clean, and free from offense and scandal. Iniquity is so entailed to religion, and baseness of life to the naming of the name of Christ, that one may say of the professors of this age, as it was said of them of old,

“All places are full of vomit and filthiness,
so that there is no place clean.” Isaiah 28:8.

Where are they, even amongst those that strive for the rule, that mind it at all, when it pinches upon their lusts, their pride, avarice and wantonness? Are not now a-days, the bulk of professors like those that strain at a gnat and swallow a camel? Yea, do not professors teach the wicked ones to be wicked? Matthew 23:24. Ah! Lord God, this is a lamentation, and will be for a lamentation. Jeremiah 2:33. What a sore disease is now got into the church of God, that the generality of professors should walk with scandal!

No fashion, no vanity, no profuseness, and yet no niggardliness, but is found among professors. They pinch the poor, and nip from them their due, to maintain their own pride and vanity. I shall not need to instance particulars, for from the rich to the poor, from the pastor to the people, from the master to his man, and from the mistress to her maiden, all are guilty of scandal, and of reproaching, by their lives, the name of the Lord. For they profess, and name that worthy name of Christ, but are not as they should be departed from iniquity.

1. Hence the name of God is polluted and reproached, even till God is weary and cries out,

“Pollute ye my name no more with your gifts,
and with your idols.” Ezekiel 20:39.

‘O do not pollute my name,’ says God: ‘rather leave off profession, and go every one to his wickedness!’ Tell the world, if you will not depart from iniquity, that Christ and you are parted, and that you have left him, to be embraced by them to whom iniquity is an abomination. It would far better secure the name of God from scandal and reproach, than for you to name the name of Christ, and yet not to depart from iniquity. Then though you sin as now you do the poor world would not cry out, ‘Ay! this is your religion!’ Then they would not have occasion to vilify religion because of you, since you tell them that Christ and you are parted. But,

2. If you will not leave off to name the name of Christ, nor yet depart from iniquity, you also scandal the sincere professors of religion; and that is a grievous thing. There are a people in the world that have made it their business ever since they knew Christ, to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and that desire to perfect holiness in the fear of God; and you scandalous professors mixing yourselves with them, “make their gold look dim.” You are spots and blemishes to them; you are an evil mixing itself with their good, and a scandal to their holy profession. 2 Peter 2:13. Jude 12. They are you that make the heart of the righteous sad, whom God would not have sad. They are you that offend his little ones. Oh! the mill-stone that God will shortly hang about your necks, when the time is come that you must be drowned in the sea and deluge of God’s wrath!

3. If you will not leave off to name the name of Christ, nor yet depart from iniquity, you continue to extend your scandal also to the word and doctrine of God. They that name the name of Jesus religiously, should so carry it in the world, that they may adorn the doctrine of God their Savior; but thou that professest and yet departest not from iniquity, thou causest the name and doctrine which thou professest to be blasphemed and reproached by the men of this world. And that is a sad thing; a thing that will bring so heavy a load upon thee, when God shall open thine eyes, (and he will open them either here, or in hell-fire), that thou wilt repent it with great bitterness of soul. 1 Timothy 6:1; Titus 2:5, 10. The Lord smite thee to the making of thee sensible to thy shame, and to conversion, if it be his blessed will. Amen. But,

4. If thou wilt not leave off to name the name of Christ, nor yet depart from iniquity, thou wilt bring reproach, scorn and contempt upon thyself. “For sin is a reproach to any people.” Proverbs 14:34.

- (1.) These are they that God will hold in great contempt and scorn. See the first of Isaiah.
- (2.) These are they that his people shall have in great contempt. “Therefore (saith he) have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people, according as you have not kept my ways, but have lifted up the face against my law.” Malachi 2:9; Jeremiah 25:9, 18.
- (3.) Such shall also be contemned, and had in derision of the men of this world. They shall be a hissing, a bye-word, a taunt, and a reproach among all people.

“For him that honoreth me, saith God, I will honor; but he that despiseth me, shall be lightly esteemed.” 1. Samuel 2:30.

I remember that Philpot used to tell the Papists that ‘they danced bare-backed in a net,’ because of the evil of their ways; and the Lord bids professors have a care, “that the shame of their nakedness does not appear,” or lest they walk naked, and their shame be discovered. For those professors that depart not from iniquity, however they think of themselves, their nakedness is seen of others. And if it be a shame to the modest to have their nakedness seen of others, what bold and brazen

brows have they who are not ashamed to show their nakedness, yea, the very shame of it, to all that dwell about them? And yet thus doth every one that religiously names the name of Christ and yet doth not depart from iniquity.

Fourthly, Those that religiously name the name of Christ, and do not depart from iniquity, are the cause of the perishing of many.

“Woe, saith Christ, to the world because of offenses.”
Matthew 18:7.

And again, “Woe to that man by whom the offense cometh.” These are they that cause many to stumble at sin, and fall into hell. Hark, you that are such, what God says to you. “You have caused many to stumble at the law,” and at religion. Malachi 2:8. Men that are for taking occasion, you give it them; men that would enter into the kingdom, you puzzle and confound with your iniquity, while you name the name of Christ, and do not depart therefrom. “One sinner destroyeth much good.” These are the men that encourage the vile to be yet more vile; these be the men that quench weak desires in others; and these be the men that tempt the ignorant to harden themselves against their own salvation. A professor that hath not forsaken his iniquity, is like one that comes out of the pest-house, among the whole, with his plague sores running upon him. This is the man that hath the breath of a dragon; he poisons the air round about him. This it the man that slays his children, his kinsmen, his friend, and himself! What shall I say? A man that nameth the name of Christ and that departeth not from iniquity; to whom may he be compared? The Pharisees; because they professed religion, but walked not answerable thereto. Unto what doth Christ compare them, but to serpents and vipers; what does he call them, but hypocrites, whited-walls, painted sepulchres, fools, and blind; and tells them that they made men more the children of hell than they were before. Matthew 23. Wherefore such a one cannot go out of the world by himself: for as he gave occasion of scandal, when he was in the world, so is he the cause of the damnation of many.

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life.” Proverbs 11:30.

But what is the fruit of the wicked, of the professors that are wicked? why, not to perish alone in their iniquity. Job 22:20. These, as the dragon,

draw many of the stars of heaven, and cast them to the earth with their most stinking tail. Revelation 12:4. They cast many a professor into earthly and carnal delights, with their most filthy conversation.

The Apostle Paul did use to weep, when he spake of these professors; such offense he knew they were and would be in the world. Acts 20:30; Philippians 3:18, 19.

These are the chief of the engines of Satan; with these he worketh wonders. One Balaam, one Jeroboam, one Ahab, O how many fish bring such to Satan's net! These are the tares that he strives to sow among the wheat, for he knows they are mischief to it. "Wherefore let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

Fifthly. Those that religiously name the name of Christ, and do not depart from iniquity; how will they die? And how will they look that Man in the face, unto the profession of whose name, they have entailed an unrighteous conversation? Or do they think that he doth not know what they have done; or that they may take him off with a few cries and wringing of hands, when he is on the throne to do judgment against transgressors? O! it had been better they had not known, had not professed: yea, better they had never been born. For as Christ said of Judas, so may it be said of these; "It had been good for that man, if he had never been born." And as Christ says, "it had been good," so Peter says, "It had been better." Mark 14:22; 2 Peter 2:20, 21. Good they had not been born, and better they had not known and made profession of the name of Christ!

CHAPTER 5.

PARTICULAR INIQUITIES THAT MUST BE GIVEN UP.

But perhaps some may ask me, WHAT INIQUITY THEY MUST DEPART FROM, that religiously name the name of Christ?

I answer, FIRST, in general. Those that religiously profess the name of Christ, must depart from ALL INIQUITY. They should lay aside every weight; they should fly all appearance of evil. Hebrews 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:22. Many there are that are willing to part with some sins, some pleasures, some unjust profits, if they may be saved; but this selling all, parting with all, forsaking all, is a very hard chapter.

And yet the Lord Jesus lays it there; saying so likewise,

“Whosoever he be of you (or any of you that professeth my name) that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

Luke 14:33.

Christ by this text requireth more of them that are his, than to forsake all iniquity: Wherefore to be sure every sin is included. No less than universal obedience, will prove a man sincere. “A divided heart” is a faulty one. Hosea 10:2. He that forsaketh not every sin is “partial in the law,” nor can he have respect to all God’s commandments. There can be no true love to Christ where there are reserves: he that will hide any one sin in his bosom, or that will keep it, as the phrase is, under his tongue, is a secret enemy to Jesus Christ. Job. 20:13; John 14:21-24. He loveth not Christ that keepeth not his sayings. To halt between two is naught; and no man can serve two masters. Christ is a master, and sin is a master; yea and masters are they so opposite, that he that at all shall cleave to the one, shall by the other be counted his enemy. If sin at all be countenanced, Christ counts himself despised. What man would count himself beloved of his wife, that knows she hath a bosom for another?

“Thou shalt not be for another, (saith he); so will I be for thee.”
Hosea 3:3.

Would the king count him a loyal subject who would hide in his house, nourish in his bed, and feed at his table, one that implacably hateth and seeketh to murder his majesty? Why, sin is such an enemy to the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore as kings command that traitors be delivered up to justice, so Christ commands that we depart from iniquity. “Take away all iniquity,” is a good prayer, and to “resist unto blood, striving against sin,” is a good warfare; and he that brings “every thought to the obedience of Christ,” gets a brave victory. Hosea 14:2; Hebrews 12:4; 2 Corinthians 10:5. Grace leaveneth the soul, and so consequently all the parts thereof. Now where the whole is leavened, the taste must needs be the same throughout. Grace leaves no power, faculty, or passion of the soul unsanctified; wherefore there is no corner in a sanctified soul, where sin may hide his head, to find rest and abode without control. Consequently, he that has harbor for this or that sin, and that can find a hiding place, and an abode for it in his heart, is no Christian man. Let them, then, that christianly name the name of Christ, make it manifest that they do not do it feignedly by departing from iniquity. But,

Secondly, And more particularly, they that name the name of Christ, as above, let them depart from their CONSTITUTION-SIN, or if you will, the sin that their temper most inclines them to. Every man is not alike inclined to the same sin, but some to one and some to another. Now let the man that professes the name of Christ religiously, consider with himself, ‘Unto what sin or vanity am I most inclined; is it pride? is it covetousness? is it fleshly lust?’ And let him labor, by all means, to leave off and depart from that. This is that which David called his ‘own iniquity,’ and saith,

“I was also upright before him,
and I kept myself from mine iniquity.” Psalm 18:22.

Rightly are these two put together; for it is not possible that he should be an upright man that indulgeth or countenanceth his constitution-sin; but on the contrary, he that keeps himself from that, will be upright as to all the rest. And the reason is, because if a man has that grace as to trample upon, and mortify his darling, his bosom, his only sin, he will more easily and more heartily abhor and fly the rest.

And indeed, if a man will depart from iniquity, he must depart from his darling sin, first; for as long as that is entertained, the others, at least those that are most suiting with that darling, will always be haunting him. There is a man that has such and such persons haunt his house, and spend his substance, and would be rid of them, but cannot: but now, let him rid himself of that for the sake of which they haunt his house, and then he shall with ease be rid of them. Thus it is with sin. There is a man that is plagued with many sins, perhaps because he embraceth one; well, let him turn that one out of doors, and that is the way to be rid of the rest. Keep thee from thy darling, thy bosom, thy constitution-sin.

Motives to prevail with thee to fall in with this exhortation, are several.

1. There can no great change appear in thee, make what profession of Christ thou wilt, unless thou cast away thy bosom sin. A man's constitution-sin is, as I may call it, his visible sin; it is that by which his neighbors know him and describe him; whether it be pride, covetousness, lightness or the lie. Now if these abide with thee, though thou shouldest be much reformed in thy notions, and in other parts of thy life; yet say thy neighbors, 'he is the same man still; his faith has not saved him from his darling; he was proud afore, and is proud still; was covetous afore, and is covetous still; was light and wanton afore, and is so still. He is the same man, though he has got a new mouth.' But now, if thy constitution-sin be parted with, if thy darling be cast away, thy conversion is apparent, it is seen of all: for the casting away of that is death to the rest, and ordinarily makes a change throughout.

2. So long as thy constitution-sin remains, as winked at by thee, so long thou art a hypocrite before God, let thy profession be what it will; also when conscience shall awake and be commanded to speak to thee plainly, what thou art, it will tell thee so, to thy no little vexation and perplexity.

3. Besides, do what thou canst, so long as thou remainest thus thou wilt be of a scandalous life. No honor is brought to religion by such.

Again, As they that name the name of Christ should depart from their constitution-sin, so they should depart from the sins of other men's tempers also. Much harm among professors is done by each other's sins. There is a man that has clean escaped from those who live in error, has

shaken off the carnal world and the men thereof, and is come among professors; but, behold, there also he meeteth with wicked men, with men that have not departed from iniquity, and there he is entangled. This is a sad thing, and yet so it is. I doubt there are some in the world, I mean professors, that will curse the day that ever they were acquainted with some professors. There are professors that are defilers, professors that are wicked men, professors of whom a wicked man may learn to sin. Jeremiah 5:26; 2:33. Take heed of these, lest having fled from thine own sins, thou shouldst be taken with the sins of others. “Be not partakers of other men’s sins,” is the counsel and caution that Paul giveth Timothy, if he would keep himself pure. 1 Timothy 5:22.

1. Dost thou profess the name of Christ, and dost thou pretend to be a man departing from iniquity? Then take heed thou dost not deceive thyself, by changing one bad way of sinning, for another bad way of sinning. This was a trick that Israel played of old; for when God’s prophets followed them hard with demands of repentance and reformation, then they would “gad about to change their ways,” (Jeremiah 2:36); but behold, they would not change a bad way for a good, but one bad way for another, hopping as the squirrel from bough to bough, but not willing to forsake the tree. Hence they were said to return, but not to the Most High. Take heed, I say, of this. Many leave off to be drunkards, and fall in with covetousness. Many fall off from covetousness to pride and lasciviousness. Take heed of this. Hosea 7:16. This is a grand deceit, and a common one too, a deceit of a long standing, and almost a disease epidemical among professors.

Many times men change their darling sins, as some change their wives and servants; that which would serve for such an one this year may not serve to be so for the year ensuing. Hypocrisy would do awhile ago, but now debauchery. Profaneness would do when profaneness was in fashion, but now a deceitful profession. Take heed, professor, that thou dost not throw away thine old darling sin for a new one. Men’s tempers alter. Youth is for pride and wantonness; middle age for cunning and craft; old age for the world and covetousness. Take heed, therefore, of deceit in this thing.

2. Dost thou profess the name of Christ, and dost thou pretend to be a man departing from iniquity? take heed lest thy departing from iniquity

should be but for a time. Some do depart from iniquity, as persons in wrangling fits depart from one another; that is, for a time; but when the quarrel again. O! Satan is the intercessor between the soul and sin! and though the breach between these two may seem to be irreconcilable; yea, though the soul has sworn it will never give countenance to so vile a thing as sin is, more; yet he can tell how to make up this difference, and to fetch them back to their vomit again, who, one would have thought, had quite escaped their sins, and been gone. 2 Peter 2:18-22. Take heed, therefore, O professor! For there is danger of this, and the height of danger lies in it; and I think that Satan, to do this thing, makes use of those sins again, to begin this rejoinder, which he findeth most suitable to the temper and constitution of the sinner. These are, as I may call them, **THE MASTER SINS**; they suit, they jump with the temper of the soul. These, as the little end of the wedge, enter with ease, and so make way for those that come after, with which Satan knows he can rend the soul in pieces. Wherefore,

3. To help this, take heed of parleying with thy sins again, when once thou hast departed from them. Sin has a smooth tongue; if thou hearken to its enchanting language, ten thousand to one but thou art entangled. See the saying of the wise man,

“With much fair speech she caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips, she forced him. He goeth after her straightway, as the ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.” Proverbs 7:21, 22.

He heard her charm, and by hearing, is noosed, and led away to her house, which is the way to hell, “going down to the chambers of death.” Take heed therefore of listening to the charms, wherewith sin enchanteth the soul. In this, be like the deaf adder; stop thine ear, plug it up to sin, and let it only be open to hear the words of God.

Thirdly. Let them that name the name of Christ, depart from **THE INIQUITY OF THE TIMES**. There are sins that may be called the iniquity of the day. It was thus in Noah’s day; it was thus in Lot’s day; and it was thus in Christ’s day; I mean in the days of his flesh: and it is a famous thing for professors to keep themselves from the iniquities of the times. Here lay Noah’s excellency; here lay Lot’s excellency; and here will lay thy excellency, if thou keep thyself from the iniquity of this day. Keep, or

“save yourselves from this untoward generation,” (Acts 2:40), is seasonable counsel; yet taken of but few; the sin of the time, or day, being as a strong current or stream that drives all before it. Hence Noah and Lot were found as it were alone, in the practice of this excellent piece of righteousness in their generation. Hence it is said of Noah that he was a just man, and perfect in his generation. And again, the Lord said under Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me, in this generation. Genesis 6:9. The meaning is, he kept himself clear of the sin of his day, or of the generation among which he lived. Chap. 7:1.

The same I say of Lot, he kept himself from, the sin of Sodom; and hence Peter cries him up for such a righteous man.

“Just Lot,” said he, “that righteous man, whose righteous soul was vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked.” 2 Peter 2:7, 8.

Mark: ‘a just man, a righteous man, his righteous soul,’ etc. But how obtained he this character? Why, he abhorred the sin of his time, he fell not in with the sin of the people, but was afflicted and vexed thereabout: yea, it was to him a daily burden. “For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds.” So David.

“I beheld the transgressors,” saith he, “and was grieved because they kept not thy word.” Psalm 119:158.

The sin of the times, is to God the worst of sins; and to fall in with the sin of the times, is counted as the highest of transgressions. Consequently, to keep from them, though a man should through infirmity be guilty of others, yet he is accounted upright. And hence it is (I think) that David was called a man after God’s own heart; namely, because he served his own generation, by the will of God, (as in Acts 13.), or after he had in his own age served the will of God. By the sin of the times Satan, as it were, sets up his standard in defiance to God; seeking then to cause his name in a signed way to be dishonored, and that by the professors of that age. And hence it is that the Lord doth manifest such wrath against his people, that are guilty of the common sin of their day, and that he shows such special favor to them that abstain therefrom. Was there no more, think you, but

Noah, in his generation that feared God? Yes, several, no doubt; but he was the man that kept clear of the sin of his day; therefore he and his family must be partakers of God's deliverance; the other must die before, and not be permitted to the mercy of the ark, nor to see the new world with Noah. Unbelief was the sin of the day, when Israel was going from Egypt to Canaan; therefore all that were guilty of that transgression, must be denied to go in to see that good land, yea, though it were Moses himself.

“And the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.” Numbers 20:12.

The sin of the day is a high transgression; from the which, because Caleb and Joshua kept themselves, God kept them from all the blasting plagues that overtook all the rest, and gave them the land which he had promised to their fathers.

“But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit in him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land, whereunto he went, and his seed shall possess it.” Numbers 14:22-24.

Idolatry was the sin of the day, just before Israel was carried captive into Babylon.

“Now those of the priests that went astray then, even they, says God, shall bear their iniquity. But the priests, the Levites, the sons of Zadock, that kept the charge of my sanctuary, when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near unto me, to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me, to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith the Lord God. They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.” Ezekiel 44:10-16.

Great complaints have we now among professors, of deadness in duties, barrenness of the ministry, and of the withdrawing of God from his people; but I can tell you a cause of all this, namely, the sin of the day is got into the church of God, and has defiled that holy place. This is the ground and cause of all these things: nor is it like to be otherwise, till the

cause shall be removed. If any should ask me what are the sins of our day, I would say they are conspicuous, they are open, they are declared as were Sodom's. Isaiah 3:9. They that have embraced them, are not ashamed of them: yea, they have got the boldness to plead for them, and to count them their enemies that seek to reform them. All tables are full of vomit and filthiness. And for pride and covetousness, for loathing of the gospel, and contemning holiness, as these have covered the face of the nation, so they have infected most of them, that now name the name of Christ.

And I say again, when you find out a professor that is not horribly tainted with some of these things, (I exclude not the ministers, nor their families), let him be as a beacon upon an hill, or as an ensign in our land. But says one, 'would you have us singular?' and says another, 'would you have us make ourselves ridiculous?' and says a third, 'such and such more godly-wise than we, do so.' But I answer, if God has made you singular, and called you to grace, that's singular; and he bids you walk in ways that are singular, and diverse from the ways of all others. Yea, if to depart from iniquity will make you ridiculous, if to be holy in all manner of conversation, will make you ridiculous, then be contented to be counted so. As for the godly-wise you speak of, let them manifest themselves to be such, by departing from iniquity. I am sure that their being tainted with sins of the day, will not prove them godly-wise. "Behold, I have taught you," said Moses, "statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me; that ye should do so in the land whither you go to possess it. Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom, and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear of all these statutes, and say, 'surely, this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'" "Here then is wisdom, and this is that that manifesteth a people to be understanding, and godly-wise, even the keeping of the commandments of God. And why, follow the apish fashions of the world? Hath the God of wisdom set them on foot among us? Oh is it because the devil and wicked men (the inventors of these vain toys) have outwitted the law of God? "What nation is there so great," said Moses,

"who have God so nigh unto them as his people have, and as he is in all things that we call upon him for? and what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous, as all this law, which I set before you this day?" Deuteronomy 4:5-8.

This then is that which declareth us to be godly-wise, when we keep our soul diligently to the holy words of God: and set not only our tongues and lips, but also our lives thereto.

Fourthly. But again, let them that name the name of Christ depart from the INIQUITY OF THE HOUSE, that is, from FAMILY INIQUITY. There is a house-iniquity; an iniquity that loves not to walk abroad, but to harbor within doors. This the holy man David was aware of, therefore he said that he would behave himself wisely, in a perfect way; yea, saith he,

“I will walk within my house, with a perfect heart.” Psalm 101:2.

Now this house-iniquity standeth in these things:

- (1.) In domestic broils and quarrels.
- (2.) In domestic chamberings, and wantonness.
- (3.) In domestic disorders of children and servants.

Firstly, For house broils and quarrels, it is an iniquity to be departed from, whether it be betwixt husband and wife, or otherwise. This, as I said, is an iniquity that loves not to walk abroad, but yet it is a horrible plague within doors. And many that show like saints abroad, yet act the part of devils when they are at home, by giving way to this house-iniquity. This iniquity meeteth the man and his wife at the very threshold of the door, and will not suffer them to enter, no not with one foot into the house in peace; but how far this is from walking together as heirs of the grace of life, is easy to be determined. Men should carry it in love to their wives, as Christ doth to his Church; and wives should carry it to their husbands, as the church ought to carry it to her Savior; Ephesians 5:21-28; 1 Peter 3:7; and until each relation be managed with respect to these things, this house-iniquity will be cherished there. O! God sees within doors as well as without, and will judge too for the iniquity of the house as well as for that more open.

Secondly, As house-iniquity standeth in domestic broils, and contentions, so it also standeth in chamberings and wantonness. Romans 13:13. Wherefore the Apostle putteth both together, saying, “not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.” This chambering and wantonness is of a more general extent, being entertained by all,

insomuch that sometimes from the head to the foot all are horribly guilty. But, “it is a shame to speak of those things that are done of some in secret:” for

“through the lusts of their own hearts, they dishonor their own
bodies between themselves, working that which is unseemly,”
(Ephesians 5:12; Romans 1:24-27),

to their ignominy and contempt, if not with their fellows, yet with God, who sees them; “for the darkness hideth not from him.” Psalm 39:12. It was for this kind of iniquity with other, that God told Eli that he would judge his house for ever. 1 Samuel 3:13. Also the words that follow are to be trembled at, that say, “The iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.” 5:14. Such an evil thing is house-iniquity in the eyes of the God that is above.

Thirdly, As domestic iniquity standeth in these, so also in the disorders of children and servants. Children’s unlawful carriages to their parents, is a great house-iniquity, yea, and a common one too. 2. Timothy 3:2, 3. Disobedience to parents is one of the sins of the last days. O! it is horrible to behold how irreverently, how irrespectively, how saucily and malapertly, children, yea, professing children, at this day, carry it to their parents, snapping, and checking, curbing and rebuking them, as if they had never received their being by them, or had never been beholden to them for bringing them up: yea as if the relation was lost, or as if they had received a dispensation from God to dishonor, and disobey parents.

I will add, that this sin reigns in little and great; for not only the small and young, but men are disobedient to their parents; and indeed, this is the sin with a shame, that men shall be disobedient to parents, the sin of the last times, that men shall be disobedient to parents, and without natural affection. Where now a-days shall we see children that are come to men and women’s estate, carry it as by the word they are bound, to their aged and worn out parents? I say, where is the honor they should put upon them? Who speak to their aged parents with that due regard to that relation, to their age, to their worn-out condition, as becomes them? Is it not common now-a-days, for parents to be brought into bondage, and servitude by their children? For parents to be under, and children above; for parents to be debased, and children to lord it over them? Nor doth this

sin go alone in the families where it is; no, those men are “lovers of their ownelves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers,” that are disobedient to their parents. This is that the prophet means, when he saith,

“the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient,
and the base against the honorable.” Isaiah 3:4, 5.

This is a common sin, and a crying sin, and to their shame be it spoken that are guilty; a sin that makes men vile to a high degree, and yet it is the sin of professors. But behold how the Apostle brands them; he saith, “such have but a form of godliness, and deny the power thereof,” and bids the godly shut them out of their fellowship. 2 Timothy 3:2-5. This sin also is, I fear, grown to such a height in some, as to make them weary of their parents, and of doing their duty to them. Yea, I wish that some are not murderers of fathers and mothers, by their thoughts, while they secretly long after, and desire their death; that the inheritance may be theirs, and that they may be delivered from obedience to their parents. 1 Timothy 1:9. This is a sin in the house, in the family; a sin that is kept in hugger-mugger, close; but God sees it, and hath declared his dislike against it, by an implicit threatening, to cut them off that are guilty of it. Ephesians 5:1, 2, 3. Let them then that name the name of Christ, depart from this iniquity.

Disorders of servants, is also a house-iniquity, and to be departed from by the godly. “He that worketh deceit, shall not dwell within my house,” said David; “and he that telleth lies, shall not tarry in my sight.” Psalm 101:7. One of the rarities in Solomon’s house, and which the queen of Sheba was so taken with, was the goodly order of his servants. 2 Chronicles 9:4.

Some of the disorders of servants are to be imputed to the governors of families, and some to the servants themselves. Those that are to be imputed to the governors of families, are such as these:

- (1.) When the servant learns his vileness of his master, or of her mistress.
- (2.) When servants are countenanced by the master against the mistress; or by the mistress against the master; or when in opposition to either, they shall be made equals in things.

- (3.) When the extra-vagancies of servants are not discountenanced, and rebuked by their superiors, and the contrary taught them by word and life.

Those to be imputed to the servants themselves are:

- (1.) Their want of reverence to their superiors.
- (2.) Their backbiting and slandering them.
- (3.) Their unfaithfulness in serving them.
- (4.) Their murmuring at their lawful commands, etc.

CHAPTER 5.

PARTICULAR INIQUITIES THAT MUST BE GIVEN UP.

From all these domestic iniquities, let every one depart that religiously nameth the name of Christ. And before I leave this head, let me, to enforce my exhortation, urge upon you a few considerations to work with you, yet further to depart from these house-iniquities.

First, A man's house, and his carriage there, doth more bespeak the nature and temper of his mind, than all public profession. If I were to judge of a man for my life, I would not judge of him by his open profession, but by his domestic behaviors. Open profession is like a man's best cloak, the which is worn by him, when he walketh abroad, and with many is made but little use of at home. But now what a man is at home, that he is indeed. There is, abroad, my house, my closet, my heart; and my house, my closet, show most what I am: though not to the world, yet to my family, and to angels. And a good report from those most near, and most capable of advantage to judge, is like to be truer than to have it only from that which is gotten by my observers abroad. The outside of the platter and cup may look well, when within they may be full of excess. Matthew 23:25-28. The outward show and profession may be tolerable, when within doors may be bad enough. "I and my house will serve the Lord," is the character of a godly man. Joshua 24:15.

Secondly, As the best judgment is made upon a man from his house; so that man is like to have the approbation of God for good, that is faithful in all his house.

"I know Abraham (says God) that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." Genesis 18:17-19.

To make religion, and the power of godliness the chief of my designs at home, among those whom God by a special hand has placed me, is that

which is pleasing to God, and that obtaineth a good report of him. But to pass these, and to come to other things.

1. A master of a family, and mistress of the same, are those that are intrusted of God, with those under their tuition and care to be brought up for him, be they children or servants. This is plain from the text last mentioned; wherefore here is a charge committed to thee of God. Look to it, and consider with thyself whether thou hast done such duty and service for God in this matter, as, setting common frailties aside, thou canst with good conscience lift up thy face unto God; the which to be sure thou canst by no means do, if iniquity, to the utmost, be not banished out of thy house.

2. And will it not be a sad complaint thy servant shall take up against thee, before the Judge at the last day, that he learnt the way to destruction in thy house, who art a professor? Servants, though themselves be carnal, expect, when they come into the house of professors, that there they shall see religion in its spangling colors; but behold, when he enters thy door, he finds sin and wickedness there. There is pride instead of humility, and heat and raillery instead of meekness and holiness of mind. He looked for a house full of virtue, and behold nothing but spider-webs; fair and plausible abroad, but like the sow in the mire at home. ‘Bless me,’ saith such a servant, ‘are these the religious people! Are these the servants of God, where iniquity is made so much of, and is so highly entertained!’ And now is his heart filled with prejudice against all religion, or else he turns hypocrite like his master and his mistress, wearing, as they, a cloak of religion to cover all abroad, while all is naked and shameful at home. — But perhaps thy heart is so hard, and thy mind so united to the pleasing of thy vile affections, that thou wilt say, “What care I for my servant? I took him to do my work, not to train him up in religion.” Well, suppose the soul of thy servant be thus little worth in thine eyes; yet what wilt thou say for thy children, who behold all thy ways, and are as capable of drinking up the poison of thy footsteps, as the swine is of drinking up swill? I say, what wilt thou do for them? Children will learn to be naught of parents, of professing parents soonest of all: for they will be tempted to think all that they do is right. I say, what wilt thou say to this? Or art thou like the ostrich whom God hath deprived of wisdom, and has hardened her heart against her young? Job 39:13-16. Will it please thee

when thou shalt see that thou hast brought forth children to the murderer? or when thou shalt hear them cry, “I learnt to go on in the paths of sin by the carriages of professing parents.’ Hosea 9:13. If it was counted of old a sad thing for a man to bring forth children to the sword as Ephraim did, what will it be for a man to bring up children for hell and damnation? But,

Fifthly, Let those that name the name of Christ depart from THE INIQUITY OF THEIR CLOSET. This may be called part of the iniquity of the house; but because it is not public, but is a retired part, therefore I put it here by itself. There are many closet sins that professors may be guilty of, and from which they have need to depart: As,

First, There is the pride of a library, that is, the study or closet, and I doubt this sin and iniquity to this day is manifested.

1. When men secretly please themselves to think it is known what a stock of books they have, or when they take more pleasure in the number, than the matter contained in their books.
2. When they buy books rather to make up a number, than to learn to be good and godly men thereby.
3. When, though they own their books to be good and godly, yet they will not conform thereto.

This is an iniquity now on foot in this land, and ought to be departed from. It is better to have no books, and depart from iniquity, than to have a thousand, and not to be bettered in my soul thereby.

Secondly, There is an iniquity of vacancy; or a closet to look upon, not to bow before God in; a closet to lay up gold in, but not to mourn in for the sins of my life; a closet, that could it speak, would say, ‘my owner is seldom here upon his knees before the God of heaven; seldom here humbling himself for the iniquity of his heart, or to thank God for the mercies of his life.’

Thirdly, Then also a man is guilty of closet iniquity, when he desireth that the sound of the devotion he doth there may be heard by them without; in the house, the street, or of those that dwell by; for a closet is only for the man and God to do things in secretly. Matthew 6:6, 7.

These things let the professor beware of, lest he add to his iniquity sin, until he and it come to be loathsome. The closet is by God appointed for men to wait upon him in, and to do it without hypocrisy; to wait there for his mind and his will, and also for grace to perform it. And how can a man that went last time out of his closet to be naught, have the face to come thither again? “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer;” and if so, then he will not meet me in my closet; and if so, then I shall quickly be weary thereof, being left to myself, and the vanity of my mind.

It is a great thing to be a closet-Christian, and to hold it. He must be a close-Christian, that will be a closet-Christian. When I say a close-Christian, I mean one that is so in the hidden part, and that also walks with God. Many there be that profess Christ, who do oftener (in the city) frequent the coffee-house than their closet; and that sooner in a morning run to make bargains than to pray unto God, and begin the day with him.¹ But for thee, who professest the name of Christ, do thou depart from all these things; do thou make conscience of reading and practising; do thou follow after righteousness; do thou make conscience of beginning the day with God; for he that begins it not with him will hardly end it with him; he that runs from God in the morning will hardly find him at the close of the day; nor will he that begins with the world and the vanities thereof, in the first place, be very capable of walking with God all the day after. It is he that finds God in his closet that will carry the savor of him into his house, his shop, and his more open conversation. When Moses had been with God in the Mount his face shone; he brought of that glory into the camp. Exodus 24.

Sixthly, I add again, let those that name the name of Christ depart from THE INIQUITY THAT CLEAVETH TO OPINIONS. This is a sad after for that. Let opinions in themselves be never so good, never so necessary, never so innocent, yet there are spirits in the world that will entail iniquity to them, and will make the vanity so inseparable with the opinion, that it is almost impossible with some to take in the opinion and leave out the iniquity, that by craft and subtilty of Satan is joined thereto. Nor is this thing new, and of yesterday; it has been thus almost in all ages of the church of God, and that not only in things small and indifferent, but in things fundamental and most substantial. I need instance in none other for proof hereof, but

the doctrine of faith and holiness. If faith be preached as that which is absolutely necessary to justification, then fantastical faith, and looseness and remissness in life (with some) are joined therewith. If holiness of life be preached as necessary to salvation, then faith is undervalued, and set below its place, and works as to justification with God set up and made co-partners with Christ's merits in the remission of sins. Thus iniquity joineth itself with the great and most substantial truths of the gospel, and it is hard to receive any good opinion whatever, but iniquity will join itself thereto. Ephesians 6:12, 13. Wicked spirits do not only tempt men to transgress the moral law, but do present themselves in heavenly things, working there, and laboring in them, to wrest the judgment, and turn the understanding and conscience awry in those high and most important things. Wherefore, I say, we must be the more watchful and careful lest we be abused in our notions and best principles, by the iniquities that join themselves thereto.

It is strange to see at this day how, notwithstanding all the threatenings of God, men are wedded to their own opinions, beyond what the law of grace and love will admit. Here is a Presbyterian, here is an Independent, here an Anabaptist, so joined each man to his own opinion, that they cannot have that communion one with another, as by the testament of the Lord Jesus they are commanded and enjoined. What is the cause? Is the truth? No! God is the author of no confusion in the church of God. 1 Corinthians 14:33. It is then because every man makes too much of his own opinion, abounds too much in his own sense, and takes not care to separate his opinion from the iniquity that cleaveth thereto. That this confusion is in the church of Christ, "I am of Paul, I of Apollo, I of Cephas, and I of Christ," is too manifest. But what unbecoming language is this for the children of the same Father, members of the same body, and heirs of the same glory, to be accustomed to? whether it is pride, or hypocrisy, or ignorance, or self, or the devil, or the jesuit, or all these jointly working with the church, that makes and maintains these names of distinction. This distance, and want of love, this contempt of one another, these base and undervaluing thoughts of brethren, will be better seen, to the shame and confusion of some in the judgment.

In the meantime I advise thee with whom I am at this time concerned to take heed of this mixture, this sinful mixture of truth and iniquity together.

And to help thee in this thing, keep thine eye much upon thine own base self; labor also to be sensible of the imperfections that cleave to thy best performances; be clothed with humility, and prefer thy brother before thyself; and know that Christianity lieth not in small matters, neither before God, nor understanding men. And it would be well if those that so stickle by their private and unscriptural notions (which only is iniquity cleaving to truth): I say, it would be well if such were more sound in faith and morals, and if by their lives they gave better conviction to the world, that the truth and grace of Christ is in them.

Sometimes so much iniquity is mixed with good opinions that it prevails, not only to hurt men in this world, but to drown them in misery everlasting. It was good that the Jews did own and allow the ceremonies of the law; but since the iniquity that joined itself thereto, did prevail with them to make those ceremonies co-partners with Christ, in those matters that pertained to Christ alone; therefore they perished in them. The Galatians also, with many of the Corinthians, had like to have been overthrown by three these things. Takes heed therefore of that iniquity that seeketh to steal with the truth into thy heart, thy judgment and understanding.

Nor doth one iniquity come without another; they are linked together, and come by companies, and therefore usually they that are superstitious in one thing, are corrupted in several others. The more a man stands upon his points to justify himself, and to condemn his holy brethren, the more danger he is in of being overcome of divers evils. And it is the wisdom of God to let it be so, that flesh might not glory in his presence. "His soul, that if lifted up," (Habakkuk 2:4) that is, with his good doings, with his order, and methods in religion, "his soul is not upright in him." I have often said in my heart, what is the reason that some of the brethren should be so shy of holding communion with those every whit as good, if not better than themselves?² Is it because they think themselves unworthy of their holy fellowship? No, verily: it is because they exalt themselves, they are leavened with some iniquity that hath mixed itself with some good opinions that they hold, and therefore it is that they say to others, "Stand by thyself, come not near me, for I am holier than thou." Isaiah 65:5. But what is the sentence of God concerning them? Why, "these are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." Wherefore, as I said before, so I

say now again, take heed of the iniquity that cleaveth to good opinions; the which thou wilt in no wise be able to shun, unless thou beest clothed with humility. But,

Seventhly, Let them that name the name of Christ, depart from THE INIQUITY OF HYPOCRISIES. This exhortation is as the first, general; for hypocrisies are of that nature, that they spread themselves (as the leprosy of the body) all over; not the faculties of the soul only, but all the duties of a man. So that here is a great iniquity to be parted from, an over-spreading iniquity. This sin will get into all thy profession, into every whit of it, and will make the whole of it a loathsome stink in the nostrils of God.

Hypocrisy will be in the pulpit, in conference, in closets, in communion of saints, in faith, in love, in repentance, in zeal, in humility, in alms, in the prison, and in all duties. Matthew 23:15; Luke 20:19, 20; Ezekiel 8:12; Matthew 26:20, 21; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Corinthians 6:6; Malachi 2:2, 3; Matthew 23:15; Colossians 2:23; Matthew 6:2; 1 Corinthians 13:3; Luke 12:1, 2. So that here is, for the keeping of thy soul upright and sincere, more than ordinary diligence to be used. Hypocrisy is one of the most abominable of iniquities. It is a sin that dares it with God. It is a sin that saith God is ignorant, or that he delighteth in iniquity. It is a sin that flattereth, that dissembleth, that offereth to hold God, as it were, fair in hand, about that which is neither purposed nor intended. It is also a sin that puts a man upon studying and contriving to beguile and deceive his neighbor, as to the bent and intent of the heart, and also as to the cause and end of actions. It is a sin that persuadeth a man to make a show of civility, morality, or Christian religion, as a cloak, a pretense, a guise to deceive withal. It will make a man preach for a place, and for praise, rather than to glorify God and save souls; it will put a man upon talking that he may be commended; it will make a man, when he is at prayer in his closet, strive to be heard without door; it will make a man ask for that he desireth not, and show zeal in duties, when his heart is as cold, as senseless, and as much without savor as a clod; it will make a man pray to be seen and heard of men, rather than to be heard of God; it will make a man strive to weep when he repenteth not, and to pretend much friendship, when he doth not love; it will make a man pretend to experience, and sanctification, when he has none, and to faith and sincerity, when he knows not what they are. There are opposed to this sin, simplicity, innocence, and godly sincerity,

without which three graces, thou wilt be a hypocrite; let thy notions, thy knowledge, thy profession, and commendations from others, be what they will.

Of all sins, the sin of hypocrisy bespeaks a man most in love with some lust, because he dissembleth both with God and man to keep it.

Helps against this sin there are many, some of which I shall now present thee with. Proverbs 16:2; 21:2; Luke 16:15.

1. Believe that God's eye is always upon thy heart, to observe all the ways, all the turnings and windings of it. 1 Samuel 16:7.
2. Believe that he observeth all thy ways, and marks thy actions.

“The ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord,
and he pondereth all his goings.” Proverbs 5:21.

3. Believe that there is a day of judgment a coming, and that then, all things shall be revealed and discovered as they are.

“For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in light, and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.”

Luke 12:2, 3.

4. Believe that a hypocrite, with the cunning and shrouds for his hypocrisy, can go unseen no farther than the grave, nor can he longer flatter himself with thoughts of life.

“For the triumphing of the wicked is short, the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment. Though his excellency reach up to the heavens, and his head reaches unto the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever, like his own dung; they which have seen him shall say, where is he? he shall fly away as a dream and not be found: yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night.” Job 20:5-8.

5. Believe that God will not spare a hypocrite in the judgment, no nor punish him either with ordinary damnation; but as they have here sinned in a way by themselves, so there they shall receive “greater damnation.” Luke 20:47.

For a CONCLUSION upon this seven-fold answer to the question above propounded: let me advise those that are tender of the name of Christ, to have regard to these things.

First, Be well acquainted with the word, and with the general rules of holiness, namely, with the moral law; the want of this is a cause of much unholiness of conversation. These licentious and evil times, wherein we live, are full of iniquity; nor can we (though we never so much love God) do our duty as we are enjoined, if we do not know it. The law is cast behind the back of many, when it should be carried in the hand and heart, that we might do it, to the end that the gospel which we profess, might be glorified in the world. Let then the law be with thee to love it, and do it in the spirit of the gospel, that thou be not unfruitful in thy life. Let the law, I say, be with thee, not as it comes from Moses, but from Christ; for though thou art set “free from the law,” as a covenant for life, yet thou still art “under the law to Christ;” and it is to be received by thee, as out of his hand, to be a rule for thy conversation in the world. 1 Corinthians 9:21. What then thou art about to do, do it or leave it undone, as thou shalt find it approved or forbidden by the law. And when aught shall come into thy mind to be done, and thou art at a stand, and at a loss about the lawfulness or unlawfulness thereof, then betake thyself to the law of thy God, which is in thy hand, and ask if this thing be good, or to be avoided.

If this were practiced by professors, there would not be so much iniquity found in their beds, their houses, their shops, and their conversations, as there is.

Secondly, As thou must be careful to find out the lawfulness or unlawfulness of a thing before thou puttest forth thy hand thereto, so thou must also consider again, whether that which is lawful is expedient. A thing may be lawful in itself, and may yet be unlawful to thee; that is, if there be an inconveniency, or an inexpediency attending the doing of it. “All things are lawful for me,” says the Apostle, “but all things are not expedient; all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.” 1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23. This then thou must consider, and this also thou must practice.

But this is a hard lesson, and impossible to be done, except thou art addicted to self-denial. For this text, and so the practice of what is

contained therein, has respect chiefly to another, that is, to thy neighbor, and his advantage and edification; and it supposeth, yea, enjoineth thee, if thou wilt depart from iniquity, to forbear also some things that are lawful, and consequently profitable to thee, for the sake of, and of love to thy neighbor. But how little of this is found among men? Where is the man that will forbear some lawful things, for fear of hurting the weak thereby? Alas! how many are there that this day profess, that will not forbear palpable wickedness: no, though the salvation of their own souls is endangered thereby; and how then should these forbear things that are lawful, even of godly tenderness to the weakness of their neighbor?

CHAPTER 6.

MOMENTOUS USES OF THIS WHOLE DISCUSSION.

Thus much have I thought good to speak, in answer to this question, what iniquity should we depart from, that religiously name the name of Christ; and now we will make some use of what has been spoken.

And the FIRST shall be a use of EXAMINATION. Art thou a professor? Dost thou religiously name the name of Christ? if so, I ask, dost thou according to the exhortation here, “Depart from iniquity?” I say, examine thyself about this matter, and be thou faithful in this work: for the deceit in this will fall upon thine own pate. Deceive thyself thou mayest, but beguile God thou shalt not. “Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Galatians 6:7. Wherefore let no man deceive himself, either in professing, while he lives viciously; or in examining whether his profession of this name, and his life and conversation do answer one another. What departing from iniquity is, I have already shown, in the former part of this book: wherefore I shall not here handle that point farther, only press upon thee, the necessity of this exhortation, and the danger of not doing it faithfully.

The NECESSITY of it is urged,

1. From the deceitfulness of man’s heart; which will flatter him with promises of peace and life, both now and hereafter, though he live in iniquity, while he professeth the name of Christ. For there are that say in their hearts, or that have their hearts say unto them,

“I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of my heart,
to add drunkenness to thirst.” Deuteronomy 29:19.

And what will become of them that so do, you may see by that which followeth in the text. The heart therefore is not to be trusted; for it will promise a man peace in the way of death and damnation. I doubt not that

many are under this fearful judgment to this day. What means else their quietness of mind, their peace, and boast of heaven and glory, though every step they take, as to life and conversation, is an apparent step to hell and damnation. These sayings, (Jeremiah 17:9; Proverbs 28:26), “The heart is deceitful above all things;” and, “he that trusteth his own heart is a fool;” were not written without a cause. Let as many therefore as would examine themselves about this matter, have a jealous eye over their own heart, and take heed of being beguiled thereby: let them mix hearty prayer with this matter, unto God, that he will help them to be faithful to themselves, in this so great a matter; yea, let them compare their lives with the holy commandment, and judge by that, rather than by the fleshly fondness, that men naturally are apt to have for, and of their own actions. For by the verdict of the word, thou must stand and fall, both now, at death, and in the day of judgment. Take heed therefore of thy heart, thy carnal heart, when thou goest into thy life, to make a search for iniquity. Take the word with thee, and by the word do thou examine thyself. John 12:48.

2. It is urged from the cunning of Satan. Wouldst thou examine thyself faithfully as to this thing, then take heed of the flatteries of the devil: can he help it, thou shalt never find out the iniquity of thy heels. He will labor to blind thy mind, to harden thy heart, to put such virtuous names upon thy foulest vices, that thou shalt never, unless thou stoppest thine ear to him, after a godly sort, truly examine and try thy ways, according as thou art commanded. Lamentations 3:40; 2 Corinthians 13:5. Wherefore take heed of him, for he will be ready at thy side when thou goest about this work. Now for thy help in this matter, set God, the holy God, the all-seeing God, the sin-revenging God, before thine eyes; “for our God is a consuming fire.” Hebrews 12:29. And believe that he hath pitched his eyes upon thy heart, also that he pondereth all thy goons, and that thy judgment, as to thy faithfulness, or unfaithfulness, in this work, must proceed out of the mouth of God. Proverbs 5:21; 21:2. This will be thy help in this thing, that is, if thou usest it faithfully; also this will be thy hindrance if thou shalt neglect it and suffer thyself to be abused by the devil.

3. It is urged from the dangerousness of the latter days. Wouldst thou examine thyself, then make not the lives of others any rule to thee in this

matter. It is prophesied long ago, by Christ and by Paul, concerning the latter times, “that iniquity shall abound,” and be very high among professors.” Matthew 24:12; 2 Timothy 2:1-8. Therefore it will be a rare thing to find an exemplary life among professors. Wherefore cease from man, and learn of the word; try thyself by the word, receive conviction from the word; and to take off thyself from taking encouragement from others, set the judgment before thine eyes, and that account that God will demand of thee then; and know that it will be but a poor excuse of thee to say, ‘Lord such a one doth so, did so, would do so: and they professed,’ etc. Whether thou wilt hear me, or not, I know not; yet this I know,

“if thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself:
but if thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it.” Proverbs 9:12.

Let me then, to press this use farther upon thee, show thee in a few particulars, the danger of not doing of it, that is, since thou professest, of not departing from iniquity.

First, the iniquity that cleaveth to men that profess, if they cast it not away, but countenance it, will all prove nettles and briars to them: and I will assure thee, yea, thou knowest, that nettles and thorns will sting, and scratch but ill-favoredly. “I went,” saith Solomon,

“by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void
of understanding. And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and
nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was
broken down.” Proverbs 24:30, 31.

Suppose a man were, after work all day, to be turned into a bed of nettles at night: or after a man had been about such a business, should be rewarded with chastisements of briars and thorns: this would for work be but little help, relief, or comfort to him. Why this is the reward of a wicked man, of a wicked professor, from God; nettles and thorns are to cover over the face of his vineyard, his field, his profession, and that at the last of all; for this covering over the face of his vineyard with nettles and thorns, is to show what fruit the slovenly, slothful, careless professor will reap out of his profession, when reaping time shall come.

Nor can he whose vineyard, whose profession is covered over with these nettles and thorns of iniquity, escape being afflicted with them in his

conscience. For look, as they cover the face of his vineyard through his sloth now, so will they cover the face of his conscience, in the day of judgment. For profession and conscience cannot be separated long; if a man then shall make profession without conscience of God's honor in his conversation, his profession and conscience will meet in the day of his visitation. Nor will he, whose condition this shall be, be able to ward off the guilt and sting of a slothful and bad conversation, from covering the face of his conscience, by retaining in his profession the name of Jesus Christ; for naming, and professing the name of Christ, will, instead of salving such a conscience, put venom, sting, and keenness into those nettles and thorns, that then shall be spread over the face of such consciences. This will be worse, than was that cold wet cloth that Hazael took and spread over the face of Benhadad, that he died. 2 Kings 8:15. This will sting worse, tear worse, torment worse, kill worse. Therefore look to it.

2. Nor may men shift this danger by their own neglect of inquiring into the truth of their separation from iniquity, for God himself will search them. "I search the reins and the heart," saith he, "to give unto every one of you according to his ways," Revelation 2:23.

There are many that wear the name of Christ for a cloak, and so make their advantages by their iniquity; but Christ, at death and judgment, will read this cloak from off such shoulders; then shall they walk naked, yea, the shame of their nakedness shall then appear. Now since no man can escape the search of God, and so, not his judgment, it will be thy wisdom to search thine own ways and to prevent judgment by judging thyself. 1 Corinthians 11:31.

3. Christ will deny those to be his that do not depart from iniquity, though they shall name his name among the rest of his people.

"Depart from me," saith he,
"all you that departed not from iniquity." Luke 13:25, 26, 27.

Yes, they that shall name his name religiously, and not depart from iniquity, are denied by him all along. For observe,

(1.) He alloweth them not now to call him Lord.

“And why call ye me Lord, Lord, (saith he),
and do not the things which I say?” Luke 6:46.

He cannot abide to be reputed the Lord of those that presume to profess his name, and do not depart from iniquity. Ezekiel 20:39. The reason is, that such do but profane his name, and stave others off from falling in love with him and his ways. Hence he says again,

“Behold I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah.”
Romans 2:24; Jeremiah 44:26.

(2.) He regardeth not their prayers. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.” Psalm 66:18. And if so, then whatever thou hast at the hand of God, thou hast it, not in mercy, but in judgment, and to work out father thine everlasting misery.

(3) He will not regard their soul, but at the last day will cast it from him, as a thing abhorred by him. As is evidently seen by that thirteenth of Luke, but now noted above.

Wherefore from these few hints, thou, whoever thou art, mayst well perceive what a horrible thing it is to make a profession of the name of Christ, and not to depart from iniquity. Therefore let me exhort thee again to examine thyself, if thou hast, and dost, (since thou professest that name), depart from iniquity.

And here I would distinguish, for there are two parts in iniquity, namely the guilt, and filth. As for the guilt that is contracted by iniquity, I persuade myself no man, who knows it, needs to be bid to desire to depart from that; nay, I do believe that the worst devil in hell would depart from his guilt, if he could, and might: but this is it, namely to depart from the sweet, the pleasure, and profit of iniquity. There are that call evil good, iniquity good, and that of professors to: this is that to be departed from, and these are they that are exhorted to forsake it upon the pains and penalties before threatened. Therefore, as I said, let such look to it, that they examine themselves if they depart from iniquity.

And come, now thou art going about this work, let me help thee in this matter.

- (1.) Ask thy heart, what evil dost thou see in sin?
- (2.) How sick art thou of sin?
- (3.) What means dost thou use to mortify thy sins?
- (4.) How much hast thou been grieved to see others break God's law, and to find temptations in thyself to do it?

For the first,

- (1.) There is a soul-polluting evil in iniquity.
- (2.) There is a God-provoking evil in iniquity.
- (3.) There is a soul-damning evil in iniquity. And until thou comest experimentally to know these things, thou wilt have neither list, nor will, to depart from iniquity.

For the second. I mean not sick with guilt, for, so the damned in hell are sick; but I mean sick of the filth, and polluting nature of it. Thus was Moses sick of sin, thus Jabez was sick of sin; and thus was Paul sick of sin. Numbers 11:14, 15; 1 Chronicles 4:9, 10; Romans 7:14; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 2, 3; Philippians 3:10-14.

For the third. You know that those that are sensible of a sickness, will look out after the means to be recovered. There is a means also for this disease; and dost thou know what that means is, and hast thou indeed a desire to it? Yea, couldst thou be willing even now to partake of the means that would help thee to that means, that can cure thee of this disease? There are no means can cure a man that is sick of sin, but glory; and the means to come by that is Christ, and to go out of this world by the faith of him. There is no grace can cure this disease; yea, grace doth rather increase it: for the more grace any man has, the more is he sick of sin; the greater an offense is iniquity to him. So then, there is nothing can cure this disease, but glory: but immortal glory. And dost thou desire this medicine? and doth God testify that thy desire is true, not feigned? 2 Corinthians 5:4. I know that there are many things do make some even wish to die: but the question is not whether thou dost wish to die: for death can cure many diseases: but is this that that moveth thee to desire to depart, namely, that thou mightest be rid, quite rid, and stripped of a body of death, because nothing on this side the grave can rid thee and strip thee of it? And is

hope, that this day is approaching, a reviving cordial to thee? And doth the hope of this strike arrows into the heart of thy lusts, and draw off thy mind and affections yet farther from iniquity?

To the fourth. How much hast thou been grieved to see others break God's law, and to find temptations in thyself to do it? "I beheld the transgressors," said David, "and was grieved, because men kept not thy word." Psalm 119:158. The same grief, also had Paul, because of that holy of sin and death which was in him. Professor, I beseech thee, be thou serious about this thing, because it will be found, when God comes to judge, that those that profess Christ, and yet abide with their iniquity, are but wooden, earthly professors, and none of the silver or golden ones: and so consequently such as shall be vessels, not to honor, but to dishonor; not to glory, but to shame.

Secondly. My next shall be a use of TERROR. Has God commanded by the mouth of his holy Apostles and Prophets, that those that name the name of Christ, should depart from iniquity: then what will become of those that rebel against his word? Where the word of a king is, there is power; and if the wrath of a king be as the roaring of a lion, what is, and what will be the wrath of God, when with violence it falls upon the head of the wicked?

Sirs, I beseech you consider this, namely, that the man that professeth the name of Christ, and yet liveth a wicked life, is the greatest enemy that God has in the world, and consequently, one that God, in a way most eminent, will set his face against. Hence he threateneth such so hotly, saying,

"And the destruction of the transgressors, and of the sinners shall be together; and that they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." Isaiah 1:28; 33:14.

But what sinners are these? why, the sinners in Zion, the hypocrites in the church. So again,

"The Lord shall purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against him. All the sinners of my people shall die with the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us." Ezekiel 20:38; Amos 9:10.

For though such do think that by professing the name of Christ, they shall prevent their going down to hell, yet they shall go down thither, with those that have lived openly wicked and profane — Egypt, and Judah, the circumcised with them that are not — for it is not a profession of faith that can save them. Jeremiah 9:26. Whom dost thou pass in beauty, saith God? wherein art thou bettered by the profession, than the wicked? Go down, and be thou “laid with the uncircumcised” Ezekiel 32:19.

This is general: but more particularly, the wrath of God manifesteth itself against such kind of professors in that the gospel, and means of salvation shall not be effectual for their salvation, but that it shall work rather quite contrary effects. It shall bring forth, as I said, quite contrary effects. As,

- 1.** The preaching of the word shall be to such, the savor of death unto death, and that’s a fearful thing. 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16.
- 2.** Yea Christ Jesus himself shall be so far off from being a savor unto them, that he shall be a snare, a trap and a gin to catch them by the heel withal: that they may go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. Isaiah 8:13, 14, 15. 28:13.
- 3.** The Lord also will choose out such delusions (such as will best suit with the workings of their flesh) as will effectually bring them down, with the bullocks and with the bulls to the slaughter: yes, he will lead such forth with the workers of iniquity. Isaiah 66:3, 4; Psalm 125:5.
- 4.** Such, above all, lie open to the sin against the Holy Ghost, that unpardonable sin, that must never be forgiven.

For alas, it is not the poor ignorant world, but the enlightened professor that committeth the sin that shall never be forgiven. It is one enlightened, one that has tasted the good word of God, and something of the powers of the world to come. Hebrews 6:4; 1 John 5:16. It is one that was counted a brother, that was with us in our profession: it is such a one that is in danger of committing that most black and bloody sin. But yet all and every one of those that are such, are not in danger of this; but those among these that take pleasure in unrighteousness, and that rather than they will lose that pleasure, will commit it presumptuously. Presumptuously, that is, against light, against convictions, against warnings, against mercies. Or thus, a presumptuous sin is such a one as is committed in the face of the

command, in a desperate venturing to run the hazard, or in a presuming upon the mercy of God, through Christ to be saved notwithstanding: that is a leading sin to that which is unpardonable, and will be found with such professors as do hanker after iniquity. I say it is designed by the devil, and suffered by the just judgment of God, to catch and overthrow the loose and carnal gospellers. And hence it is that David cries unto God, that he would hold him back from this sort of sins. “Cleanse thou me from my secret faults,” says he. And then adds,

“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins, let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.” Psalm 19:12, 13.

If there were any dread of God, or of his word, in the hearts of the men of this generation, the consideration of this one text is enough to shake them in pieces. I speak those that name the name of Christ, but do not depart from iniquity. But the word of God must be fulfilled; in the last days, “iniquity shall abound;” Matthew 24:12; wherefore these days will be perilous and dangerous to professors. “In the last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy.” 2 Timothy 3:1, 2. I do the oftener harp upon this text at this time, because it is a prediction of what shall be in the latter days, namely, what a sea and deluge of iniquity, shall in the latter days overspread and drown those that then shall have a form of godliness, and of religion. So that this day is more dangerous than were the days that have been before us. Now, iniquity, even immorality, shall with professors be in fashion, be pleaded for, be loved, and more esteemed than holiness itself. Now godliness, and self-denial shall be little set by; even those very men that have a form of godliness, hate the life, and power thereof; yea, they shall despise them that are good. Now, therefore, ministers must not think that what they say of the doctrine of self-denial among professors, will be much, if at all regarded. I say, regarded, so as to be loved and put in practice by them that name the name of Christ. For the strong hold that iniquity shall have of their affections, will cause that but little effectualness to this end will be found to attend the preaching of the word unto them.

But what will this kind of men do, when God that is just, God that is holy, and God that is strong to execute his word, shall call them to an account for these things?

Now some may say, 'But what shall we do to depart from iniquity?'

I answer,

- 1.** Labor to see the odiousness and unprofitableness thereof: which thou mayest do by the true knowledge of the excellent nature of the holiness of God. For until thou seest a beauty in holiness, thou canst not see odiousness in sin and iniquity. Danger thou mayst see in sin before, but odiousness thou canst not.
- 2.** Be much in the consideration of the power, justice, and faithfulness of God, to revenge himself on the workers of iniquity.
- 3.** Be much in the consideration of the greatness and worth of thy soul.
- 4.** Be often asking thyself, what true profit did I ever get by the commission of any sin.
- 5.** Bring thy last day often to thy bedside.
- 6.** Be often thinking of the cries and roaring of the damned in hell.
- 7.** Be often considering the lastingness of the torments of hell.
- 8.** Be often thinking what would those that are now in hell give, that they might live their lives over again.
- 9.** Consider often the frailty of thy life, and that there is no repentance to be found in the grave, whither thou goest.
- 10.** Consider that hell is a doleful place, and that the devils are but uncomfortable companions.
- 11.** Again, consider together with these how the patience of God has been abused by thee; yea, how all his attributes have been despised by thee, who art a professor that does not depart from iniquity.
- 12.** Moreover I would ask with what face thou canst look the Lord Jesus in the face, whose name thou hast profaned by thine iniquity?

13. Also, how thou wilt look on those that are truly godly, whose hearts thou hast grieved, while they have beheld the dirt and dung that have cloven to thee and to thy professions.

14. But especially consider with thyself how thou wilt bear, together with thine own, the guilt of the damnation of others. For as I have often said, a professor, if he perishes, seldom perishes alone, but casteth others down to hell with himself. The reason is, because others, both weak professors and carnal men, are spectators and observers of his ways; yea, and will presume also to follow him, especially in evil courses, concluding that he is right. We read that the tail of the dragon, or that the dragon by his tail, did draw and cast down abundance of the stars of heaven to the earth. Revelation 12:4; Isaiah 9:14, 15. The tail. “The prophet that speaketh lies, he is the tail.” The prophet that speaketh lies, either by opinion or practice, he is the tail, the dragon’s tail, the serpentine tail of the devil. Isaiah 9:14, 15. And so in his order, every professor that by his iniquity draweth both himself and others to hell, he is the tail. The tail, says the Holy Ghost, draws them down; draw down even the stars of heaven. But whither does he draw them? The answer is, from heaven, the throne of God, to earth, the seat of the dragon; for he is the god of this world. The professor then that is dishonorable in his profession, he is the tail. “The ancient and honorable, he is the head; and the prophet that speaketh lies, he is the tail.” Nor can Satan work such exploits by any, as he can by unrighteous professors. These he useth in his hand, as the giant uses his club; he, as it were, drives all before him with it. It is said of Behemoth, that “he moveth his tail like a cedar.” Job 40:17. Behemoth is a type of the devil; but behold how he handleth his tail, even as if a man should swing about a cedar. This is spoken to show the hurtfulness of the tail, as it is also said in another place. Revelation 9:19. Better no professor than a wicked a professor. Better open profane, than a hypocritical names of the name of Christ; and less hurt shall such a one do to his own soul, to the poor ignorant world, to the name of Christ, and to the church of God.

Let professors, therefore take heed to themselves, that they join to their naming of the name of Christ, a holy and godly conversation; for away they must go else with the workers of iniquity to the pit, with more guilt, and bigger load, and more torment by far than others. But,

Thirdly, My next word shall be a word of COUNSEL, to those that desire to be true, sincere professors of the name of Christ.

First, Do you bless God, that he has put not only his name into your lips, but grace into your hearts, that thereby that profession which thou makest of him, may be seasoned with salt. Mark 9:49. “Every sacrifice shall be seasoned with salt.” Now naming the name of Christ is a sacrifice, and a sacrifice acceptable, when the salt of the covenant of thy God is not lacking, but mixed therewith. Hebrews 12:15; Leviticus 2:13. Therefore I say, since God has put his name into thy mouth to profess the same, and grace into thy heart to season that profession with such carriage, such behavior, such life, and such conversation as doth become the same, thou hast great cause to thank God. A man into whose mouth God has put the name of Christ to profess it, is as a man that is to act his part upon a stage in the market-place; if he doth it well, he brings both to his master and himself; but if he doth it ill, both are brought into contempt. No greater praise can by man be brought to God, than by joining to the profession of the name of Christ a fruitful life and conversation.

“Herein (saith Christ) is my Father, glorified,
that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” John 15:8.

Fruitful lives God expecteth of all that profess the name of Christ. And let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. Bless God, therefore, if he hath kept thee from blotting and blemishing thy profession; if thy conversation has not been stained with the blots and evils of the times. What thou feelest, fightest with, and groanest under, by reason of the working of thine inward corruptions, with that I meddle not; nor is thy conversation the worse for that, if thou keepest them from breaking out. Thou also shalt be counted holy unto God through Christ, if thou be of an upright conversation; though plagued every day with the working of thine own corruption.

As God’s grace is the salt of saints, so saints are the salt of God. Matthew 5:13. The one is the salt of God in the heart, and the other is the salt of God in the world. “Ye are the salt of the earth.” That is, the salt of God in the earth. For the earth would be wholly corrupt, and would altogether stink, if professors were not in it. But now if the professor, which is the salt, shall indeed lose his savor, and hath nothing in his conversation to

season that part of the earth in which God has placed him, wherewith shall it be seasoned? The place where he dwells, as well as his profession, will both stink odiously in the nostrils of the Lord, and so both come to ruin and desolation.

Indeed, as I have shown, the professor will come to the worst of it; for God doth deny further to give him salt.

“If the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?”
Luke 14:35.

Wherewith shall the salt be salted? With nothing. Therefore it is henceforth good for nothing, no, not for the dunghill, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”

How much, therefore, is the tender-hearted, and he that laboreth to beautify his profession with a gospel conversation, bound to bless God for the salt of his grace, by the which his heart is seasoned, and from his heart his conversation.

Secondly, As such Christians should bless God, so let them watch; let them still watch, let them still watch and pray; watch against Satan, and pray yet for more grace, that they may yet more and more beautify their profession of the worthy name of Christ with a suitable conversation. “Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garment,” that is, his conversation, clean; nor is there any thing, save the overthrowing of our faith, that Satan seeketh more than to destroy. He knows holiness in them that rightly, as to doctrine, name the name of Christ, is a maul and destruction to his kingdom, an allurement to the ignorant, and a cutting off those occasions to stumble, that by the dirty life of a professor are laid in the way of the blind. Leviticus 19:14. He knows that holiness of living, when it shines in those that profess the name of Christ, doth cut off his lies that seeketh to make the world believe, and slanders that he seeketh to fasten upon the professors of the gospel. Wherefore, as you have begun to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s; so I beseech you, do it more and more.

Thirdly, To this end, shun those professors that are loose of life and conversation.

“From such withdraw thyself (saith Paul); and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:22.

If a man, if a good man takes not good heed to himself, he shall soon bring his soul into a snare. Loose professors are defilers and corrupters; a man shall get nothing but a blot by having company with them. Isaiah 1:4. Besides, as a man shall get a blot by having much to do with such; so, let him beware that his heart learn none of their ways. Let thy company be the excellent in the earth; even those that are excellent for knowledge and conversation. “He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”

Be content to be counted singular; for so thou shalt be, if thou shalt follow after righteousness, in good earnest; for holiness is a rare thing now in the world. I told thee before that it is foretold by the word, that in the last days perilous times shall come, and that men shall walk after their own lusts, yea, professors, to their destruction. Nor will it be easy to keep thyself therefrom. For even as when the pestilence is come into a place, it infecteth, and casteth down the healthful, so the iniquity of the last times will infect and pollute the godly. I mean the generality of them. Were but our times duly compared with those that went before, we should see that which now we are ignorant of. Did we but look back to the Puritans, but especially to those that but a little before them, suffered for the word of God, in the Marian days, we should see another life than is now among men, another manner of conversation, than now is among professors. But I say, predictions and prophecies must be fulfilled, and since the word says plainly, that “in the last days there shall come scoffers, walking after their own lusts,” and since Christians shall be endangered thereby, let us look to it, that we acquit ourselves like men, seeing we know these things before; lest we being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from our own steadfastness. 2. Peter 3:3, 17.

Singularity in godliness, if it be in godliness, no man should be ashamed of. For that is no more than to be more godly, to walk more humbly with God than others. And for my part, I had rather be a pattern and example of piety, I had rather that my life should be instructing to the saints, and

condemning to the world, with Noah and Lot, than to hazard myself among the multitude of the drossy.

I know that many professors will fall short of eternal life, and my judgment tells me, that they will be of the slovenly sort of professors, that so do. And for my part, I had rather run with the foremost and win the prize, than come behind, and lose that and my labor and all. "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully." And when men have said all they can, they are the truly redeemed, that are "zealous of good works." 1 Corinthians 9:24; 2 Timothy 2:4, 5; Titus 2:14. Not that works do save us; but faith, which layeth hold on Christ's righteousness for justification, sanctifies the heart, and makes men desirous to live in this world to the glory of that Christ, who died in this world to save us from death.

For my part, I doubt of the faith of many, and fear that it will prove no better at the day of God, than will the faith of devils. For often it standeth in bare speculation, and is without life and soul to that which is good. Where is the man that walketh with his cross upon his shoulder? Where is the man that is zealous of moral holiness? Indeed for those things that have nothing of the cross of the purse, or of the cross of the belly, or of the cross of the back, or of the cross of the vanity of household affairs; for those things, I find we have many, and those, very busy sticklers: but otherwise, the cross, self-denial, charity, purity in life and conversation, are almost quite out of doors among professors. But, man of God! do thou be singular as to these, and as to their conversation. "Be not therefore partaker with them" in any of their ways, but keep thy soul diligently, for if damage happeneth to thee, thou alone must bear it. Ephesians 5:7.

But he that will depart from iniquity, must be well fortified with faith, and patience, and the love of God; for iniquity has its beauty-spots, and its advantages attending on it: hence it is compared to a woman, (Zechariah 5:7), for it allureth greatly. Wherefore, I say, he that will depart therefrom had need have faith; that being it which will help him to see beyond it, and that will show him more in things that are invisible, than can be found in sin, were it ten thousand times more entangling than it is. 2 Corinthians 4:18.

He has need of patience also, to hold out in this work of departing from iniquity. For indeed to depart from that, is to draw my mind off from that which will follow me with continual solicitations. Samson withstood his Delilah for a while, but she got the mastery of him at the last. Why so? Because he wanted patience, he grew angry and was vexed, and could withstand her solicitation no longer. Judges 16:15, 16, 17. Many there be also, that can well enough be contented to shut sin out of doors for a while; but because sin has much fair speech, therefore it overcomes at last. Proverbs 7:21. For iniquity will not be easily said nay: it is like her of whom you read, she has a whore's forehead, and refuses to be ashamed. Jeremiah 3. Wherefore departing from iniquity is a work for length, as long as life shall last. A work did I say? it is a war; a continual combat. Wherefore he that will adventure to set upon this work, must needs be armed with faith and patience. A daily exercise he will find himself put upon, by the continual attempts of iniquity to be putting forth itself. This is called an enduring to the end, a continuing in the word of Christ, and also a keeping of the word of his patience. Matthew 24:13; Revelation 3:10. But what man in the world can do this, whose heart is not seasoned with the love of God, and the love of Christ? Therefore he that will exercise himself in this work, must be often considering the love of God to him in Christ: for the more sense, or apprehension, a man shall have of that, the more easy and pleasant will this work be to him; yea, though the doing thereof should cost him his heart's blood.

*“Thy loving kindness is before mine eyes (says David),
and I have walked in thy truth.” Psalm 26:1-3.*

Nothing like the sense, sight, or belief of that, to the man of God, to make him depart from iniquity.

Question: ‘But what shall I do? I cannot depart therefrom as I should.’

Answer: Keep thine eye upon all thy shortnesses, or upon all they failures; for that is profitable for thee.

1. The sight of this will make thee base in thine own eyes.
2. It will give thee occasion to see the need and excellency of repentance.
3. It will put thee upon prayer to God for help and pardon.

4. It will make thee weary of this world.
5. It will make grace to persevere, the more desirable in thine eyes.

Also, it will help thee in the things which follow:

1. It will make thee see the need of Christ's righteousness.
2. It will make thee see the need of Christ's intercession.
3. It will make thee see thy need of Christ's advocateship.
4. It will make thee see the riches of God's patience.
5. And it will make heaven and eternal life the sweeter to thee when thou comest there.

But to the question. Get more grace; for the more grace thou hast, the further is thine heart set off of iniquity, the more also set against it, and the better able to depart from it, when it cometh to thee, tempteth thee, and entreats thee for entertainment. Now the way to have more grace, is to have more knowledge of Christ, and to pray more fervently in his name; also to subject thy soul and thy lusts with all thy power to the authority of that grace thou hast; and to judge and condemn thyself most heartily before God, for every secret inclination that thou findest in thy flesh to sin-ward.

The improvement of what thou hast, is that, (as I may say), by which God judges how thou wouldst use, if thou hadst it, more; and according to that, so shalt thou have, or not have, a farther measure. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful (and will be so) also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is (and will be) unjust also in much. I know Christ speaks here about the unrighteous mammon, but the same may be applied also unto the thing in hand. Luke 16:10-12.

And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who will commit unto you that which is your own? That is a remarkable place to this purpose in the Revelation,

“Behold,” saith he, “I have set before thee an open door, (that thou mayest have what thou wilt, as was also said to the improving woman of Canaan, Matthew 15:28), and no man can shut it: for

thou hast a little strength, and hast held fast my word, and hast not denied my name.” Revelation 3:8.

A good improvement of what we have of the grace of God at present, pleases God, and engages him to give us more: but an ill improvement of what we at present have, will not do so.

“To him that hath, (that hath an heart to improve what he hath) to him shall be given; but to him that hath not, from him shall be taken, even that which he hath.” Matthew 25:24-30.

Well, weigh the place, and you shall find it so.

I know that to depart from iniquity so as is required, that is, to the utmost degree of the requirement, no man can; for it is a copy too fair for mortal flesh exactly to imitate, while we are in this world. But with good paper, good ink, and a good pen, a skillful and willing man may go far. And it is well for thee if thy compliance be sincere; that is, that thou art troubled that thou canst not forsake iniquity, as thou shouldst: for God accepteth of thy design and desire, and it is counted by him as thy kindness. Proverbs 30:22. But if thy complaint in this matter be true, thou wilt not rest, nor content thyself in thy complaints; but wilt, (as he that is truly hungry, or greatly burdened, useth all lawful means to satisfy his hunger, and to ease himself of his burden) use all thy skill and power to mortify and keep them under by the word of God. Nor can it otherwise be, but that such a man must be a growing man.

“Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” John 15:2.

Such a man shall not be stumbling in religion, nor a scandal to it in his calling, but shall (according to God’s ordinary way with his people) be a fruitful and flourishing bough. And I would to God this were the sickness of all them that profess in this nation. For then should we soon have a new leaf turned over in most corners of this nation: then would graciousness of heart, and life, and conversation be more prized, more sought after, and better improved, and practiced, than it is. Yes, then would the throats of ungodly men be better stopt, and their mouths faster shut up, as to their reproaching of religion, than they are. A Christian man must be the object of the envy of the world; but it is better, if the will of God be so, that we

be reproached for well doing, than for evil. 1 Peter 2, 3. If we be reproached for evil doing, it is our shame; but if for well doing, it is our glory. If we be reproached for our sins, God cannot vindicate us; but if we be reproached for a virtuous life, God himself is concerned, will espouse our quarrel, and in his good time will show our foes our righteousness, and put them to shame and silence. Briefly, A godly life annexed to faith in Christ, is so necessary, that a man that professes the name of Christ, is worse than a beast without it.

Question: But thou wilt say unto me, “Why do men profess the name of Christ, that love not to depart from iniquity?”

Answer: I answer, There are many reasons for it.

1. The preaching of the gospel, and so, the publication of the name of Christ, is musical and very taking to the children of men. A Savior! a Redeemer! a loving, sin-pardoning Jesus! what better words can come from man? what better melody can be heard? “Son of man,” said God to the prophet,

“Lo thou art to them as a very lovely son, (or as a song of loves), of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.” Ezekiel 33:32.

The gospel is a most melodious note, and sweet tune, to any that are not prepossessed with slander, reproach and enmity against the professors of it. Now its melodious notes being so sweet, nor marvel, if it entangle some, even of them that yet will not depart from iniquity to take up and profess so lovely a profession. But,

2. There is a generation of men that are and have been frightened with the law, and terrified with fears of perishing for their sins, but yet have not grace to leave them. Now when the sound of the gospel shall reach such men’s ears, because there is by that made public the willingness of Christ to die for sin, and of God to forgive them for his sake; therefore they presently receive and profess those notions, as the only ones that can rid them from their frights and terrors; falsely resting themselves content with that faith thereof, which standeth in naked knowledge; yea, liking that faith best, that will stand with their pride, covetousness, and lechery, never

desiring to hear of practical holiness, because it will disturb them: wherefore they usually cast dirt at such, calling them legal preachers.

3. Here also is a design of Satan set on foot. For these carnal gospellers, are his tares, the children of the wicked one. Those that he hath sowed among the wheat, of purpose, if possible, that that might be rooted up, or at least that the sinners might be corrupted by beholding and learning to be vile and filthy of them. Matthew 13:36-42.

4. Another cause hereof is this, the hypocrites that begin to profess, find as bad as themselves already in profession of this worthy name: and, think they, ‘these do so and so, and therefore so will I.’

5. This comes to pass also through the righteous judgment of God, who, through the anger that he has conceived against some men for their sins, will lift them up to heaven, before he casts them down to hell, that their fall may be the greater, and their punishment more intolerable. Matthew 11:20-24.

I have now done, when I have read to you my text over again: “And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.”

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 2

¹ The term “flesh” here, and often elsewhere is used figuratively to denote, not the body as distinguished from the soul, but the principle of sin, the native disposition of man as a fallen being in opposition to the Spirit, or principle of holiness communicated to believers in regeneration. This use of the term “flesh” is found in Genesis 6:3. Our Savior sanctions this usage in John 3:6; 6:63. And Paul, in Romans 7:5; 8:1-13; Galatians 5:17-26.

CHAPTER 3

¹ England under Charles II was overrun with wickedness in the false profession of Christianity. The Corporation and Test Acts, intended to crush Popery and Dissent, augmented profaneness in the Clergy, and in all other classes of State officials. The moral condition of the people is easily inferred.

CHAPTER 5

¹ Had Bunyan lived in our day, he would have added, “Many there be who more regularly and earnestly read the morning paper than the word of God, by which men are solemnly enjoined to live.

² However Christians differ in judgment and in Church relations, they are bound by the law of Christ to hold with each other as members of one glorious Head, the real communion of spiritual love, courtesy and kindness. This does not imply meeting at the Lord’s Table — which is a symbol also of communion in Church relations. Many mistake here, and confound the one with the other. But an Apostle has warned us that “the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink.” Romans 14:17.

PUBLISHERS NOTES

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